The Compendium for The Rachofsky Collection Graduate Symposium as presented at The Warehouse on November 9, 2018 in Dallas, Texas.

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The Compendium for The Rachofsky Collection Graduate Symposium as presented at The Warehouse on November 9, 2018 in Dallas, Texas.

Cover:
Seung-taek Lee (Korean, born 1932). *Wind*, 1977. Paint on C-print. 19½ x 23¼ inches (49.5 x 59 cm). The Rachofsky Collection.
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The Graduate Symposium is a natural out-growth of the goals of The Rachofsky Collection and The Warehouse. This symposium aims to highlight emerging scholars presenting new perspectives on postwar and contemporary art, and to make the collection available to a wider national and international academic audience. Graduate students and recent graduates are invited to present their research on artists and works from the collection. As part of the program, students are given the opportunity to visit The Warehouse before the symposium to utilize the library and view works from the collection in person. For the inaugural Graduate Symposium, The Rachosky Collection invited four graduate students or recent graduates to present their research on artists from Postwar Japan, Postwar Korea, and Postwar Italy—three focuses of the collection.

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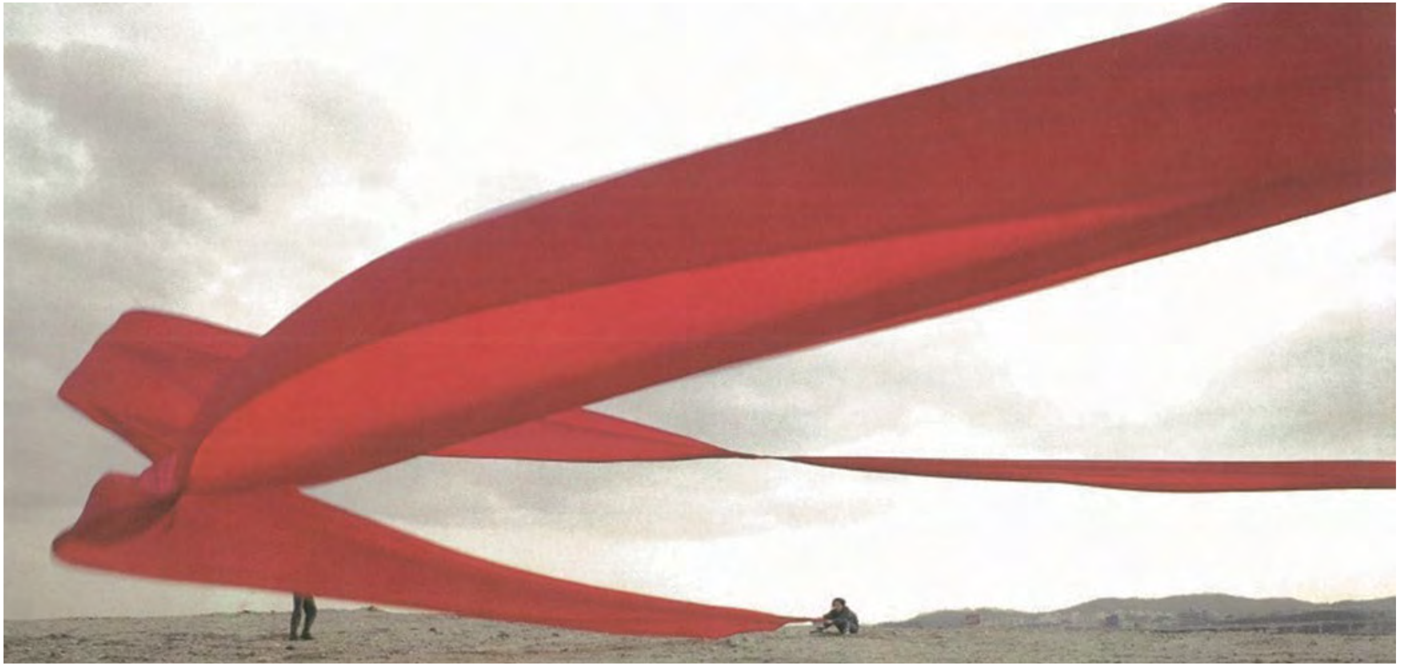


Fig. 1

Seung-taek Lee (Korean, born 1932). *Wind Folk Amusement*, 1970s. Fabric performance. 39½ x 3149½ x 787½ inches (100 x 8000 x 2000 cm).
© Seung-taek Lee

From Medium to Mediator: Seung-taek Lee's *Wind Folk Amusement*

Ji Eun (Camille) Sung

Introduction

In 1971, Korean artist Seung-taek Lee showed *Wind Folk Amusement (Param minsongnori)* on Nanji Island in the Han River in Seoul, South Korea (fig. 1). Several people held three 80-meter-long strips of red cloth up in the air. The strips were freely flowing, sometimes making large circles, and continuously changed their shapes as the wind blew. As a monumental sculptor by day and an experimental artist by night, Lee conceived of and staged this piece in his search for "a new plastic order," as a part of the activity for the Korean Avant-garde Association (*Han'guk abanggarŭdŭ hyŏp'oe*, abbreviated as A.G.). [1] Formed in 1969 by emerging art critics and artists, A.G. aimed at "contributing to the development of Korean arts and culture by searching out and creating a new plastic order based on a strong awareness of avant-garde art, within the context of a Korean art scene that was lacking in vision." [2]

1
For the artist's overall art world, see In-beom Lee. "Lee Seung-taek Jakpoom Yeonku" (A Study of Seung-taek Lee's Artwork: Focusing on the concept of the Non-Sculpture), *The Misulsahakbo: Reviews on the Art History* 49 (2017): 249–272.

Lee, trained as a sculptor, described this work as "sculpture without form (*hyŏngch'eŏmnŭn chogak*)" in his 1988 exhibition catalogue. [3] This description contests the definition of the genre of sculpture by claiming that formless works of art can be sculpture. The work itself, moreover, complicates the condition of the genre as this formless work does, in fact, have physical, visible material — the strips of cloth. Then, how is it "without form," and what makes it a "sculpture?"

2
AG vol. 1 (1969), in Sang-gil Oh, *Han'guk hyŏndae misul ta-si ikki* II vol. 2 (*Rereading of Korean Contemporary Art* II vol. 2) (Seoul: ICAS, 2001), 97. My translation.

3
Seung-taek Lee, "Pan'gaenyŏmŭi chŏngshin'gwa pijogak (The Spirit of Counter-Concept and Non-Sculpture)," *Lee Seung-taek* (Seoul: Gwanhoon Gallery, 1988).

Counter-concept and Non-Sculpture in Pursuit of "Korean Contemporary Sculpture"

Since the late 1950s, Lee's works showed radical experimentation with the language of sculpture: the base, verticality, and the material. The convention of sculpture in the

art world of postwar Korea was to utilize a plinth or base, which isolates the object of art from the non-art, everyday space and thus endows the object with artistic value. The base also allowed verticality in sculpture, which gives a sense of monumentality and artistic purity to artworks. In 1956, Lee submitted a sculpture in which two figures stood on a single plinth to the Art Exhibition of the Republic of Korea, but the jurors rejected the work because it was "not conventional." He kept refusing the base and even incorporated horizontality, which resulted in defying the artistic validation that the base and the verticality generate. In doing so, Lee used unconventional materials. In 1958's *Tiled Roof*, for instance, he packed dirt into coils in the shape of a traditional Korean roof and placed it on the ground. Also, in the *Godret Stone* series made between 1956 and 1960, he took *godret* stone, traditional tools used in weaving straw bags or hemp cloth, and arranged them vertically and horizontally (fig. 2).

In the late 1980s, Lee retroactively suggested the concept of sculpture without form along with a set of concepts describing this earlier practice. According to him, his practice was based on the attitude of "counter-concept (*pan'gaenyŏm*)," which serves as the antithesis of a preexisting concept or idea. A counter-concept is born at the moment when a preexisting one becomes taken for granted and considered banal. The confrontation between the two concepts becomes a catalyst for another creative moment. To Lee, the development of sculpture is also driven by this dialectical force: Sculpture needs the antithesis of its status quo, which in turn leads to the innovation of the genre. The next step for him, therefore, was to oppose the genre conventions of sculpture of his time. He describes this practice as "non-sculpture (*pijogak*)." [4]

He called his works in the 1950s, incorporating the lack of base, horizontality, and traditional artifacts, non-sculpture. [5] Yet, what he points out as an element of the counter-concept of sculpture was the material (*chaeryo*), not the base

4
See Seung-taek Lee, "Nae pijogagŭi kŭnwŏn (The Origin of My Non-Sculpture)," *Konggan* (May 1980) 38-39; and Seung-taek Lee, "The Spirit of Counter-Concept and Non-Sculpture."

5
Interestingly, Lee does not use the word anti-sculpture, but only non-sculpture. Cho Hyun-ok argues that "his earlier works are anti-sculpture, rather than non-sculpture, and his later works are *objets*, environment art, or total art, which belong to the transcendental realm of non-sculpture."

Fig. 2

Seung-taek Lee (Korean, born 1932). *Godret Stone*, 1958. Stone, wood, and rope. 23⅝ x 15¾ x 2 inches (60 x 40 x 5 cm). © Seung-taek Lee

or horizontality. In his 1972 essay "The Prospect of Korean Contemporary Sculpture," for example, he claims that Korean sculpture should discover new materials to reflect changes in life and society generated from technological development. According to him, technological development affected the sculpture of the West to develop new art forms through the discovery of new materials. [6] His use of the shape of tiled roof and *godret* stone was a result of his experimentation with new materials in sculpture.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it was not only Lee who was interested in technological development and its impact on art and life in the postwar era. His contemporary artists and art critics, particularly members of A.G., manifested this interest through their artistic and theoretical practice. At the same time, extensive economic development projects by the Park Chunghee government also generated, among the public as well as the arts and cultural scene, aspirations to the better future enabled by technology and urbanization. [7] Whereas Lee's contemporary artists paid attention to everyday objects and industrial materials — for example, matchboxes, rubber gloves, and plastic — Lee's interest lies more in traditional artifacts such as the roof tiles and *godret* stone. Under the Park's regime that sought "original Korean arts and culture," this use of traditional objects may seem to indicate an interest in this tradition building. However, as Joan Kee argues, Lee did not aim to recuperate the Korean tradition, but to use non-conventional materials for sculpture in his non-sculptural practice. [8] The artist, indeed, pursued "a third path" between the Korean traditional art and the Western art that poured into the country at the time. [9]

Sculpture without Form

The non-sculptural works using traditional artifacts, however, did not develop into sculpture without form. In the 1960s, Lee began to use other kinds of unconventional materials: natural

(Hyun-ok Cho, "Lee Seung-taek-Ŭi chakp'umsegye" (The Oeuvre of Lee Seung-taek), MA thesis, Dongkuk University (1992), 14.

6
Seung-taek Lee, "Han'guk hyŏndae chogagŭi chŏnmang (Prospects for Korean Modern Sculpture)," *Choso (Sculpture and Modeling)*, the inaugural volume (Seoul: Ewha Women's University, 1972), 17. My translation.

7
See Jung-hoon Shin, "1960nyŏndae mal han'gungmisurŭi 'toshimunmyŏngeŭi ch'amyŏ'" ("Participation in Urban Civilization" in Korean Art of the Late 1960s), *Misulsahak* 28 (2014): 189–217.

8
Joan Kee, "Use on Vacation: The Non-Sculptures of Lee Seung-taek," *Archives of Asian Art* 63, no. 1 (2013): 103–129.

9
Seung-taek Lee, "Prospects for Korean Modern Sculpture," 17.

elements such as fire, smoke, water, and wind that do not have a fixed form. It is the works using these materials that he calls sculpture without form in his 1980s writings. His interest in the volatile natural elements began around 1960. His drawing *Smoke* in 1960, for instance, shows eight black chimneys that look like small hills on a barren plain with a column of white smoke rising from each chimney. This two-dimensional image became realized in a three-dimensional space in the 1964 work, *Smoke*. Lee placed three pots along the Han River and lit them on fire so that one could see the three columns of smoke rising up into the sky. The year 1964 was a very productive time for his innovative practice. In *Fire Ritual*, he made a fire in the shape of a 30-meter-long line along the shore of the Han River. Also, in *Burning Canvas Floating on the River*, he set a wooden drawing board on fire as it floated on water (fig. 3). Whereas these works utilized visible materials such as smoke and fire, Lee also began incorporating an invisible material into his art, the wind. In *Wind*, 1970, Lee attached short strips of cloth to thin tree branches (fig. 4). Whenever the wind blew, the strips would flow in the air. *Wind Folk Amusement*, which was depicted in several sketches and performed several times at different locations during and around 1970, was the largest and most mobile of Lee's formless sculptures.

Lee recalls that his idea of using these materials and creating formless works was inspired by Italian sculptor Alberto Giacometti's slender female figures in the late 1950s, such as *Woman of Venice II*, 1956 (fig. 5). In postwar Europe, Giacometti's slender figures were discussed mostly from the framework of existentialism, particularly as articulated by Jean-Paul Sartre, in relation to the tragic experience of the wars. After the Korean War (1950–53), the art world of Korea also tried to escape from the ruin of the war, and Lee was engrossed with Friedrich Nietzsche and Sartre in pursuit of proper language that can explain his and the nation's experience of the war. Given this, scholars and art critics have discussed Lee's sculpture without form in relation to the existentialist anxiety and despair

Fig. 3

Seung-taek Lee (Korean, born 1932). *Burning Canvas Floating on the River*, 1964/1980s. Hand-colored C-print, painting, and fire (performance). © Seung-taek Lee

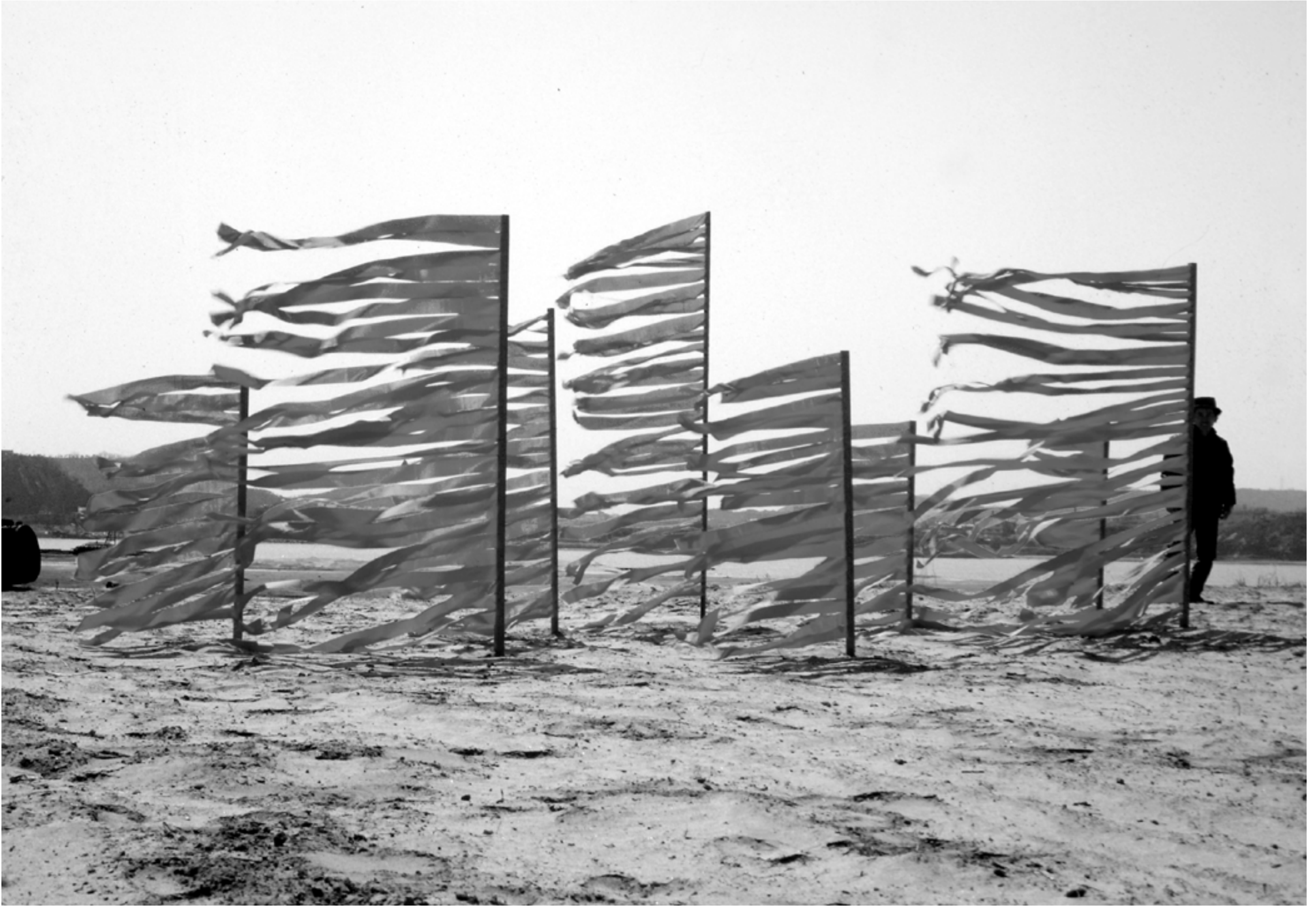


Fig. 4

Seung-taek Lee (Korean, born 1932). *Wind*, 1970. 118 x 275½ x 98½ inches (300 x 700 x 250 cm).
© Seung-taek Lee

Fig. 5

Alberto Giacometti (Swiss, 1901 1966). *Venice Woman III (Femme de Venise III)*, 1956. Bronze. 47½ x 13½ x 6⅞ inches (120.7 x 34.3 x 17.5 cm). Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, Nasher Sculpture Center. © 2022 Alberto Giacometti Estate / VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / ADAGP, Paris. Photograph by David Heald

in the postwar period, focusing on the confrontation between presence and absence, as manifested in the presentation of the wind in *Wind Folk Amusement*. [10]

10

See Art News, "Shigan'gwa yŏksaŭi yeŏn-ga, Lee Seung-taek" (A Prophet of Time and History, Lee Seung-taek), 1988, p. 39, and Cho, "The Oeuvre of Lee Seung-taek."

However, the way in which Lee took the absence of form in his works differs from Sartre's analysis of absence in Giacometti's figures. In his famous essay on Giacometti's sculptures "The Quest for the Absolute" in 1948, Sartre describes:

> Don't expect a belly to expand as you draw near it [the sculpture]... All that remains are plaits of plaster... Still, everything is there... Everything except matter. From twenty steps, we only think we see the wearisome desert of adipose tissue; it is suggested, outlined, indicated, but not given. [11]

11

Jean-Paul Sartre and Wade Baskin, *Essays in Existentialism* (New York: Citadel Press, 1965), 396.

What is peculiar in this description is the contradictory existence of body and matter. According to Sartre, Giacometti's sculptures still depict human body parts, but without matter. The existence of a body is only "suggested, outlined, indicated, but not given," because what renders it present is the viewer. As such, Sartre analyzes Giacometti's sculptures with respect to the viewer's existentialist experience of them.

Lee was similarly struck by the absence of flesh in the human figure. Unlike Sartre, who focused on the perception of the viewer, Lee seems to find the possibility and limitation of form and matter of sculpture in this play of presence and absence. He writes:

> In the late 1950s, I encountered a small photo of a Giacometti sculpture depicting an emaciated female body without any flesh or muscle; a skeletal, yet still obviously female body. Then, I began to wonder: if I negated even the bones, what would the form become? So, I came to the idea of negating the remaining elements and moving on to formless works or works that defy a solid form. [12]

12

Seung-taek Lee, *Lee Seung-taek*, exhibition catalogue Levy Gorvy Gallery (New York: Levy Gorvy, 2017), 97.

Given that visible or recognizable form and matter are the prerequisites for a work of art, his questioning of form and matter — flesh, muscle, and bones — serves as a counter-concept to sculpture. For the next step of "negating the remaining elements," he adopted the idea of "formless works," a sculpture that does not have a fixed, solid form.

In order to make formless works that are still visible, Lee might have to come up with materials enabling such visibility of a formless work. In the July 1979 issue of *Space (Konggan)*, an architecture magazine also covering other arts genres, he writes that the *Wind* series presents "my interest in obviously non-material matters and [I] introduced ropes and strips of cloth and traditional Korean paper, not merely to compile the materials, but in order to render perceptible the invisible air." [13] Formless materials he chose were, as seen in this statement, the volatile natural elements, such as wind. As a result, Lee's sculptures without form using the natural elements are amorphous and intangible, but at the same time, recognizable, and occupy a defined space. In other words, the sculpture without form has neither form nor matter, but still is recognizable.

13
Seung-taek Lee, "Han'gukchŏgin sojaewa naŭi kŏt (Korean Subject Matters and Mine)," *Space* (July 1979): 56. My translation.

The term "sculpture without form," particularly the Korean word for form, *hyŏngch'e*, in fact, reveals this ambivalent presence of absence. In the Korean language, there are several words that can be used to express form and matter. For example, *hyŏngt'ae* (形態) means form or shape, but does not necessarily imply a specific aspect of matter or mass. The word *hyŏngch'e* (形體) understands form and matter as inseparable, and thus, merged in one entity. [14] Accordingly, when Lee conceptualizes sculpture without *hyŏngch'e*, this concept designates sculpture that does not have both form and matter. *Wind Folk Amusement*, as he states, has neither form or matter as its material is wind, the formless and invisible one. More precisely, the work obtains a form when the wind blows and the cloth flows in the air. When there is no wind

14
Hyŏng (形) is form and *ch'e* (體) is a body with bones and flesh.

and the cloth is folded, it can be said that the work is not in its form, not in activation. Given this, one cannot help but ask what the cloth is to this sculpture. Again, what makes the work a "sculpture?"

Wind, Cloth, and a Sculpture

The cloth in *Wind Folk Amusement* possesses an ambiguous ontological state regarding the genre of sculpture. It should be noted that the global art world since the 1950s had shared an interest in categorization, or medium-specificity, as Clement Greenberg famously asserts, of art genres and convergence of such classification. [15] The complicated state of the cloth in *Wind Folk Amusement* also problematizes the issue of medium-specificity in art. The material and the medium have often been used as the traditional criteria for classifying art genres. For example, it is commonly understood that the medium means the instrument through which the artist expresses something. As for sculpture, marble is both the traditional material and medium and endows the unique feature of three-dimensionality to the genre of sculpture.

15
In the 1950s, U.S. art critic Clement Greenberg claimed that medium-specificity is a sole criterion to art classification, for example, the two-dimensionality for painting. This discourse was known to the Korean art world in the late 1960s. See Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," in *Partisan Review* 6 (Fall, 1939): 34-49, and "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *Partisan Review* 7 (July–August, 1940): 296-310.

Wind Folk Amusement complicates this relationship between material, medium, and genre. Although the artist states that its material is wind, it is invisible and even unrecognizable without the help of the cloth. In this sense, it can be said that the red cloth is the material, and simultaneously, the medium as it is a visible constituent of the work. Yet, the work becomes activated only when it is mobilized by the specific interaction of the wind and the cloth. As such, while the wind serves as a key element for the actualization of the work, the cloth is located on the fine line between the invisibility of the wind and the visibility of the work. The cloth connects the invisibility and the visibility inherent in this sculpture without form.

A discussion of the notion of media in art developed by W.J.T. Mitchell in the 2010s is helpful to further comprehend

the unique materiality in *Wind Folk Amusement*. Mitchell's theorization starts with a rejection of the Greenbergian understanding of art genres based on medium-specificity. In his 2005 essay, "There Are No Visual Media," he argues that "there are no 'visual media,' that all media are mixed media, without losing the concept of medium specificity." [16] He further developed this perspective in *Critical Terms for Media Studies* in 2010, where he interprets the notion of media with a focus on mediation. [17] Emphasizing the "middleness" implied in the definition of "medium," he sheds light on the mediation that a medium generates between two or more things, which Marshall McLuhan, the pioneer of media studies, originally proposed in 1964 in his famous book *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man*. [18] Mitchell writes:

> McLuhan urges us to focus on media independent of its ties with content, and in the process redefines media itself as content, not just a vehicle or channel... McLuhan's redirection is foundational for "media studies" in the sense in which we employ it here. For precisely this reason, his approach has a capaciousness that can encompass the multiple and historically disjunctive origins of the term media as well as related terms like medium and mediation. [19]

Mitchell then emphasizes the mediation played in the operation of a medium. This elucidation asks that we should consider the medium not as something that distinguishes between two things, but as something that connects two things by standing on the boundary between them, in other words, a mediator. As such, Mitchell's theorization of medium and media studies emphasizes mediation, and thus, the relationality that a medium generates.

Wind Folk Amusement, through the cloth's unique ontology in the work, illustrates this relational aspect of the medium. First, the cloth, as the medium of the artwork in the conventional sense, proves of the undecidability of the medium. For, as

16
W.J.T. Mitchell, "There are no Visual Media," *Journal of Visual Culture* 4, no. 2 (2005): 261.

17
W.J.T. Mitchell and Mark B.N. Hansen, *Critical Terms for Media Studies* (Chicago [Ill.]: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

18
Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Toronto: New American Library of Canada, 1964.

19
Mitchell and Hansen, *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, xi.

explained above, the boundary between the work's material and medium, or between the wind and the cloth, is blurry. Second, in its role as such a medium, the cloth serves as a mediator in a variety of senses. The cloth is neither to delineate between different mediums of art genres, nor to serve as material for the sculpture. It is to serve as a bridge linking the invisible material and the temporary, activated state. [20] As such, in *Wind Folk Amusement*, the medium exists as a mediator between the wind and the viewer, the formlessness and the sculpture.

20
In relation to the temporary state the work creates, the concept of situation or state was one of the important issues in the art world in 1960s Korea, and Lee's works were discussed within such a discourse of situation. For example, in his solo exhibition catalogue in 1971, art critic Oh Gwang-su writes that the artist "changed the concept of sculpture from form (*hyŏngt'ae*) to state (*sangt'ae*)." (Gwang-su Oh, "Chogakka isŭngt'aek (Sculptor Lee Seung-taek)" Lee Seung-taek solo exhibition catalogue, 1971).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have revealed that Lee's practice of "sculpture without form" was a dialectical exploration of the genre of sculpture, particularly of the material, derived from the specific context of the Korean art world in the 1950s and 1960s. His unique understanding of material and medium illuminates the medium as mediator between materials and between the work and the viewer, as I examined in relation to the recent theory of medium in art as discussed by Mitchell. As such, Lee's boundary-breaking art practice serves as a case study of global postwar art, which proposes a different discourse to the previously Euro-North American-centered art history. And yet understanding Lee's practice requires and provokes further investigation on the discourse of media, particularly from a McLuhanian perspective, regarding rapid industrialization and modernization of the nation, modernization of Korean art, and the artist's role in these circumstances in postwar Korea.

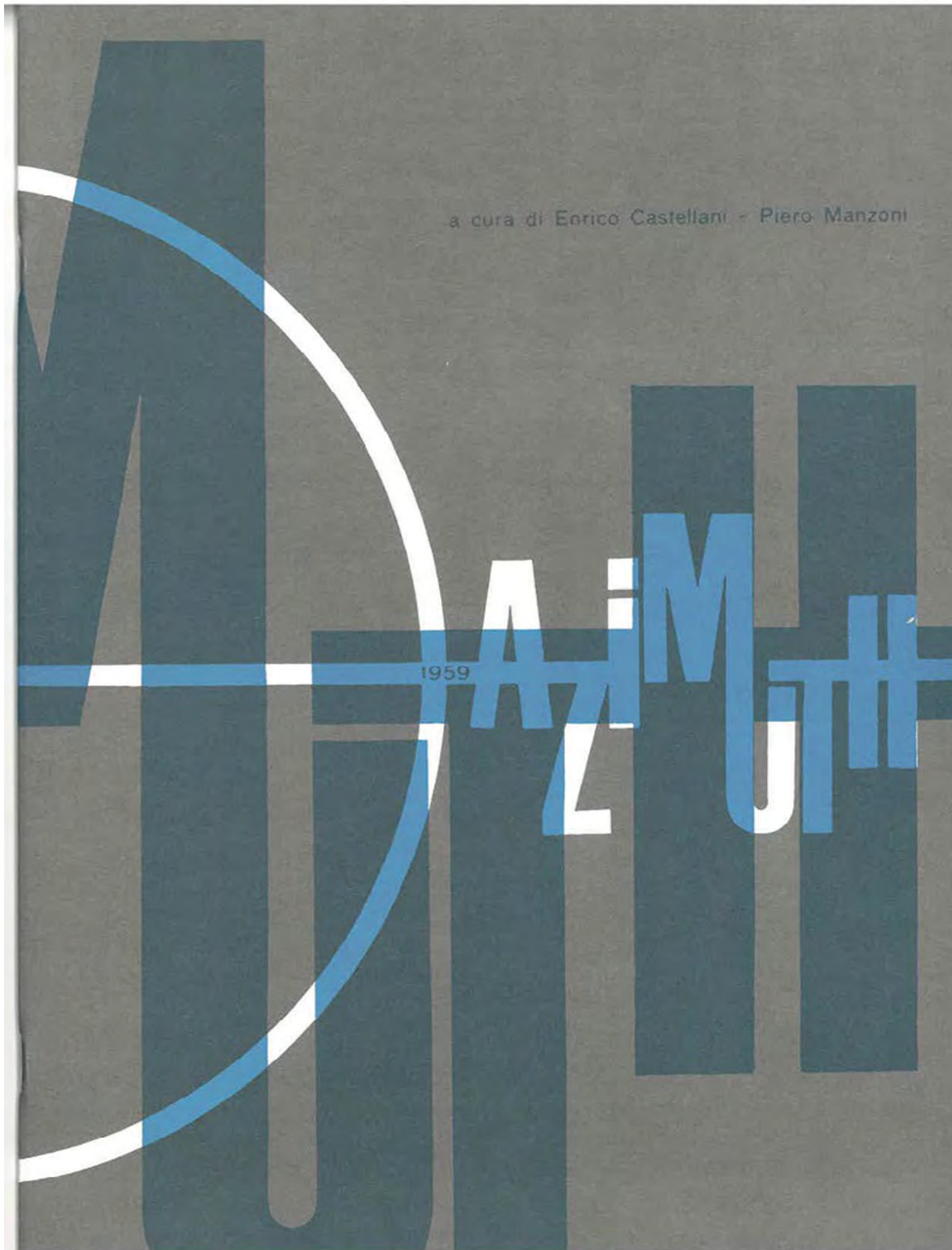


Fig. 1

Piero Manzoni (Italian, 1933–1963) and Enrico Castellani (Italian, 1930–2017). *Azimuth*, 1959. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

Riguarda la Rivista: Piero Manzoni's *Azimuth* as Exhibition

Sasha Goldman

In 1959, Italian artists Piero Manzoni and Enrico Castellani began two joint endeavors: the review *Azimuth* and the gallery Azimut. These projects provided venues for the artists and their contemporaries, both within Italy and abroad, to share written perspectives about the new artistic tendencies they were championing and to exhibit the artwork in which these ideas were manifested. Although the review lasted for only two issues and the gallery was open for just eight months, these initiatives came at a foundational time for so many of the figures involved that their effects continue to be traced today. Azimut the gallery was an Italian anchor point for the network of artists working throughout Europe and Japan in the latter half of the 1950s and into the 1960s, and Manzoni was responsible for introducing many key figures from these diverse locations. *Azimuth* the review facilitated the international dissemination of ideas of those engaged in this network of artists, critics, and writers.

When the gallery Azimut closed in 1960, Manzoni believed the role of *Azimuth* could extend further, writing in a letter to artist Killian Brier, "regarding Galleria Azimut, we have thought about continuing it by publishing *Azimuth* exhibition catalogues but without the existence of the gallery, without exhibiting anything! It seems like an amusing idea to me!" [1] Although this project was never executed due to his untimely death in 1963 at 31, Manzoni's conception of the periodical as exhibition demonstrated how his thinking predated conceptual trends that would emerge later that decade in the United States. Close examination of *Azimuth* reveals the diversity of functions Manzoni saw for printed media. Such a multiplicity would be described two years later in Italian semiotician Umberto Eco's seminal essay, *Opera aperta (The Poetics of the Open Work)*, in which he designated the artwork of his contemporary moment as being remarkable for its multiplicity of form and function, as seen through the general "openness" or ambiguity in the poetics of the art object. [2] Using Eco's ideas as a guide, this paper will offer

1 Piero Manzoni in a letter to Killian Breier, May 1960. Quoted in Francesca Pola, ed., Manzoni Azimut. (London: Gagosian Gallery in collaboration with Fondazione Piero Manzoni, 2011), 64.

2 Umberto Eco, "Poetics of the Open Work," in *The Open Work*, Anna Cancogni, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 1–23.

a reading of the two issues of *Azimuth* to reveal how, for Manzoni, the function of the journal went beyond its traditional communicative properties, opening new possibilities for what could be considered an "exhibition" of art.

Despite the fact that both the review and gallery were collaborative projects, the reason for focusing on Manzoni in this paper is twofold. First, Manzoni's skillful navigation and exploitation of the ever-expanding postwar media culture in Italy demonstrates his understanding of the swiftly changing modes of communication that shaped postwar Europe — and by extension, the possibilities such developments would enable. [3] In his own practice, the artist explored an array of media venues to disseminate his writing and artworks, understanding that different frameworks would enable him to reach new audiences. Second, it was Manzoni who became a linchpin for communication between the Milanese art scene and other artists throughout Europe who were investigating similar ideas during those years, significantly, without the assistance of a gallery. His engrossment in networks of connectivity exposed the artist to differing practices across Europe and beyond, which in turn expanded his own vision for the poetics of the art object. Although my reading of *Azimuth* gives credit to both Castellani and Manzoni — as is their due — it is Manzoni's overall vision for the project, as articulated in the previous quote, that is of primary interest. [4]

Born in Milan in 1933, Manzoni by 1958 at age 25 was actively involved in two central Milanese art groups focused on new directions in painting, the Movimento Arte Concreta, 1948, and Arte Nucleare, 1951. These movements emerged in reaction to the preceding generation of artists who worked under the umbrella of Informel — known for their gestural, visceral works — but were in many ways closely related to their predecessors. His involvement in these publications and others was a result of Manzoni's eager participation in the Milanese network of galleries and artist hangouts such as the Bar Giamaica. [5]

3
Gregory Tentler, "Without Expensive Transport or the Bother of Customs: Piero Manzoni and the Postwar Avant-Garde, 1956–1963" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2010), 72.

4
While some scholars have argued that Castellani and Manzoni opened Azimut because they needed a space to exhibit the artwork that they may not have had opportunity to show elsewhere, it seems instead that they were being opportunistic upon being offered the space by Franco Buzzi, as they did not make any efforts to resuscitate the project after they could no longer afford rent by July 1960. The artists both exhibited work often, collectively and separately, in the years preceding and following the Azimut/h project. See Federico Sardella, "Enrico Castellani: Before and After Azimut/h" in Luca Massimo Barbero, *Azimut/h: Continuity and Newness*, exh. cat. (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2014), 165.

5
Luca Massimo Barbero, "Azimut/h: Continuity and Newness," in Luca Massimo Barbero, *Azimut/h: Continuity and Newness*, exh. cat. (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2014), 26.

Despite participating as a contributing editor of the art reviews of both groups and learning from this involvement with *Il gesto* and *Documenti d'arte d'oggi*, Manzoni recognized that his own artistic objectives fundamentally differed from these movements. To expand his network and knowledge of current practices further, Manzoni traveled to Paris, Rotterdam, and Dusseldorf between June and July of 1959 to strengthen and build relationships with artists and critics in these cities. During these summer travels, Manzoni initiated many of the bonds that would create the web of artists that would soon be involved in Azimut/h. [6]

Already in January of 1959, Manzoni had written to Dutch art dealer Hans Sonnenberg about a new project to counter the "crisis" arising at *Il gesto* and within the Arte Nucleare movement. He writes of "a very special type of magazine," referring to his unrealized project, Pragma, in which we see the inklings of what was to come — the artist sought a venue for the dissemination of his own ideas, rather than submitting to the structures created by others. [7] In the fall of that same year, when Manzoni returned to Milan, the new review began to take shape. *Azimuth* arose out of Manzoni and Castellani's collective desire to write the history of what they saw as their artistic moment, which diverged from the opinions articulated by the extant Milanese movements and their publications. [8] Designed with the goal of establishing a relationship with the historic avant-garde, the first issue of *Azimuth* sought to determine the framework from which the "New Artistic Conception," as Manzoni would call it, was emerging, and to present the breadth of its reach. [9] Entitled "*Azimuth*," an astronomical and navigational term, which Castellani defined as "the vertical line above any given point on the earth's surface," the magazine announced itself as having a specific, linear trajectory toward the cosmic or universal, anticipating, in its expansive goals, the openness Eco identified in the artwork of those years. [10]

6

Valerie Hillings, "Countdown to a New Beginning: The Multinational Zero Network, 1950s–60s," in *ZERO: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s–60s*, exh. cat. (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2014), 17. This spelling of "Azimut/h" is meant to indicate a combination of the gallery and the review. It is taken from the 2014 exhibition of the same name, which was on view at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice.

7

Piero Manzoni, "Letter to Hans Sonnenberg," in Germano Celant, *Manzoni*. (Milan: Skira, 2009), 144.

8

See Umberto Eco, "Serial and Structure," in *The Open Work*, Anna Cancogni, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989): 87.

9

"Interview with Castellani," in Lea Vergine, *Azimuth: mostra documentaria*, exh. cat. (Primo piano galleria d'arte: Rome, 1974), np.

10

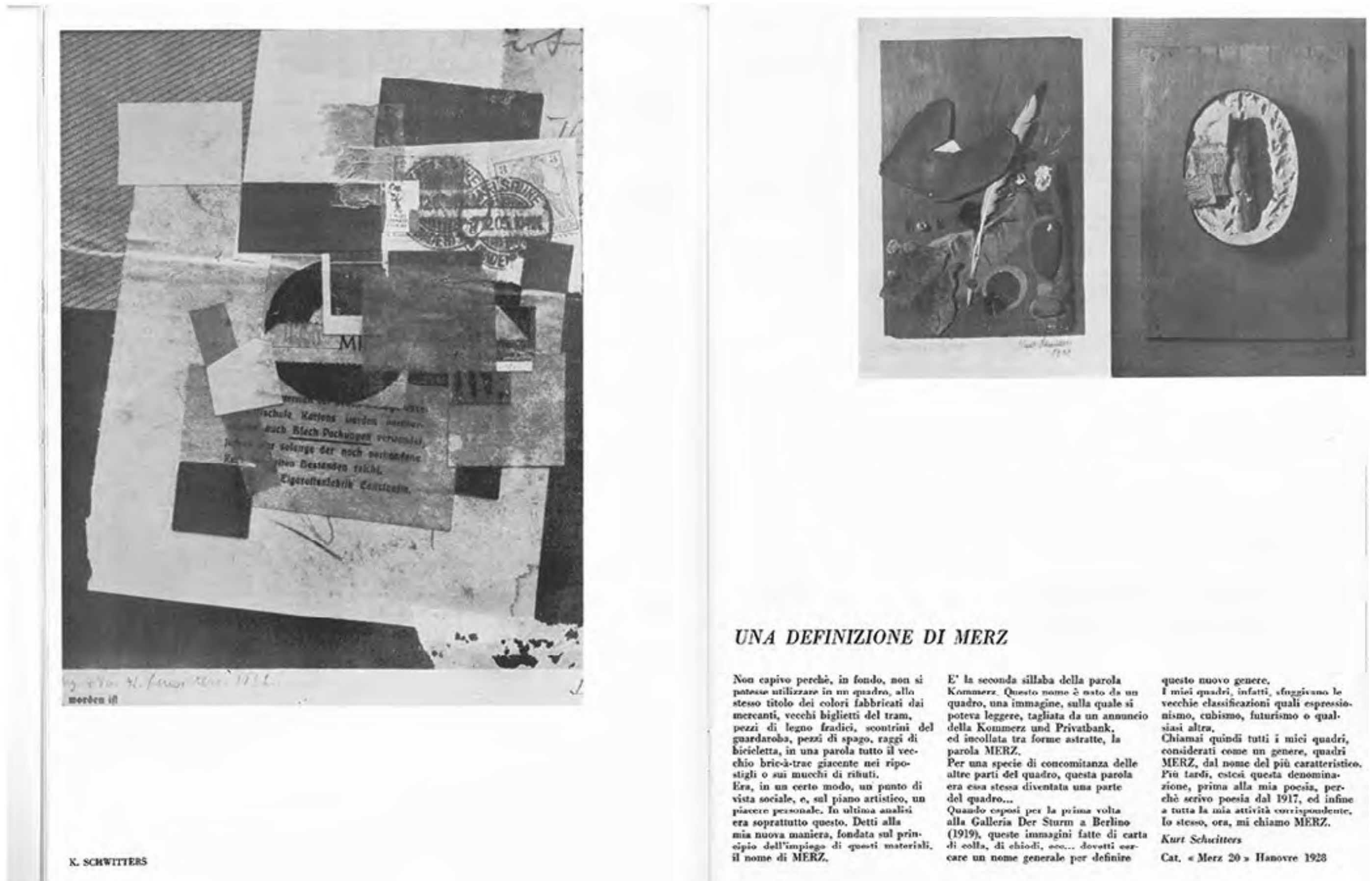
The Merriam-Webster definition of *Azimuth* is: an arc of the horizon measured between a fixed point (as true north) and the vertical circle passing through the center of an object usually in astronomy and navigation clockwise from the north point through 360 degrees.

Published in September 1959, the first issue of *Azimuth* was 36 pages (fig. 1). It consisted of critical essays, poetry, and historic texts; 12 advertisements for galleries/exhibitions; and 41 black-and-white reproductions of artworks, with one color page (an Yves Klein monochrome). While the format largely mirrors the layout of *Il gesto*, the content diverged significantly. Of the contemporary writing included, there was an introductory essay by Gillo Dorfles, a former member of Movimento Arte Concreta and contributor to *Documenti*, who had begun to concentrate his efforts on critical writing rather than art making. In his essay "'Comunicazione' e 'Consumo' Nell'Arte d'Oggi," or "'Communication' and 'Consumption' in Art Today," Dorfles sets the tone for the review, foregrounding the importance of communication for the establishment of commonalities between the artists in the following pages. According to Dutch art historian Antoon Melissen, Dorfles' foreword reveals the common factor of resistance to the preceding phase of Informel, which had reduced the artist, in Dorfles' words, "to a tired rewriter of the poetics of others, a vacuous manipulator of already conquered techniques." [11] This generation of artists would create a new approach to art making, expanding the concept of art through the investigation of novel techniques. Dorfles continues by explaining that he views the potential for this new artistic creation in its "communicative function." [12] Dorfles' own move from artist to writer demonstrates his commitment to this approach, translating his creative abilities to the written word; his inclusion on the first page of the first issue of *Azimuth* illustrates how Manzoni and Castellani saw his work as an example of these new techniques. In the development of their own review, through the careful selection of texts, Manzoni and Castellani sought to counter the tiredness that Dorfles described, by becoming active in the creation of their own poetics, shaping and selecting written language to accompany the visual developments they had already recognized. [13]

11
Gillo Dorfles as quoted in Antoon Melissen "Transforming Reality. Azimut/h: Between Radical Abstraction and the Poetics of the Object," in Barbero, Luca Massimo. *Azimut/h: Continuity and Newness*, exh. cat. (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2014), 146.

12
Gillo Dorfles, "'Comunicazione' e 'Consumo' Nell'Arte d'Oggi," *Azimuth* 1 (September 1959): 1.

13
Eco, too, would write in 1962 of the purpose of "modern" art as being a conveyor of information. Umberto Eco, "The Poetics of the Open Work," in *The Open Work*, Anna Cancogni, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989): 1–23.



K. SCHWITTERS

UNA DEFINIZIONE DI MERZ

Non capivo perchè, in fondo, non si potesse utilizzare in un quadro, allo stesso titolo dei colori fabbricati dai mercanti, vecchi biglietti del tram, pezzi di legno fradici, scontrini del guardaroba, pezzi di spago, raggi di bicicletta, in una parola tutto il vecchio bric-à-brac giacente nei ripostigli o sui mucchi di rifiuti.
Era, in un certo modo, un punto di vista sociale, e, sul piano artistico, un piacere personale. In ultima analisi era soprattutto questo. Detti alla mia nuova maniera, fondata sul principio dell'impiego di questi materiali, il nome di MERZ.
E' la seconda sillaba della parola Kommerz. Questo nome è nato da un quadro, una immagine, sulla quale si poteva leggere, tagliata da un annuncio della Kommerz und Privatbank, ed incollata tra forme astratte, la parola MERZ.
Per una specie di concomitanza delle altre parti del quadro, questa parola era essa stessa diventata una parte del quadro...
Quando esposi per la prima volta alla Galleria Der Sturm a Berlino (1919), queste immagini fatte di carta di colla, di chiodi, ecc... dovetti cercare un nome generale per definire questo nuovo genere.
I miei quadri, infatti, sfuggivano le vecchie classificazioni quali espressionismo, cubismo, futurismo o qualsiasi altra.
Chiamai quindi tutti i miei quadri, considerati come un genere, quadri MERZ, dal nome del più caratteristico.
Più tardi, estesi questa denominazione, prima alla mia poesia, perchè scrivo poesia dal 1917, ed infine a tutta la mia attività corrispondente.
Io stesso, ora, mi chiamo MERZ.

Kurt Schwitters

Cat. « Merz 20 » Hanovre 1928

Fig. 2

Piero Manzoni (Italian, 1933–1963) and Enrico Castellani (Italian, 1930–2017). *Azimuth*, 1959. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

Other contributors to the first issue of *Azimuth* were Italian critics whose essays collectively paint a picture of the artistic moment of *Azimuth*'s publishing and the concerns these artists saw in the work of the preceding generation. Poems by Nanni Balestrini and Samuel Beckett, among others, made each issue an interdisciplinary endeavor and recalled the importance poetry held in Futurism, as well as acknowledging contemporaneous international practices of concrete art, which emerged out of concrete poetry. These diverse written works are paired with an array of images of painting, sculpture, assemblage, and drawing — all from the 1950s, with one exception, which will be described momentarily. With no apparent order to the texts or images, the issue gives the impression of an overall presentation of the critical thought and artistic energy of the moment. The somewhat erratic layout seems to indicate that the text is not illustrated by the artwork, nor is the artwork explained through text, but instead, that they supplement one another, with the layout highlighting the "communicative functions" that both language and image can contribute.

The outliers mentioned are texts written by Kurt Schwitters (from 1928) and Francis Picabia (from 1921). Schwitters' text is paired with images of three *Merz* objects, which Manzoni saw at the Arturo Schwartz gallery in Milan in 1954 (fig. 2). Their unique inclusion in the issue demonstrates a visual and intellectual connection to the historic avant-garde that Castellani and Manzoni aimed to establish as a foundation for their own work. But additionally, it seems the artists sought to create an open dialogue with the past, allowing history to lend new meanings to their artistic explorations, and vice versa, illustrated by the pairing of Picabia's text with works by Piero Dorazio, Mario Rosello, Gino Novelli, and Otto Piene (fig. 3). [14] History is an essential factor in the process of interpretation of an "open" work for Eco, as history provides the means through which new understandings can arise from different perspectives. Playing on the ideas of the historic avant-garde and utopia,

14
Germano Celant, *Piero Manzoni: Catalogo Generale* (Milan: Skira, 2004), 650.

G. NOVELLI

O. PIENE

FRANCIS PICABIA

Paris, 1 mais 1921

Je me suis séparé de certains Dadas parce que j'étouffais parmi eux, chaque jour je devenais plus triste, je m'ennuyais terriblement. J'aurais aimé vivre autour du cirque de Néron, il m'est impossible de vivre autour d'une Table de "Certa", lieu des conspirations dadaistes. Je ne veux pas faire ici l'historique complète du mouvement Dada; deux mots seulement pour mettre les choses au point: L'esprit Dada n'a véritablement existé que durant trois ou quatre ans. il fut exprimé par *Marcel Duchamp* et moi à la fin de 1912; Hülsenbeck, Tzara et Ball en ont trouvé le "nom-écrin" Dada en 1916. Avec ce mot, le mouvement toucha à son point culminant, mais il continua à évoluer, chacun de nous y apportant le plus de vie possible. Nous fûmes traités de fous, de fumistes, de loustics, etc., etc., enfin, c'était le grand succès! Ce succès, le plaisir du jeu, attirèrent en 1918 plusieurs personnages qui n'ont de Dada que le nom; alors, tout changea autor de moi, j'eus l'impression que tel le cubisme, Dada allait avoir des disciples qui comprendraient et je n'eus bientôt plus qu'une idée, fuir le plus loin possible pour oublier ces Messieurs. Mais, n'est-ce pas, quelques heures cela m'avait amusé, moi, ayant la tête dans le vent, de les voir profiter tranquillement de leur opportunisme pour caresser aussi *les gens sérieux et la Nouvelle Revue Française*. Maintenant, Dada, a un tribunal, des avocats, bientôt probablement des gendarmes et un Monsieuer Deibler; il deviendra, comme l'antimilitarisme de Lénine, lequel, pour supprimer un général, en fait un simple soldat et réciproquement.
Dada me fait penser à une cigarette qui laissa autour d'elle une odeur agréable. La marque de ces cigarettes est épuisée, il reste du tabac et je compte sur l'homme de génie qui saura lui donner à nouveau un nom. Mais ne pensons plus au passé malgré l'odeur des cigarettes; la vie n'est qu'une ombre, gardons l'illusion que notre tête la dépasse.
Il faut toujours regarder en bas - le vertige est plus violent; nous sommes tous compagnons de voyage, la plupart du temp assez râpés physiquement, nous assistons aux mareés; chaque marée basse est nouvelle comme chaque marée haute, c'est ce que les hommes appèlent une évolution ou un progrès et c'est toujours la même chose. La seule force qui puisse nous aider à faire cette promenade, c'est l'orgeuil; faut que notre orgeuil soit infini comme l'Univers.
Mais cette parabole m'éloigne un peu du but de mon article; Je me suis séparé de Dada parce que je crois au bonheur et que j'ai horreur de vômir, les odeurs de cuisine m'impressionnent désagréablement. Je rougis d'être aussi faible, mais, que voulez vous, je n'aime pas les illustrations et les directeurs de "Littérature" ne sont que des illustrateur. J'aime me promener au hasard, le nom des rues m'importe peu, chaque jour ressemble à l'autre si nous ne créons subjectivement l'illusion d'une nouveauté et Dada n'est plus nouveau . . . pour le moment.
Les bourgeois représentent l'infini. Dada serait de même s'il durait trop longtemps.

Francis Picabia

M. ROSSELLO

P. DORAZIO

Fig. 3

Piero Manzoni (Italian, 1933–1963) and Enrico Castellani (Italian, 1930–2017). *Azimuth*, 1959. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

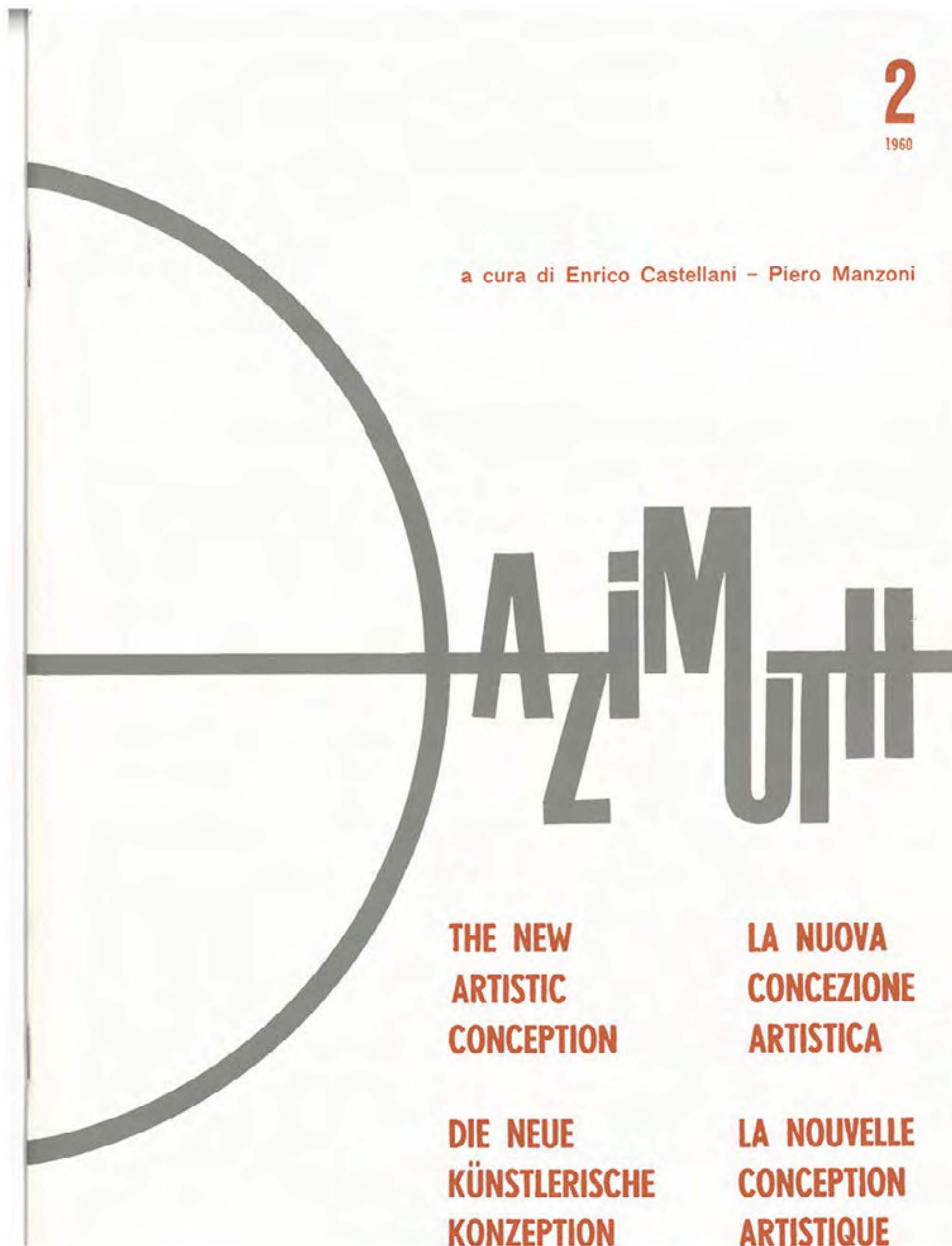


Fig. 4

Piero Manzoni (Italian, 1933–1963) and Enrico Castellani (Italian, 1930–2017). *Azimuth*, 1960. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

here *Azimuth* constructed a parallel world from the time when these works had initially been created, where changing attitudes about art could exist, locating Manzoni and Castellani at the forefront of a shifting conceptual trend. This world was shaped in the pages of *Azimuth*, and the review emerged as the intellectual space where ideas could intermingle and work together to outline shifting attitudes toward artistic production. In being left "open," *Azimuth* created the space in which future collaborators could add to the interpretation of this work, as well as the legacy of its history, in future issues of the review, or elsewhere.

Letters written by Manzoni in the fall of 1959 indicate that he spoke of the magazine and sent issues to those he wished to inform of his project and to bring into his network, thereby spreading the *Azimuth* attitude toward art making to other locations. [15] Although text in this first issue was published in Italian, which limited its accessibility to the international readership that it targeted, the publication of the review still functioned as a tool for further expansion of the international network of contacts Manzoni was building. [16] The mobility that the magazine format provided, in contrast to the exhibition, as well as its temporal endurance and its reproducibility, proved to satisfy the issue of access, so that Manzoni and Castellani could continue to promote their project.

The "communicative function" of *Azimuth* is presented differently in the magazine's second issue (fig. 4). Intended as the catalogue for the Azimut gallery exhibition *La nuova concezione artistica* (The New Artistic Conception), which ran from January 4 to February 1, 1960, the final issue of *Azimuth* was not printed until May 1960 due to logistical and financial problems. The cover of this review communicates a significant amount of information about how this issue compares to the first. Both covers were designed by Cecco Re, in collaboration with Manzoni and Castellani. The first cover has a gray background overlaid with white and blue text — a blue that

15
Correspondence between Manzoni and various interlocutors quoted and reprinted in Francesca Pola, "Piero Manzoni Amidst *Azimuth* and Azimut: An International Creative Adventure," in Pola, Francesca, ed. *Manzoni Azimut*. (London: Gagosian Gallery in collaboration with Fondazione Piero Manzoni), 2011. The magazine was primarily disseminated by Manzoni and Castellani but was likewise circulated by the galleries that are advertised in the back of the issue.

16
As of November 2018, I have yet to uncover what the print run was, for either issue.

may refer to the International Klein Blue monochrome that is replicated in its pages. Date and location are focal points in a way that they are not on the second issue's cover. The year of publication, 1959, is located in the center of the page, placed directly adjacent to the title of the review, marking the moment of the advent of this publication. The other textual information on the cover is the address at the bottom, which is the location of Manzoni's family home in Milan, and the credit line "a cura di Enrico Castellani — Piero Manzoni," a phrase that translates to both "edited by" and "curated by." The use in the Italian language of the same verb, curare, to describe both the processes of editing and curating, is noteworthy here. Both undertakings involve the active selection, organizing, and contextualization of materials for presentation to an audience. In its use here, this linguistic synonymy demonstrates the relatedness of the communicative functions of a visual art magazine and an exhibition of artwork, to which Manzoni's idea of review as exhibition speaks unequivocally.

The cover of the second issue, designed in January 1960, places the date in the upper right-hand corner, under the number 2 indicating the issue number, giving less importance to the date of publication than to the seriality of the publication itself. While the title design remains the same, there is an added subtitle — the title of the exhibition this issue had been meant to accompany. It is printed four times, in four languages — English, Italian, German, and French. This new cover emphasizes the transnational quality of the issue. Although the first edition of *Azimuth* was international by virtue of the fact that many of its contributors were from outside of Italy, the second issue's internationalism is announced through the accessibility of language on its front cover and its dismissal of fixed location as a defining feature of its existence, with an address now located on its back cover.

In the second issue's 27 pages, there are only four texts and eight images of artwork. The announcement for the *New Artistic Conception* exhibition, for which this issue was to serve as a posthumous catalogue, was included, along with a list of the exhibited works. The essays by Castellani and Manzoni,

"Continuità e Nuovo" and "Libera Dimensione," were seen as manifestos describing the new modes of expression they were advocating. Their "New Artistic Conception" called for a different approach to painting and emphasized responsibility on the part of the viewer to participate in the creation of meaning — a direct precedent of Eco's open work. Two other texts, by artist Piene and curator Udo Kultermann, highlighted the parallel ideas these German counterparts were describing. Each essay was translated and printed in the four languages mentioned previously. [17] Unlike in the first issue, where text and image were paired on almost every page, the majority of pages in the second issue are taken up by writing, and many of the artworks are given a full page, without the interference of text. The images depict artworks by the seven artists who were included in the exhibition, save for one by Piene who contributed to the catalogue but did not exhibit a work in the show. Communicative text has been given precedence here over the artwork that was shown in the exhibition. Whereas the prior issue gave a variety of functions to the writing — historical, critical, poetic — in order to present a survey of the contemporary landscape, the texts included here sought to specify the shift in artistic production, with Manzoni and Castellani identifying the artists whose work fits within the more clearly defined "tendency" exhibited in the show. The change in contents of this issue from the first demonstrates how the magazine's editors/curators viewed this review/catalogue differently from the original issue of *Azimuth*. With the opening of the gallery, a physical venue where they could show the visual evidence of their artistic concepts, the review became an intellectual component of Manzoni and Castellani's project. While the first issue presented an interdisciplinary "gallery," so to speak, of text and image that illustrated the scope of the intellectual activity contributing to *Azimuth*, the second primarily served as a written document that articulated the concepts of the artistic works in the exhibition, primarily from the perspective of the artists themselves, rather than critics or poets. This issue was not published in time for the exhibition; the exhibition took place in January and the review was not printed until May. It was created as the enduring counterpart to the transient exhibition, solidifying in its pages the poetics of

17
There is one exception: Udo Kultermann's essay was not translated into English.

the new tendencies proposed by these artists who sought an open and active dialogue with audiences, current and future. Unlike a static work of art depicted in the pages of the journal, *Azimuth* can only be experienced by turning its pages, reading its texts, and moving through the space of the review, exploring it over time. Rather than being able to consume it all at once, one must read the review page by page, much like one would travel through an exhibition, room by room or artwork by artwork. Such a structure allows for a dynamic between author, object, and reader that is "open," in that it allows for participation with and completion of the work through its use by viewers and audiences. Similarly, the open structure of the review enables the viewer to experience, conceptually and physically, a specific moment in time through the arrangement, contextualization, and visual display of works of art and related text. Such a description could also apply to an exhibition of art.

In the introduction to an anthology entitled *Thinking about Exhibitions*, the editors offer the following by way of a definition of the term exhibition: "the medium through which most art becomes known." [18] Manzoni, remarkably, saw *Azimuth* functioning as such a medium, understanding that the essence of both a printed review and a physical exhibition was in their communicative potential. Manzoni's connections to his conceptual predecessors, like Marcel Duchamp and those American and European artists who emerged later on in the 1960s under the label Conceptual Art, have been fittingly historicized. And yet, there is still a glaring gap in his historiography. Several years after *Azimuth*'s final issue and Manzoni's death, artists, critics, and curators in the United States began organizing exhibitions that took the form of publications or printed materials. Examples include Mel Bochner's exhibition *Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art*, presented in 1966 in New York; and the Brian O'Doherty–edited issue 5+6 of *ASPEN* magazine from 1967, among others. What this paper has demonstrated is that years before such projects, Manzoni saw the review *Azimuth* as an open possibility for artistic intervention, as a new avenue for audience participation, and as a medium through which new art could become known.

18
Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson, and Sandy Narine, eds. *Thinking about Exhibitions*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 2.

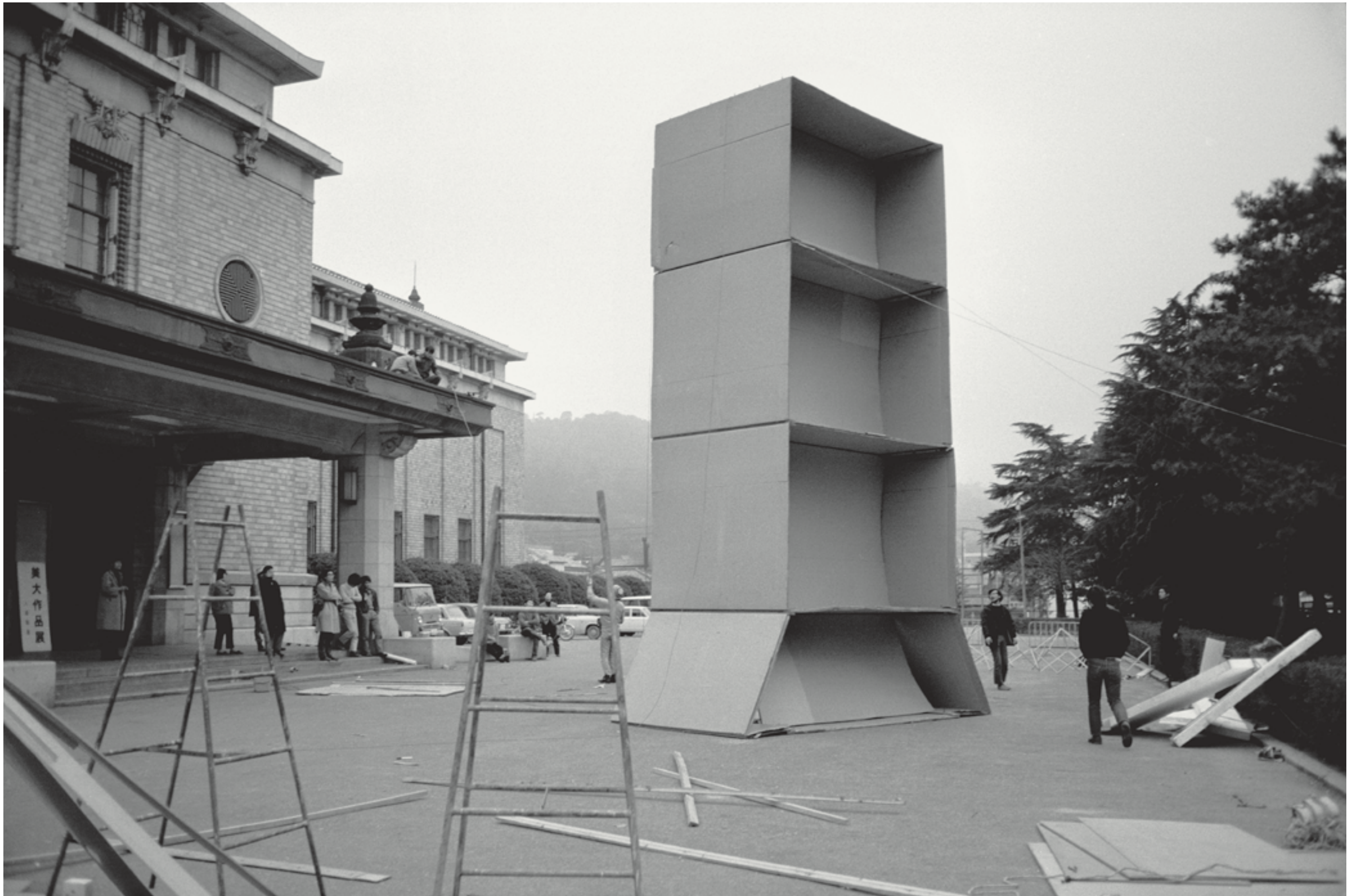


Fig. 1

Hitoshi Nomura (Japanese, born 1945). *Tardiology*, 1968–1969. Corrugated paper. 329 x 124½ x 90 inches (836 x 316 x 229 cm). © Hitoshi Nomura

Time Made Manifest: The Sculpture and Multimedia Practice of Hitoshi Nomura

A. Colin Raymond

From the outset of his career, the Gunma prefecture native Hitoshi Nomura has been consistently fascinated by entropy, decay, sublimation, and most notably the passage of time — forces which, although undeniable, are nonetheless fundamentally transient and immaterial in and of themselves. His method for capturing these transitory states is remarkable for the ingenuity with which he manages to shift the perspective frame of the artwork from that of a traditional art object or sculpture to unique forms of the documentation of natural processes. From photography and sound art to manipulated film techniques, Nomura utilizes ostensibly unnatural, man-made multimedia technology to highlight natural occurrences. His earliest works from the late 1960s and 1970s represent a critical early innovation in both conceptual and earth-based artworks — not only for his elevation of photography as art, but because of the commonly perceived dichotomy between the manufactured media of photography and moving images in contrast with Nomura's thematic focus on time and the processes of nature. In bringing this tension to the forefront of his artistic practice, Nomura's work undermines this false dichotomy, implicitly suggesting that the gap between the technological and the natural is not as wide as one may be prone to think.

Nomura's drive to capture the passage of time and its effects on the material world can be seen as early as 1968 in his capstone graduate artwork *Tardiology*, 1968–69, which he produced during the completion of his coursework at the Kyoto City University of Fine Art (fig. 1). For this conceptual, time-based sculpture, Nomura erected a monolithic freestanding cardboard tower measuring approximately 27 feet high with a flared base just over 10 feet wide. Although lightly reinforced with wiring to prevent the sculpture from toppling over onto passersby, *Tardiology* was also purpose-built to collapse in on itself over time. Nomura's emphasis on the temporal is even embedded within the name of the work itself, which roughly

means “the study of latency, delay, or prolongation.” “Tardi,” in this sense, stems from the Latin for “slow,” and “ology,” as “the study of.” [1] For the *Tardiology* project, Nomura also photographically documented the sculpture’s degradation, which occurred gradually over the course of four days. Once all structural integrity was lost, Nomura discarded the wilted and weathered cardboard; all that remained were his photographs. This is a curious departure from many contemporaneous Euro-American Earthwork artists for whom the detritus of such a performance (if one can call it that) are generally of greater importance than the photographic document, which Nomura deliberately elevates here. Nomura later noted that inspiration for this work came from his observation that the common cardboard packaging protecting his earliest artworks naturally weathered and deformed under their own weight over time. [2]

Although Nomura initially conceived of photography as a mere record or documentation of *Tardiology*’s decay, during the process of developing his film he began to embrace a more holistic vision of the work and its themes. Was the “art” of *Tardiology* the sculpture itself, the event of its collapse, or the photographic record? Increasingly for Nomura, the answer lay in all three of these instances. [3] Beyond this, even, Nomura was increasingly fascinated by the notion of time as both his implicit medium and his subject matter. Instead of creating sculptural works intended to last generations — works in bronze or marble, works of monumental scale — Nomura’s sculptures were short-lived in the extreme; several of which were never even intended to be viewed firsthand by an art-going public. And Nomura’s materials, the photographed subject, became, in essence, the canvas on which Nomura permitted time to manipulate, warp, and destabilize. Time itself, although quite literally insubstantial, is Nomura’s subject and practice.

Nomura’s artworks are resonant with trends in American conceptual and land art of the 1960s and 1970s, most notably in their shared commitments to celebrating ephemerality in

1 Fergus McCaffrey, “An Interview with Hitoshi Nomura: Kyoto, Japan April 20, 2010,” in *Hitoshi Nomura: Early Works Sculpture, Photography, Film, Sound*, eds. Martha Buskirk and Reiko Tomii (New York: McCaffery Fine Art, 2010), 10.

2 Hitoshi Nomura, *Time-Space: 1968 to 1993* (Kyoto: Korinsha Press, 1994), 14.

3 Nomura, 15.

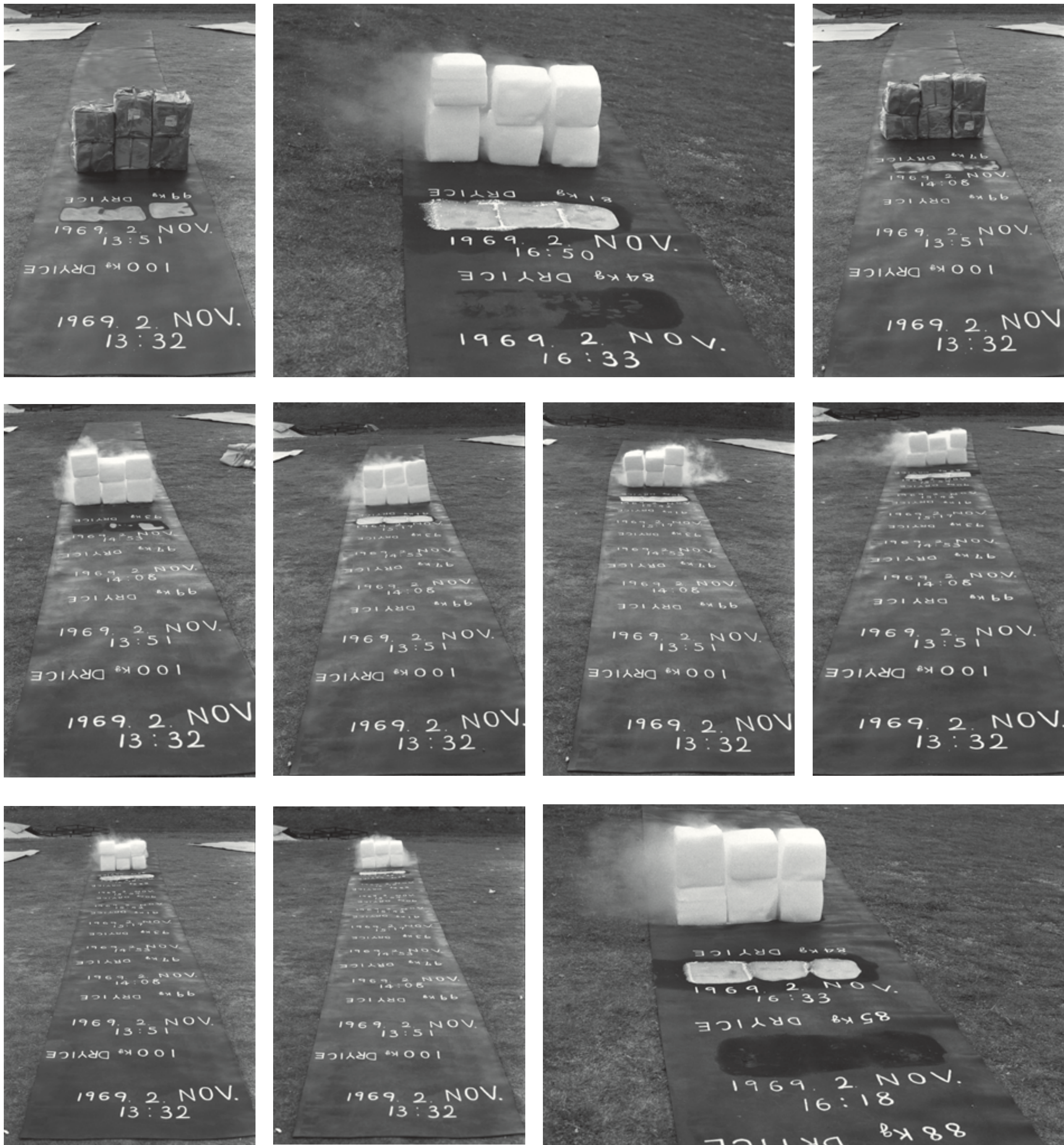


Fig. 2

Hitoshi Nomura (Japanese, born 1945). *Dryice*, November 2, 1969. Dry ice and canvas. 141¾ x 141¾ inches (360 x 360 cm). © Hitoshi Nomura

art and deemphasizing or decentering the hand of the artist. However, unlike later iterations of American land art such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, 1970, Nomura's work is often stridently small-scale and frequently short-lived. Aside from a small handful of works, *Tardiology* notably one of them, the public was commonly not invited to participate or directly observe Nomura's work — nothing remains. Photographic documentation is all that survives, and here again Nomura's elevation of photography within the context of conceptual and land art is remarkable. Even in the events of, for example, Allan Kaprow, Nomura finds a kindred spirit. Kaprow's 1967 happening *Fluids*, in which he and others built a rectangular enclosed wall comprised of bricks of ice, bears some resemblance to Nomura's later fascination with tracing the effects of the physical process of sublimation on dry ice and iodine. For Nomura, however, his artistic practice was no event, and any onlookers were purely coincidental. Any communal experience to be had was one in the gallery. Community, although not altogether disregarded or disdained, plays no key role in Nomura's initial creation.

First executed in October 1969, Nomura's *Dryice* series evolved several times over at least four iterations within the span of six months. For the earliest photographed versions of *Dryice*, Nomura painstakingly arranged, deconstructed, and rearranged blocks of dry ice on large sheets of black corrugated paper (fig. 2). With each new arrangement, Nomura weighed the blocks and noted the exact date and time, writing this data on the corrugated paper prior to photographing. Each photograph in the series explicitly conveys to the viewer the minute changes in the mass of these blocks and the time elapsed between concurrent moves. In one early iteration of the work, Nomura constructed a large rectangular stage from the corrugated paper. Each successive move of the dry ice was placed behind the previous arrangement, receding back and to the right from Nomura's camera lens. Nomura's fascination with sublimation, or the natural process of a material's change

in physical state from a solid directly into a gas, extended to iodine, as well. And like his *Dryice* series, Nomura conducted similar projects with iodine.

However, by the March 1970 version of *Dryice* currently on view in the Mika Yoshitake-curated *Topologies* (The Warehouse, Rachofsky Collection, Dallas), Nomura made the decision to remove all data from his work (fig. 3). Gone are all markings denoting time, date, and weight of these massive blocks of frozen carbon dioxide. Moreover, Nomura decided that, instead of shifting the arrangement of these blocks in a gridlike pattern across a rectangular field, he would create a long runway-like stage. Each new arrangement would plunge further and further into the background of the picture plane. These decisions are both intriguing and perplexing, simultaneously stressing and obfuscating the state of decay of the titular subject matter. The viewer must now imagine or intuit the gradual loss of mass rather than see it made explicit, as it had been previously written by the artist himself.

The removal of data from *Dryice* reveals precisely what it conceals. By obscuring the minute detail of the act of sublimation through which the solid blocks of dry ice changed state from solid to gas (with no intervening stage, and thus no mess), Nomura draws further attention to this very process. Curiosity and imagination are thrust to the forefront as the viewer can no longer rely on the precision and solace of numbers and must instead infer the gradual loss of mass of these blocks as they are transported and rearranged. Again, Nomura adds a layer of complexity to even this task, as the blocks recede into the background of the picture plane they naturally diminish in scale relative to the photograph itself. The distance created confounds our ability to accurately and concretely discern precisely how much weight may be loss in each transfer. This tension only heightens the sensitivity of the viewer to the natural process of sublimation and to an assumed time required to transfer and reassemble. With each pass and

each new photograph, a spectral-like residue remains where the blocks of dry ice once stood. These shadows of earlier arrangements also reinforce the sensation of weight and the loss of mass that must have occurred between movements. Nomura himself revealed that the decision to remove data from his photographs of *Dryice* was to reinforce a more obvious regression into space. [4] Elapsed time, too, is emphasized in a similar fashion.

Nomura's use of photography is of particular note. Even by 1968, Nomura was already connected to artists associated not only with the Gutai group (founded by Jiro Yoshihara in nearby Osaka), but also with a larger intermedia art movement based mostly out of Tokyo and whose numbers included renowned artists like Norio Imai. [5] Intermedia art is a term used to refer to artworks that utilize multiple media simultaneously, including moving images, sound design, and consumer technology, such as cathode ray tube televisions and video cameras. The discourse surrounding intermedia art and the rise of practicing intermedia artists grew to a fever pitch during the mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s and was relatively concurrent with the notion of expanded cinema developed by Stan Vanderbeek and Gene Youngblood. In Japan, some of the earliest references to this latter term can be found in 1969, appearing in music and art magazines such as *Ongaku Geijutsu* and *Bijjtsu Techō*. [6][7] As expanded cinema touted the artist's facility with projecting, literally and figuratively, individual consciousness outside the boundaries of the mind, so too were intermedia artists experimenting with new technology in order to make highly subjective interiority visible to the outside world on a large scale. [8]

Nomura's embrace of the techniques of photography and the tools of filmmaking were, if not prescient, certainly aligned with the cultural zeitgeist. But, for an artist concerned with representations of time and space, photography might initially seem counterintuitive. Rather than emphasizing or recreating

4
The Warehouse, email message to the artist, November 15, 2010.

5
Jung-Yeon Ma, *Nihon media āto shi* (Tokyo: Artes Publishing, 2014), 57.

6
Robert Ashley, "Kurosu Tōku / intāmedia: motto shinakereba ikenai koto ga...," *Ongaku Geijutsu*, April 1969, 24.

7
Toshio Matsumoto, "Vandābīku to sono shūhen—ekusupandiddo shinema no tenbō," *Bijutsu Techō*, June 1969, 70.

8
Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1970), 41.

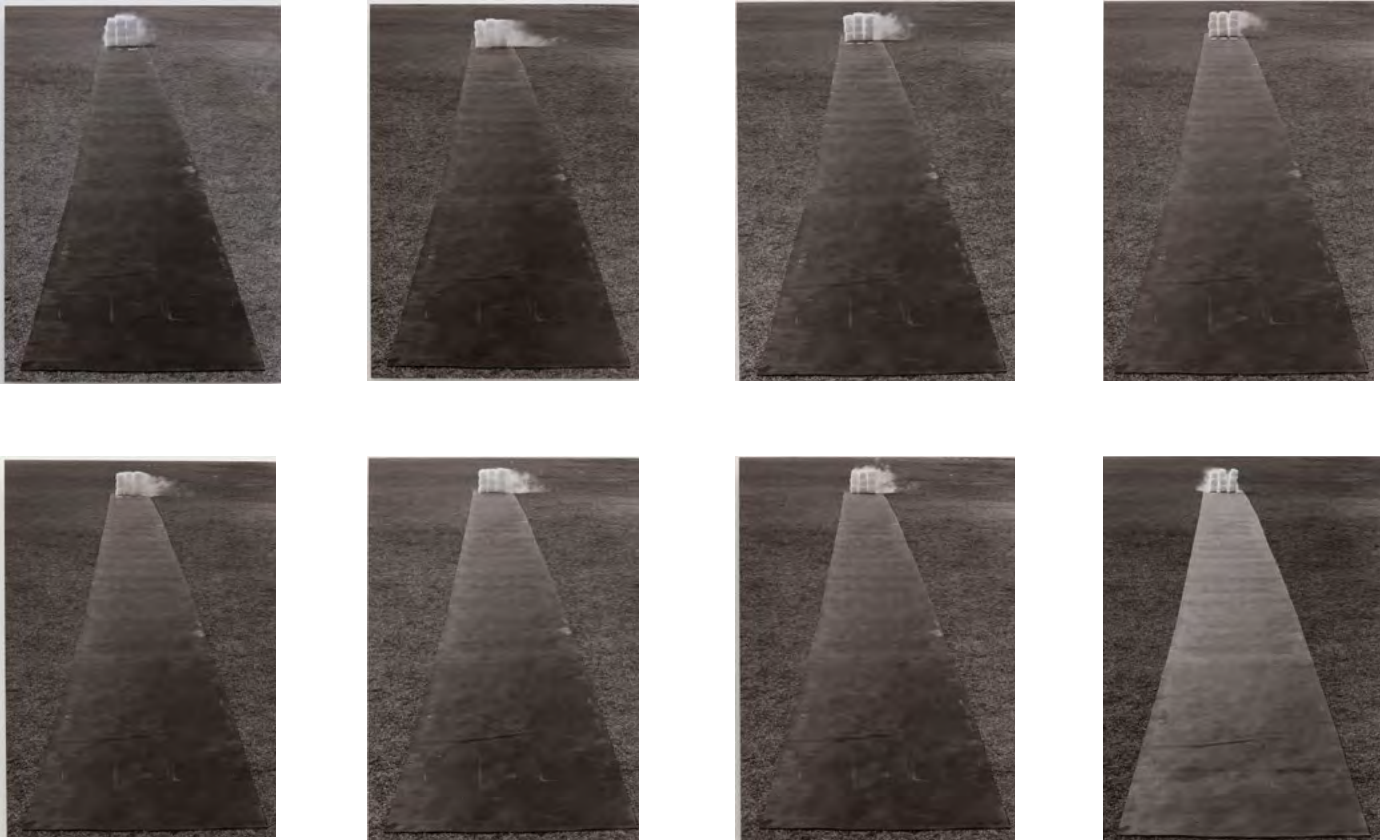


Fig. 3

Hitoshi Nomura (Japanese, born 1945). *Dryice*, March 28, 1970 (printed in 2011). 24 black-and-white photographs. 35¾ x 26¼ inches (90.8 x 66.7 cm) each. Edition 3 of 5. The Rachofsky Collection and the Dallas Museum of Art through the TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art Fund. © Hitoshi Nomura. Photograph by Kevin Todora

movement through time, the photograph captures singular moments, ensconcing them in celluloid. And were Nomura's practice single-shot photography, that may very well have been the case. But here, Nomura relies on the photographic series to reanimate his single, shot-by-shot documentation. As with the current display of *Dryice*, 1970, Nomura's photographic series must be displayed in their entirety to achieve the desired effect of conjuring time and space in static two-dimensional images.

Although photography remains Nomura's primary mode of expression, by 1972 he had acquired a small 16 mm film camera that he used to document mundane, fleeting moments on his walks about town. From these experiments, Nomura created the book series *The Brownian Motion of Eyesight*, 1972–73; its title, a reference to the random movement of atomic particles when suspended in a liquid or gas (fig. 4). Gesturing toward the incorporation of aleatoric elements into the usual deliberation of photographic practice, *The Brownian Motion of Eyesight* was a full 26-volume series in total. However, Nomura's "photographs" were created by counterintuitively snapping a single frame of 16 mm film at a time, taking advantage of the technology available to him in order to recreate the outward semblance of a film. Several reels could be pieced together to recreate Nomura's journey through a small side street or a car trip through the countryside. Just as in *Dryice* several years earlier, these still frames become animated in the mind of the viewer. This engaging zoetropic effect stimulates a sympathetic, narrative-building response in the viewer while emphasizing the passage of both space and time that would be necessary to create such a scenic, pictorial narrative.

Later works of Nomura such as his *Analemma* series shift perspective from the terrestrial to the celestial (fig. 5). The term analemma refers to the ancient European tradition of mapping the course of a celestial body (typically the sun) throughout the sky at various times of the year. [9] Nomura used magnifying Fresnel lenses on his camera to enlarge his subject while

9 Nomura, 145.

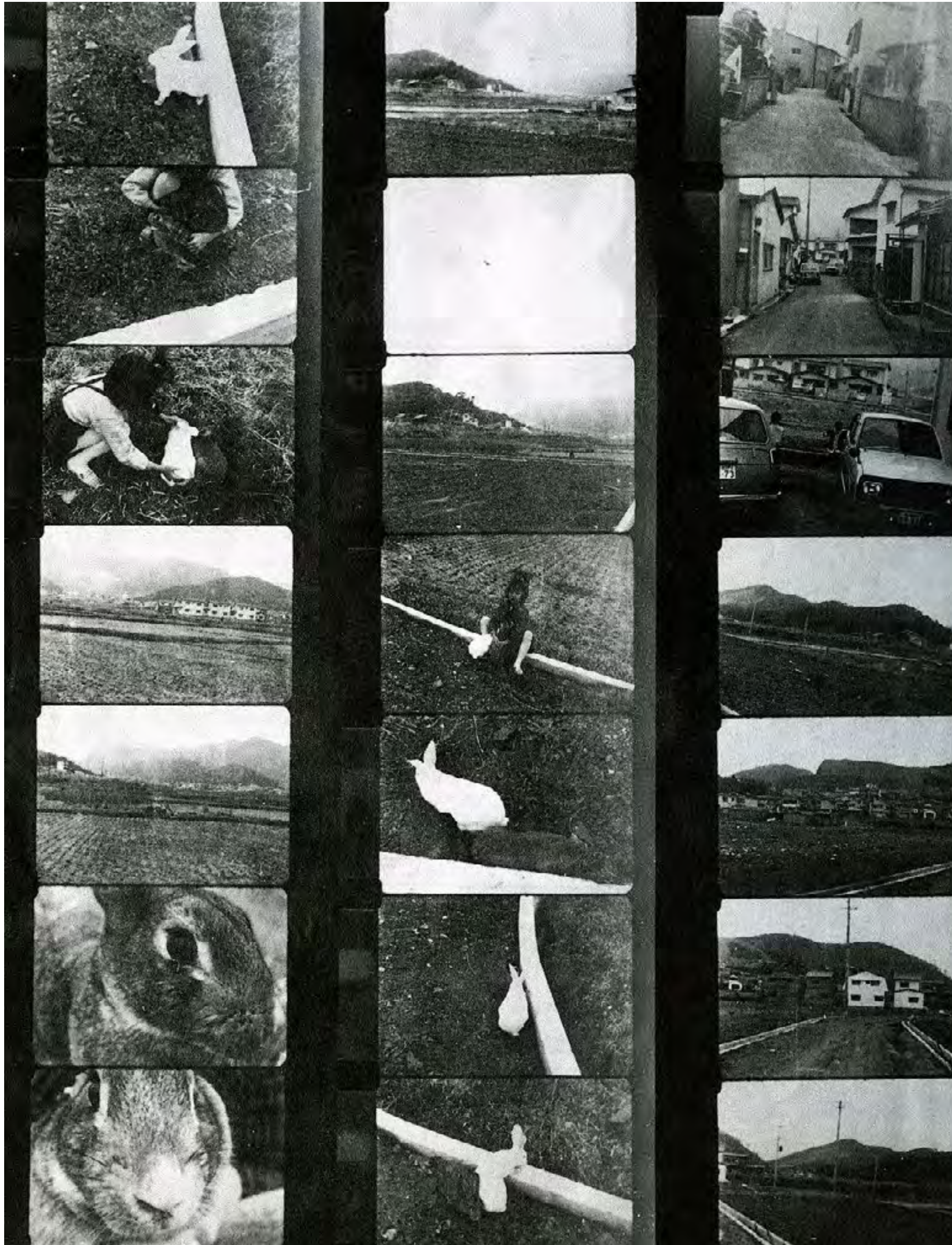


Fig. 4

Hitoshi Nomura (Japanese, born 1945). *The Brownian Motion of Eyesight* (detail), 1972–1973. DVD Converted from 16 mm black-and-white film. Running time: 5 hours.
© Hitoshi Nomura

Fig. 5

Hitoshi Nomura (Japanese, born 1945). *The Analemma ’90: Noon*, 1990. Color photograph. 43¼ x 35⅜ inches (110 x 90 cm). Edition 3 of 5. Private Collection, New York. © Hitoshi Nomura

decreasing the amount of light capable of reaching the film, thus reducing glare and increasing contrast in the final photograph. [10] Taking a single shot of the sun at the same time of day, somewhere between 10 days to two weeks apart, over the course of a single year and then overlaying each exposure, Nomura's *Analemma* series is mesmerizing in the delicacy with which the sun traces its path across the sky. Although, even in this there is some perspectival trickery as the elliptical figure-eight pattern of the sun is produced by the Earth's rotation and the tilt of its axis rather than, of course, any actual movement by the sun itself.

10
Itsuo Sakane, *Media āto sōseiki: kagaku to geijutsu no deai* (Tokyo: Kōsakusha, 2010), 315.

Nomura's body of work is firmly rooted in expressions of natural phenomena, of time and its inevitable passage. Regarding his own work, Nomura states that "by setting my eyes on things that have movement, I thought that I wanted to make conspicuous the characteristics of time and space on equal terms." [11] Distances traveled and the intervening moments become overriding themes of Nomura's body of work, as facilitated by his creative manipulation of technological media. Far from the artificial dichotomy presumed by the nature vs. technology divide, Nomura harnessed new media and reimagined these as a tool for expressing the ephemeral. Sculpture, event, and photography are thus united as singular works of art in the medium of time.

11
Nomura, 141.

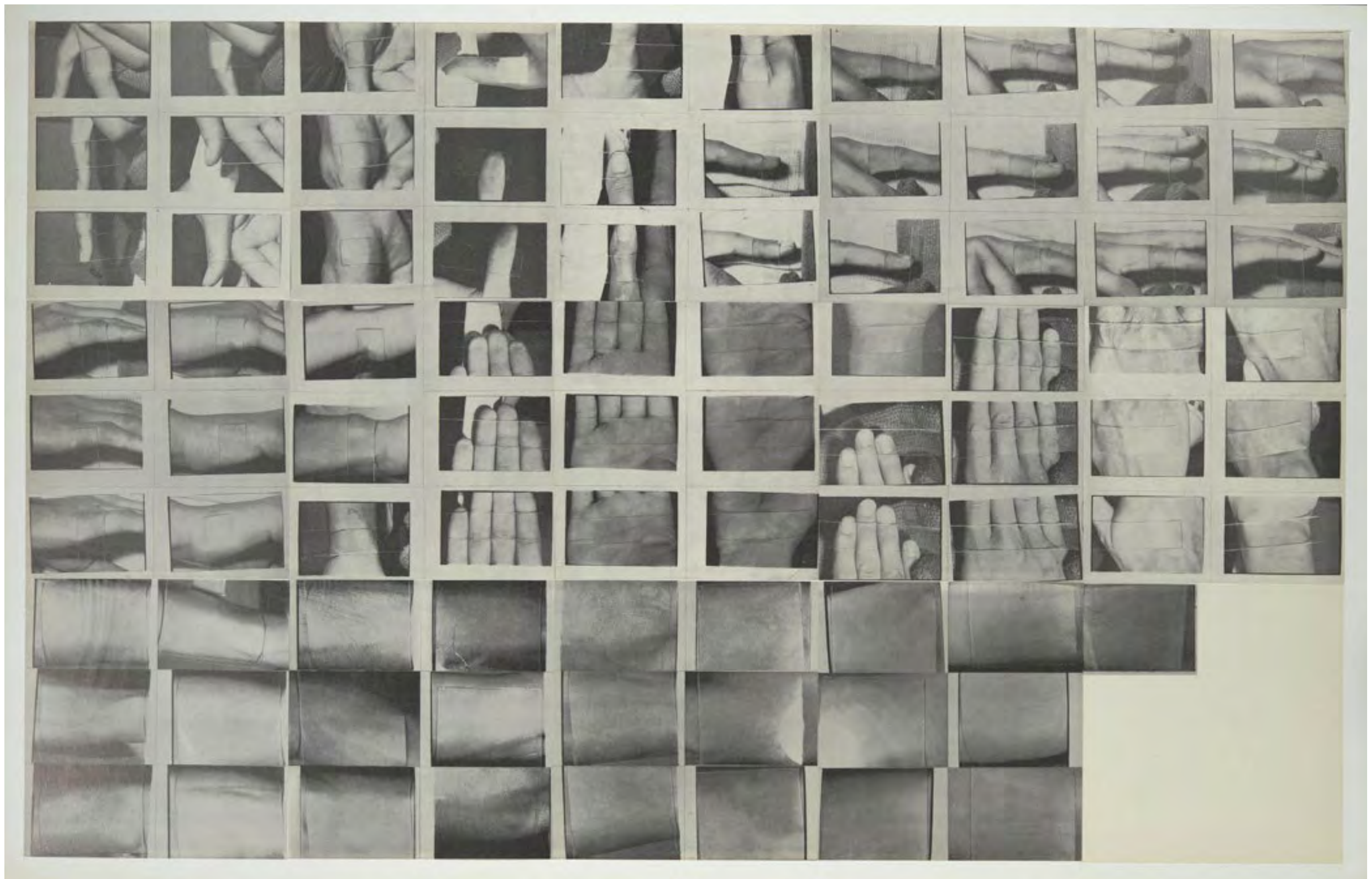


Fig. 1

Giuseppe Penone (Italian, born 1947). *Svolgere la propria pelle (To Unroll One's Skin)* [detail], 1970–1971. 607 photographs, Gelatin silver print, mounted on 7 panels. 27⅜ x 42⅛ inches (69.5 x 107 cm), each. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, Jennifer and Joseph Duke Gift, 2001. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

The Depth of the Surface: Giuseppe Penone's *To Unroll One's Skin**

Francesco Guzzetti

Unfolding through notably diverse iterations throughout the 1970s, the group of works known as *Svolgere la propria pelle* (*To Unroll One's Skin*) marks a turning point in the practice of Italian artist Giuseppe Penone (fig. 1). [1] In collaboration with photographer Claudio Basso, Penone mapped his whole body through 607 photographs of his skin, pressed inch by inch onto a glass slide similar to those used for laboratory analyses. The artist then gathered the pictures in groups of six according to the depicted limbs and mounted the images on panels. [2] The artist assembled the photos in diverse numbers of panels, but the sequence in which the photographs are arranged in groups is fixed, unfolding from the right temple and the forehead on the top left corner of the first panel to the heel and the sole of the foot in the bottom right corner of the last one.

The aim of this essay is to delve into the practice of Penone by investigating such an identifying work as *To Unroll One's Skin* through the theories of perception and media applied to the examination of skin and body in the field of visual studies. Revolving around the elaboration on the concept of reciprocity between substances established through the sense of touch, the artist's work embodies one of the most consistent and impressive investigations into the multifaceted relationships between men and the surrounding environment, which is a defining subject in contemporary art and culture: "The will of an equal relationship between me and the things," the artist wrote in 1999, "is the origin of my work." [4] Such an attitude entails the sense of the participatory and osmotic symbiosis with nature and ultimately resonates with what the anthropologists in the 1950s and 1960s termed as "the primitive thought." [5] In the artist's words, "Our culture has separated one way of thinking from the other, the human being from nature. I don't believe such a clear distinction can be drawn; there is human material and there are materials called stone and wood, which together make up cities, railroads, and streets, riverbeds and mountains. From a cosmic point of view the difference between them is irrelevant." [6] Through

*This essay expands a chapter of the doctoral dissertation which I completed at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa (title: *Senza titolo/Untitled, 1970 c. Torino e il contesto internazionale dopo "Arte Povera,"* advisors: Flavio Fergonzi, Emily Braun, Federica Rovati) and developed in 2018 on the occasion of my lecture as Lauro De Bosis Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University (supervisor: Giuliana Bruno). I would like to express all my gratitude to Giuseppe Penone and his Studio and Archive for the extremely kind consideration and generosity, and the memorable conversations. Special thanks go to the people with whom I discussed my research and who benefited me with insightful remarks and suggestions: Giuliana Bruno, Daniela Lancioni, Philippe-Alain Michaud, Francesco Zucconi. I would like to thank the team of Magazzino Italian Art Foundation for their valuable support.

1
A complete survey of the series has been recently conducted. See Daniela Lancioni, *Svolgere la propria pelle (To Unroll One's Skin)*, in *Giuseppe Penone: The Inner Life of Forms*, ed. Carlos Basualdo (New York: Gagosian, with Rizzoli International Publications, 2018), n.p.

2
The photos were taken by Claudio Basso, who had been already involved in the creation of the photos of *Alpi marittime*, the first important work made by Penone in 1968.

3
The work may count 18 panels, each one displaying six groups of pictures, or even just seven panels, comprising 15 groups of photos each, as in a 1971 version now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/284462).

4
Giuseppe Penone: Scritti 1968–2008, eds. Gianfranco Maraniello and Jonathan Watkins (Bologna-Birmingham, MAMbo-Ikon, 2009), 13.

a thorough examination of the literary and artistic sources to which the artist turned to elaborate his imagery of reciprocity, Emily Braun has recently proposed an insightful and convincing ecocritical interpretation of Penone's practice. [7]

Reassessing Sculpture

By virtue of the thorough analysis of the multifaceted relationship between man and nature, the practice of Penone turns into an extensive investigation of the contact through which two bodies may alter each other. The sense of touch is essentially rooted in the materiality of the surfaces that the artist touches and manipulates. If painting stands in the realm of sight, touch is a primarily sculptural concern, considering that "one of the problems of sculpture is contact, the idea alone isn't enough, it doesn't work, an action is necessary. (...) The action is transmitted through contact." [8]

Mapping his own body, the artist focuses on skin as the sensitive surface that envelops the body and defines its limits. Skin mediates the relations with reality, retaining traces of the textures it encounters as well as leaving its own mark on the surface of the objects it gets in touch with. The theory of "tactile values" has been evoked to explain Penone's concern for the sense of touch. [9] However, the analysis of the artist's approach can expand further than that. Bernard Berenson defined the illusion of the third dimension supplied by the painting of Giotto and, subsequently, Florentine painters of the Renaissance as "tactile values." Endeavoring to give "an abiding impression of artistic reality with only two dimensions," those painters re-created the three dimensions of objects that we experience in the flesh by appealing to our "tactile imagination" and "giving tactile values to retinal impressions," which means "the illusion of being able to touch a figure." [10] To the contrary, Penone conceives his work as sculpture rather than painting, being more interested in enhancing the physical contact between real elements than giving the illusion of it.

5
The connection with the "primitive thought" was investigated in Germano Celant's *Intertwining Metamorphoses*, eds. Baker, Barry, and Stephen Snoddy, *Giuseppe Penone* (Milan, Electa, with Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, and Dcaf Halifax, Halifax), 12–15.

6
Celant, 1989, 19.

7
Emily Braun, *Seeing the Forest for the Trees* (Basualdo, 2018), 116–143.

8
Celant, *Intertwining Metamorphoses*, 17–19.

9
Lancioni, 2018, n.p.

10
Bernard Berenson, *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1959), 40.

The tactile exploration of a surface is ultimately a fundamental process of knowledge and self-consciousness: "The skin is a boundary," wrote Penone in 1970, "a border or dividing point; the last point to be able to add, subtract, divide, multiply, and cancel everything around us, the last point, container and contained, able to envelop physically vast areas. Mobility enables man to contain a large quantity of things within his skin in different, continuous periods with contact, impression, consciousness, discovery, grasp, repulsion... actions which are a continuous development or unrolling of one's skin against other things or on itself." [11] The notions of behavior, gesture, contact, relation, and knowledge interwoven in the artist's thoughts ultimately coalesce into the concept of imprint, the trace of the hand's touch, which is indexical of one's identity. Penone's reflection on the imprint resonates with major issues in visual culture. The first reference that arises vis-à-vis the artist's practice is the examination of the intertwining of sight and touch in establishing human experience and knowledge of the world, elaborated by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. [12] The French philosopher based his theory of perception on the status of body as subject as much as object of human experience. The notion of flesh as the matter of everything corporeal, whose thickness and depth defines the binary relationship of proximity and distance that triggers the physical perceptions of sight and touch, underpins the vocabulary through which Merleau-Ponty examined the process of perception in terms of circularity, reciprocity, reversibility, transfer, or reversal. The relational approach to the phenomenology of experience and consciousness helps to explain the interest that Penone developed around the surface of his own skin around the same time as Merleau-Ponty published his research. [13]

Other sources can be mentioned vis-à-vis the approach of Penone. The artist's attention to contact as the foundation of human self-consciousness is especially interesting. Back in the early 1940s, the philosopher Arthur Bentley had already claimed the central role of skin as a means of knowledge and self-

11
First published as *Note di lavoro*, "Interviste-Note di lavoro-Dichiarazioni," ed. Mirella Bandini, in *NAC-Notiziario Arte Contemporanea*, 3 (1973), 11. The final version was published in Giuseppe Penone, *Rovesciare gli occhi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), 82. The English translation is provided in Maraniello-Watkins 2009, 228.

12
Benjamin Buchloh inquired Penone about Merleau-Ponty's theory, but the artist didn't read it at that time, see Benjamin Buchloh, "Intervista a Giuseppe Penone," in *Giuseppe Penone,* ed. Laurent Busine (Milan: Electa, 2012), 15.

13
Maurice Merlau-Ponty, *The Intertwining – The Chiasm*, in Id., *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 141–143.

awareness. Following his studies in human behavior, Bentley dismissed the metaphysical basis of traditional philosophy and, trying to reconcile it with the methods of science, turned its categories to a "matter-of-fact" examination. In Bentley's words, skin shifts from "an etherialization of anatomical skin," a conceptual division between the categories of "inner" and "outer" that define philosophical and psychological processes, to a place-like device, the "where" in which behaviors affect each other. From the point of view of biological and scientific examination, no organisms stand alone, being instead "organisms-in-environment." Behavior is based on the continuity and fusion between organisms and environments: "To assign knowledges and other behaviors to regions within superfices is a step much like that which mathematicians took when they introduced continuity." [14] Skin acts as a "behavioral superfice;" "a type of superfice-bounded area," Bentley wrote, "within which 'a knowledge' can be located, if it is to be viewed in skin-traversing rather than in skin-dismembered form." [15] Such a description of skin in terms of space compares with Penone's sculptural sense of the fluid relationships established through contact. By unfolding or "unrolling" it, the artist expands the "transitional status" of skin further than the notion of a behavioral surface, as well as the notion of contact further than the mere physicality of the tactile perception.

Each version of *To Unroll One's Skin* marks a step in the exploration of the status of "in-between-ness" of skin as the physical membrane, the interface separating as much as connecting the human body and the surrounding environment. The first two versions of the work were presented in major group exhibitions in Rome and Munich in late 1971. [16] Prior to that, *To Unroll One's Skin* circulated as an artist's book, conceived by the artist in collaboration with the graphic designer Franco Mello and published by the Galleria Sperone in Turin, the major gallery promoting Arte Povera. A special edition of 25 copies is comprised of a slipcase containing the book and a suite of the pictures of the artist's skin printed on loose sheets of chine-

14
Arthur F. Bentley, "The Human Skin: Philosophy's Last Line of Defense," in *Philosophy of Science*, 8, 1 (1941), 17.

15
Ivi, 19.

16
Informazioni sulla presenza italiana, ed. Achille Bonito Oliva (Rome: Incontri Internazionali d'Arte, 1972), n.p. (see ed Daniela Lancioni, *Anni 70: Arte a Roma* (Rome: Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 2013), tav. 95–96, 318); ed. Germano Celant, *Arte Povera. 13 italienische Künstlers: Dokumentation und Neue Werke* (Munich, A1 Informationen Verlagsgesellschaft, 1971), n.p.

collé paper. [17] The photographs, arranged in groups of six per page, flow from one side of the page to the other. The shift from a section of pictures depicting one limb of the body to another is marked by blank spaces left in between. The version of *To Unroll One's Skin* held at The Rachofsky Collection is strictly related to the book, as the artist made it by assembling the zincographic copper plates that he had originally used to print both the illustrations of the book and the loose sheets accompanying it (fig. 2). The different shades of the plates, either yellowish or red-brownish, depend on the different acids and mixtures used to coat the plates. By capturing any detail of the skin, then grouping the photos according to the limbs they depict and finally mounting them in sequence, the artist deconstructed and reconstructed a sort of map of his body. The flat representation of the body resembles the development of a solid, in which all the surfaces of the volume unfold — or, more properly, unroll — on a plane. Anne Rorimer has effectively described how the individual views of the body in *To Unroll One's Skin* "thematically approach the dividing line between the corporeal and the real. At the nexus between art and life, sectional images of the body's outer covering that have been mechanically reproduced on a flat surface, allow for the convergence of representational planarity and sculptural convexity." [18] Further than that, Penone used photography to achieve an image as objective as possible, a veritable imprint of the real. Drawing on André Bazin's theory of the indexicality of the photograph and the objective vision of photography and film, the use of the glass slide on which each portion of the body is pressed, combined with the recording process of photograph, is intended to equal the real object and its image: "I photographed all the skin of my body as a whole," the artist said, presenting the book of *To Unroll One's Skin* in 1973, "using a glass slide to flatten its area, so that in each point the images coincide exactly with the surface of each page." [19]

17
Giuseppe Penone, *Svolgere la propria pelle*, 1970 (Turin: Sperone Editore, 1971).

18
Anne Rorimer, *Giuseppe Penone: Bringing Sculpture to Life/Bringing Life to Sculpture*, ed. Roland Mönig, *Giuseppe Penone* (Saarbrücken: Stiftung Saarländischer Kulturbesitz, Saarlandmuseum, 2019), 16.

19
Giuseppe Penone, "Intervista con Mirella Bandini," *Data*, 3, 7/8 (1973), 89. My translation. See also the artist's note reprinted and translated in Maraniello-Watkins 2009, 206. On Bazin's theory, see André Bazin, "Ontologie de l'image photographique," in *Les problèmes de la peinture*, ed. Gaston Diehl, (Lyon : Confluences, 1945), 405–411.

Fig. 2

Giuseppe Penone (Italian, born 1947). *Svolgere la propria pelle (To Unroll One's Skin)*, 1970. Copper and wood. 3 panels: 35¼ x 58¾ x 1⅞ inches (89.5 x 149.2 x 4.8 cm) each; 1 panel: 26½ x 58¾ x 1⅞ inches (67.3 x 149.2 x 4.8 cm). The Rachofsky Collection. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Photograph by Kevin Todora

Haptic Media

The artist was engaged in the production of the book of *To Unroll One's Skin*, from the shooting to the editing and montage of the images into the final arrangement. Like a filmstrip, the book is structured around a sequence of takes, printed with no margins, composing an uninterrupted flow through which skin unfolds picture by picture, inch by inch, still by still, while the reader/viewer flips the pages. The verb *svolgere*, to unroll, references a filmic attitude in capturing endless development of a whole body, unfolding through time as in a film sequence. The book of *To Unroll One's Skin* stems from a process of remediation, which means, according to Jay David Bolter's and Richard Grusin's theory, the "complex kind of borrowing in which one medium is itself incorporated or represented in another medium." [20]

20
Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 45.

Multiple aspects of photography as a recording medium are at stake in the artist's book as much as in the piece composed of the original copper plates used for it, showing the importance assigned by Penone to that medium in the elaboration of his vision. The artist thoroughly focused and explored the tenets of image in the early 1970s and was especially fascinated by the sense of objectivity traditionally associated with photography. The production of photographs at that moment of the artist's career was meant to avoid the duality separating the actual creation of work of art and its documentation through recording media as two distinct, autonomous moments. [21] Building upon the indexical status of the imprint, the artist made works in which the consequential actions of leaving imprints by touching surfaces and recording the contact through the mechanical process of photographic reproduction coincided. Photography acts as a cast of reality in the artist's vision. The sculptural dimension of the artist's practice resided in the tactile coincidence of reality and representation; significantly, the artist often molds sculptures around the cast of parts of his own body, such as the mouth or the eyelid.

21
See the note written in 1972, published in Maraniello-Watkins 2009, 95.

The artist's use of photography resonates with the theory of haptic visuality. Expanding on the theory of Gilles Deleuze, scholars have frequently articulated the term as an eminently visual concept vis-à-vis the analysis of media. The definition of "close image" produced by an almost tactile vision — as proposed by Adolf von Hildebrand in the late 19th century, which would later be articulated as haptic by the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl — was especially palpable in relation to the experience of a viewer who stands near the object. [22] The proximity facilitates the appreciation of details and requires that the viewer moves around the object perceived. The full apprehension of the object is then achieved by collecting the fragmentary images retained in the observation process and mounting them into a sequence. Among all the media, the sense of motion, proximity, fragmentation, and montage of haptic visuality resonates strongly with film. Based on the close inspection of the artist's own body and the exposure of skin as a tactile surface, Penone's *To Unroll One's Skin* fully embraces the sense of haptic vision and evokes a filmic practice. In her thorough analysis of film and tactility, scholar Laura Marks has described the process of haptic visuality in a way that applies to Penone's work, too:

> ...a film or video (or painting or photograph) may offer haptic *images*, while the term haptic *visuality* emphasizes the viewer's inclination to perceive them. (...) a haptic work may create an image of such detail, sometimes through miniaturism, that it evades a distanced view, instead pulling the viewer in close. Such images offer such a proliferation of figures that the viewer perceives the texture as much as the objects imaged. While optical perception privileges the representational power of the image, haptic perception privileges the material presence of the image. Drawing from other forms of sense experience, primarily touch and kinesthetics, haptic visuality involves the body more than is the case with optical visuality. Touch is a sense located on the surface of the body: thinking of cinema as haptic is

22
On the history of the development of haptic vision, see Andrea Pinotti and Antonio Somaini, *Cultura visuale: Immagini Sguardi Media Dispositivi* (Turin: Einaudi, 2016); Andrea Pinotti, "Guardare o toccare? Un'incertezza herderiana," in *Aisthesis*, 2 (1), (2009), 177–191.

only a step toward considering the ways cinema appeals to the body as a whole. [23]

23

Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham–London: Duke University Press, 2000), 162–163.

The texture of the image is in the foreground in haptic visuality, as Marks describes it. The term "texture" had been already deployed by Merleau-Ponty to define flesh as the "intercorporeal" entity of body, "the coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body, of the tangible upon the touching body." [24] As opposed to the sense of opacity, gravity, chaos, and inertia conveyed by the word "matter," the notion of "texture" enhances the dual status of flesh as what determines as much is inscribed within the experience of the world through the intertwining of vision and touch, perception, and consciousness. [25] Building upon Merleau-Ponty's intuition, Giuliana Bruno has thoroughly examined the notion of texture as the material quality of the surface composing the "intertextural" panorama of our experience and knowledge of the world. Defining the materiality of surfaces as elements enveloping, partitioning, and mediating objects and bodies, the notion of texture is essentially related to the one of depth. At the same time, texture and haptic vision are intertwined to the extent that closeness is required to perceive the texture of the image, as effectively demonstrated by Bruno. The haptic vision encapsulated in *To Unroll One's Skin* reveals what Bruno defines as the "texturality" of the image by focusing on multiple layers of surfaces. [26] By the act of pressing the glass slide, Penone flattens the round volumes of his body and turns them into a surface that can be aptly rendered on the two-dimensional paper. The transparent surface of the slide measures the depth of the images and becomes the space where the reciprocity of the contact visualized by the camera takes place. As the membrane connecting the subject and object of haptic vision, the glass slide overlapped to the skin operates as a three-dimensional space insofar as it requires a certain degree of depth. Expanding on the spatial thinking engaged with the notion of "art architecture" elaborated by August Schmarsow in response to Riegl's theory of hapticity,

24

Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 146.

25

Ibid.

26

Giuliana Bruno, *Surface* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 87–88, 124. In the first chapter of the book, Bruno extensively argued the point of the connection between surface, materiality, and the shift from optic to haptic visuality as the defining trait of our experience of the world (Ivi, 18–22).

Bruno has captured the spatial extension of haptic vision, which helps ground the foundation of Penone's "relational aesthetics" in the reciprocity of contact as the act measuring distance and proximity between bodies:

> The modern aesthetic rested on the understanding that a place, like an art object, cannot be separated from the viewer: the aesthetic experience is haptic when it tangibly establishes a close, transient relationship between the work of art and its beholder. In this sense the term haptic, as we have insisted, refers to more than just touch, for it comprises the complexity of how we come into contact with things. As a surface extension of the skin, then, the haptic engages that reciprocal contact between the world and us that "art architecture" "embodies." [27]

27
Ivi, 194.

Through the layers of the photographic lens and the glass slide, Penone renders the intermediary condition of skin and contact. Such a treatment of skin as the space for touching and being touched evokes the theory of French philosopher Michel Serres, revolving around the status of the human body as a milieu, a place where multiple encounters happen. [28] Expanding beyond the concept of skin as medium in the strict sense and focusing on skin as a place, an environment, through which bodies and senses mingle, Serres' examination has reenacted the discussion on haptic vision and contact surfaces. Some versions of *To Unroll One's Skin* point especially to that mingling of senses examined by Serres. On the occasion of the fifth edition of Documenta in 1972, Penone printed the photos of his body on the emulsified glass plates of a window of the building of the Fredericianum. As the artist explained in 1973 in regard to that specific version of the work, the printed image acts as a slide, requiring the action of light piercing the transparent glass to be visible. [29] By connecting light to the skin unfolding through the photos, the sense of sight and the sense of touch mingle again, and the image generated by light becomes part of the atmosphere, of the

28
Steven Connor, *The Book of Skin* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 27. Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (London-New York: Continuum, 2008), originally published as *Le Cinq Sens* (Paris, 1985), 22.

29
Penone, 1973, 89.

environment — a place, rather than a flat surface. As the artist has said, “image covers a specific space.”

The artist has often emphasized the similarities between the tactile and tangible quality of skin and the action of light, air, or water in shaping our sensations. [30] The environmental extension of the surface of the skin, embracing space and atmosphere, is at stake in each version of *To Unroll One’s Skin*. On the other hand, skin retains its own density, its thickness: as long as it bears a material presence, skin is able to leave its mark on the surfaces it touches. Skin alters the objects and the surrounding environment, yet it’s affected by the burden of environmental forces and physical conditions. As far as materiality is considered, skin is a twofold medium. It’s deep and dense at the same time, a milieu as much as an infrastructural medium. Media historian and theorist John Durham Peters termed the human body as the essential infrastructural medium and considered bodily materiality as one of the elements in the expanded field on which our experience of the world is based. [31] Peters’ notion of elements as media, bearing a specific degree of environmental materiality, resonates with Merleau-Ponty’s notion of flesh as an element and applies to Penone’s investigation of skin. [32] The manifold implications of the multiple variants of *To Unroll One’s Skin* bear witness to the artist’s interest in the materiality of the skin as equal to the materiality of the image as a surface. Looking at each version of the work, we are exposed to the depth and thickness of skin as an elemental surface, meaning a surface that unfolds and connects, whose expansion can be hardly defined other than as an element determining as much as composing the environment as we perceive and know it.

30
Giuseppe Penone, 1970, published and translated in Maraniello-Watkins, 2009, 139.

31
John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Towards a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (London-Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 266–273.

32
Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 147.

International Connections

Striving to reassess and expand the tenets of sculpture, Penone explored different media to realize and present his work, combining photographs, books, film, even architecture

(such as the installation of *To Unroll One's Skin* at Documenta in 1972). Such an attitude resonates with the fluidity of media spreading at the turn of the 1960s: "the intermedia network of cinema, television, radio, magazines, books, and newspapers," the media theorist Gene Youngblood famously wrote in 1970, "*is* our environment, a service environment that carries the messages of the social organism. It establishes meaning in life, creates mediating channels between man and man, man and society." [33]

33

Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1970), 54.

As opposed to the sense of dematerialization conveyed by the most rigorous conceptual art, many artists turned their practice to the investigation of the body and bodily features at the turn of the 1960s. By briefly comparing the work of Penone to the work of international artists at that time, I would like to highlight different practices revolving around the exploration of the materiality of the surface of the image through the materiality of the human body and skin. Among those artists, Bruce Nauman focused especially on his body as a performing and figurative device. The international exposure of the artistic context in the city of Turin, thanks to the activity of galleries like Galleria Sperone, allowed artists like Penone to get acquainted with the practice of Nauman, whose work, as said by the Italian artist, was especially interesting for its use of the human body (fig. 3). [34] Nauman has always expressed a sort of obsession for the sculptural implications of gestures, pose, and shape of his body. Works like *From Mouth to Hand*, 1967, expose fragments of body in which the material surface of cloth and wax replicates rather literally the organic texture of skin as an enveloping surface. Like Penone, Nauman has strived to expand the field of sculpture and reassess its tenets by using camera-based media. The filmic structure through which Penone partitioned and reassembled his own body in the book of *To Unroll One's Skin* especially resonates with films recorded by Nauman, similarly based on close-up views of the artist's body. By fragmenting the body and disentangling it from any expressive or psychological content, Nauman objectified it.

34

Buchloh, 2012, 21. On Galleria Sperone, see *Gian Enzo Sperone: Torino Roma New York: 35 anni di mostre tra Europa e America*, ed. Anna Minola et al. (Turin: Hopefulmonster, 2000).

Fig. 3

Bruce Nauman (American, born 1941). *Thighing (Blue)*, 1967. 16mm film transferred to video (color, sound). 4:36 min. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from Beth Rudin DeWoody in memory of Stephen Bosniak.
© 2022 Bruce Nauman / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The gestural repetitiveness and close-up views of the artist's films can be aligned with Penone's tactile exploration of the physicality of the body as a perceptive medium. Turning the camera toward the body, either their own or someone else's, artists seemed to privilege film among all media to "remediate" sculpture and enhance haptic vision as opposed to the tradition of optical perception on one hand, and the immaterial and rational systems of conceptual art on the other. Films like Dennis Oppenheim's *Arm and Wire* and Richard Serra's *Hand Catching Lead* focus on the coincidence of vision and touch and the reciprocity of the tactile and tangible surface of skin by showing a portion of their bodies in contact with other materials. [35] The use of the medium of film to bring the body back to the attention of contemporary art paved the way to the resurging interest in human presence and figuration in the following decades. Known for his photorealistic portraits, Chuck Close in 1970 shot a film titled *Bob*, which resonates with his paintings. The artist filmed the model of one of his signature portraits, Bob, and captured close-up details of the skin of his face and neck. By focusing on tiny fragments, Close also objectified the model and rendered the epidermal surface of his body through a sequence of haptic views. [36]

The human body, tactility, and skin have always been at the core of some of the most relevant artistic and cultural traditions way beyond Western culture and trans-Atlantic connections. The commonalities shared by the Japanese movement of Mono-ha and tendencies like Arte Povera and post-Minimalism were already clear in 1970, as the famous edition of the Tokyo Biennial that year demonstrated by reuniting American, Italian, and Japanese artists to make site-specific installations. Recent scholarship and exhibitions have also hinted at a few comparisons; nevertheless, a comprehensive and comparative survey of Arte Povera and Mono-ha is still missing. [37] As far as the status of body is considered, special affinities emerge by hinting at a comparison between the words of Penone and the essays by artists affiliated with

35
Those films were also screened during *Conceptual Art Arte Povera Land Art*, the exhibition curated by Germano Celant at the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Turin from June 12 to July 12, 1970, which included a section devoted to artists' films and videos. *Conceptual Art Arte Povera Land Art*, ed. Germano Celant, (Turin: Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, 1970), n.p.

36
I thank Philippe-Alain Michaud for bringing Chuck Close's film to my attention.

37
Mika Yoshitake's scholarship is especially valuable to understand Mono-ha and the connections with new avant-garde in Western countries. See especially *Requiem of the Sun: The Art of Mono-Ha*, ed. Mika Yoshitake, (Los Angeles: Blum & Poe, 2012). Yoshitake has curated important exhibitions gathering works of Arte Povera, post-Minimalism and Mono-ha, such as the installation *Topologies* at The Warehouse of The Rachofsky Collection in Dallas, Texas, (May 14, 2018–April 13, 2019). Among

Mono-ha. For instance, leading figure Lee Ufan published a fundamental essay in 1970, significantly titled *In Search of Encounter*, in which he expressed full awareness of the crisis of the idealistic model in conceiving and solving the soul/body and man/world problem and his endeavor to investigate the equality of all beings. The way in which the artist stressed the necessity of encounters between things as acts of mediation sounds familiar vis-à-vis the notion of contact as elaborated by Penone. [38] With respect to the artistic practice, the work of another leading Japanese artist, Koji Enokura, shows affinities with the interests of Penone. Enokura's series of works titled *Symptom* is comprised of visceral interventions into space, in which the hierarchy of relations of the elements composing the action and its recording is subverted in favor of the expression of mutual interconnectedness (fig. 4). The series demonstrates that Enokura's use of the photographic medium expands much further than the mere recording process. A group of close-up views of human skin shot around 1975 especially highlights the deep sense of relatedness inspiring the artist's investigation of the human condition. Exposing the texture of skin, these pictures look like detailed maps in which the depth and the density of skin visibly entangle. In his crucial essay "Origins of Creation," published in the January 1972 issue of the magazine *Mizue*, Enokura significantly envisions issues of haptic visuality in examining the role of contact, skin, and bodies to frame within the process of artistic creation: "When we perceive things we encounter in everyday life, we experience them as we brush against the everyday that is the wholeness of real life [...]. The everyday slips into the beat of our physical bodies and it is released outside with the beat of the body. [There is] that faint feel of the skin-like membrane that exists between our existence and the everyday world." [39] The sense of "unindifferentiated permeability between things" [40] and the special attention to the surface of things are the defining themes in Enokura's photographs. In his last solo exhibition in 1994, the artist presented a series of photographs titled *STORY & MEMORY*, including a set of close-up views of

other installations, a major room in the installation of the François Pinault Collection at Punta della Dogana in Venice titled *Prima Materia* (May 30, 2013–February 15, 2015) had already turned the spotlight on the connections between Arte Povera and Mono-ha.

38

Lee Ufan, "In Search of Encounter: The Sources of Contemporary Art," in *From Postwar to Postmodern: Art in Japan 1945–1989. Primary Documents*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 218–222.

39

Koji Enokura, "Origins of Creation," in *Requiem for the Sun: The Art of Mono-ha*, ed. Mika Yoshitake, (Los Angeles: Blum & Poe, 2012), 225.

40

S. Groom, "Encountering Mono-ha," in eds. Tabata Yukihito and Huang Du, *What is Mono-ha?*, (Tokyo: TBAP, 2007), 22–23.

Fig. 4

Koji Enokura (Japanese, 1942–1995). *Collection for Symptom No. 76 – SKIN*, 1975. Gelatin silver print (toning by sepia), wood. 17½ x 61⁷⁄₁₆ inches (44.5 x 156 cm). The National Museum of Art, Osaka. © Michiyo Enokura

a body. They show a clear lack of composition, as if to suggest that the artist is neither objectifying nor ordering any physical appearance through the medium, but on the contrary stating his position as a thing in a hierarchy-less world of things.

Within the broader network of references outlined so far, the works of the series *To Unroll One's Skin* address defining concerns in visual culture and theory of the 1970s that are still relevant today. The comparison with similar investigations of skin by international artists of the same generation shows the consistency of the exploration of the materiality of the surface conducted by the artists of the new avant-garde tendencies. Through their work, artists questioned the canonized theories on human perception and the relationship with the world, and finally reassessed the artistic practice by examining the ultimate degree of materiality unfolding through the thin surface of human skin. The work of Penone resembles a stratigraphic survey through which the artist undermines the multiple physical and philosophical layers within the skin's surface. As the artist wrote in a note in 1971:

> Enveloping, containing, filling, adhering, adapting, settling down, flowing...are specific actions of fluids but they are also conditions necessary for the tactile interpretation of the environment. Other boundaries, limits, other skins are created on the model of the skin that protects and delimits the individual, the transformism of man is created. The ability to identify with or have yourself be identified with the forms and objects that surround us is one of the reasons for the work of art. The work of art is capable of identifying, of encapsulating the values of an individual and indirectly of the society in which the individual participates. The culture of a people is a skin. Entering another's skin; entering another's house; a building, architecture, is identifying and becoming part of the culture, of the society that has built it. The process is more obvious if you enter an archaeological space or if you visit a place of intense cultural value, but it also happens as soon as you cross a neighbour's threshold. [41]

41

Penone, 1971, in Maraniello-Watkins, 2009, 229.

Fig. 1

Topologies, The Warehouse, Dallas. Installation view, May 14, 2018 - April 15, 2019. Photograph by Kevin Todora

Keynote Address

Curating Global Art History: Topologies of Display

Ming Tiampo

This text has been adapted from the transcript of Dr. Ming Tiampo's keynote address presented at The Warehouse on November 9, 2018.

Thank you, Caitlin. And thank you so much to Howard, Cindy, Thomas, Mika — the whole family here at The Rachofsky House and The Warehouse — for inviting me here today. It's such a pleasure to be back here, especially given the long and visionary history that you have in transnational curating, which is something that's of great interest to me, and that I'll be thinking about today in the lecture.

Thank you also to the graduate students who have presented here today. Your papers were really the beginnings of a long conversation that I'm sure we'll be pursuing again in the future as we discover together new topologies of meaning and transnational fields between Italy and Japan. So, the conversations that we're having here today represent new perspectives in transnational art history.

The first time I came here to The Warehouse, I believe it was in 2013 for *Parallel Views*, I recall that we were in an advocacy phase. And at that time, the notion that the intertwined histories of Italy and Japan could actually be a productive site of investigation was still very emergent. This, despite early and significant interactions such as this 1959 issue of the Turinese Notizie that was dedicated to the Gutai group, and the activities of Michelle Tapié's ICAR, or the International Centre for Aesthetic Research, as well as the significant presence of the Sogetsu Ikebana School in Turin after the founder Teshigahara Sofu visited in 1960 and presented his work at the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna in Turin.

While our work in transnational art history seems to be gaining some traction, for example, with the *Il Giappone a Torino* exhibition at the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna just a short time ago, we were still just calling for transnational research and curating, arguing against national models of art history that had persisted since the discipline's inception in the 18th century and advocating for art historical subfields that had long been marginalized by dominant Eurocentric paradigms.

Indeed, it was not long ago, in 2013, that the Museum of Modern Art's *Inventing Abstraction* show — which sought to open up the story of Abstraction — included not one single artist from outside the West and only elaborated slightly upon the structures that Alfred Barr had set out in 1936, even borrowing from his graphic design.

Furthermore, it is important to recall that a mere 15 years ago, the 20th century was considered the exclusive preserve of metropolitan Europe and North America. To quote the 2004 *Art Since 1900*, still the discipline's most important articulation of a pedagogical paradigm for the 20th century and still one of the most commonly used textbooks at the university levels, non-Western modernisms registered as no more than a "dissemination of modernist art through the media and its reinterpretation by artists outside the United States and Europe."

Within the past decade, museums have been rapidly expanding their collections in non-Western modernisms, reinstalling permanent collection exhibitions and staging major monographic shows of artists from the former East and global South. The Academy has also been extremely active in what was known as world art history, with two journals being launched — *World Art* and *Art Margins* — and is gradually shifting toward global art history with many transnational and transcultural dissertations, articles, and monographs being written, and academic positions in global modernisms multiplying.

At major international museums, the cultural and geographical origins of the artists being given solo shows has become increasingly diverse, and exhibitions with transnational, transcultural, and global scopes have become more common. At MoMA, we see Charles White from 2018, Yoko Ono's show from 2015, and Lygia Clark from 2014. Tate Modern had Kim Lim in 2020, Wifredo Lam with *Soul of a Nation* in 2017, Bhupen Khakhar in 2016, and Li Yuan-Chia in 2014. Tate Britain exhibited Anwar Shemza in 2016 and *Spaces of Black Modernism London*

1919–1939 in 2014. That's from Tate Britain; even Tate Britain is becoming more transnational. And of course, there are also more transnational exhibitions, like *The World Goes Pop* and the Walker Art Center's *International Pop* exhibition as well.

Collecting practices at these large institutions have also been increasingly international and have been supported by research centers that scour the globe for new directions for both special exhibitions and collections. And here I'm showing you the 2009 C-MAP research center at MoMA, the global research center for Contemporary and Modern Art Perspectives.

In 2012, Tate Modern founded the Tate Research Centre: Asia, which became the Hyundai Tate Research Centre: Transnational in 2021. In 2013, Guggenheim launched the UBS MAP Global Art Initiative, and also in 2013, the Stedelijk kicked off its Global Collaborations research project.

Despite all of the research, collecting, and exhibitions, however, institutions are only now beginning to theoretically reflect upon the question of how to make their curatorial discourses more global. Although the global scope of major collections has been expanding for almost 15 years now, institutions are just beginning to rethink their art historical paradigms, theoretical structures, collecting practices, theories, and strategies of display so that nonmetropolitan artistic practices are not simply added to an already established Western canon.

As a result, while solo shows of nonmetropolitan artists working in visual languages legible to the Western canon as avant-garde have generally been quite successful, the fault lines produced through a lack of theoretical reflection emerge most strikingly when museums attempt to create transnational narratives, and particularly when they globalize their existing permanent collection installations.

Ironically, as they attempt to construct more inclusive narratives, the limitations of their globalism become evident through the undertheorized relationships that emerge between their existing collections, non-Western art objects, and even marginalized histories within Europe. In this new phase of transnational scholarship and curating that we are in now, it is not simply that we are advocating for the *importance* of transnational histories, but rather thinking about *how* we tell those stories — reflecting upon what narratives are being told, asking how multiple perspectives could be brought into conversations, and thinking methodologically about the structures of transnational histories.

It is for this reason that the concept of topology posed by Mika Yoshitake's current exhibition, *Topologies*, at The Warehouse is so apt and functions not only as a means for interpreting the works in the exhibition — layering morphological or formal with conceptual comparison and synthetic or contact histories, to use Yoshitake's terminology — but also as a theoretical framework that one can use to reconfigure historical teleologies and Euclidean geometries of art history (fig. 1).

This talk takes the notion of topologies proposed by the exhibition as a provocation, an instigation to rethink and retheorize the ways that we narrate the global aspects of art history in museums, and in particular, the relatively recent phenomenon of reinstalling national permanent collections more globally — perhaps the most foundational way that we have as art historians to change the DNA of our museums and public culture.

The bulk of the lecture will consist of analyses of three national collections that engaged in global rehangs in order to understand the recent history of global modernism in museums. First, Tate Modern's 2006 installation and its rehang in 2016, the Centre Pompidou's 2013 *Modernités Plurielles*, and the Hamburger Bahnhof/Nationalgalerie's 2018 *Hello World, Revising a Collection*.

Interestingly, although Tate Modern's 2006 installation and the Centre Pompidou's 2013 *Modernités Plurielles* took very different approaches — the Tate using a comparative paradigm and the Pompidou using a contact paradigm — both ultimately created global narratives that were additive and Eurocentric, despite their best intentions.

The more recent efforts — Tate Modern's 2016 installation as well as *Hello World* — reveal new, more theorized engagements with global art history, providing promising directions for the future and new methodologies of practice that open up the possibility of new topologies in exhibition making.

Perhaps the earliest major institution to attempt to open up their permanent collection installation beyond a Western Euro-American canon was Tate Modern, which was distinctive in having eschewed a chronological hang for their permanent collection from its inception in 2000. I should point out as well in this context that in 2001, they held an Arte Povera exhibition demonstrating their early commitment to thinking beyond the canon. By 2006, the gallery elected to create collection clusters anchored around major European movements. By using descriptive categories rather than movement names, these clusters allowed the gallery to easily incorporate works of art from other parts of the world that resonated with their collections.

The most successful of the 2006 galleries, in my opinion, was Energy and Process, which brought together Mono-ha artists with Arte Povera and Lynda Benglis. The works in this gallery constitute a formal and conceptual cluster around the use of new materials and organic forms, as well as the gallery's eponymous invocation of energy and process, a post-minimalist investigation that explored critiques and responses to minimalism.

With little signage and no indication of the historical relationships between the works or references to the local

contexts of the works, however, the installation engaged in a comparative paradigm that allowed viewers to come to their own conclusions without adequately challenging their preconceived notions. Relying upon formal comparison without adequate contextualization of works from outside the West, the insertions were necessarily framed by the more canonical works against which they were juxtaposed. As literary theorist Shu-mei Shih writes, “The grounds are never level. A presumed or latent standard operates in any act of comparison, and it is the more powerful entity that implicitly serves as the test standard.” [1]

Here, the standards on which the gallery hangs are its most recognizable names, Lynda Benglis and Arte Povera, who are cited repeatedly by name in blogs and reviews of the galleries, such as this one *Guardian* review into which Mono-ha does not even figure. The implied and presumed neutrality of the comparisons in this gallery left intact intellectual structures that had produced modernism as a Euro-American construct, resulting in an installation that ironically reifies and refines the existing canon with its increased global, and here, European, scope.

Indeed, the collection clusters were conceptualized around and anchored by major tendencies in European and American art. And for the Tate’s audiences, these movements formed a backbone of modernism that was more or less familiar to them through previous museum visits, art history classes, the BBC, or Sister Wendy Beckett. In this context, the non-canonical works risked being received as supplements to a main narrative rather than being necessary to it. This argument becomes even clearer when one examines the 2006 *Tate Artist Timeline* that was created to accompany the new installation.

While prominent artists from the non-Western world such as Cai Guo-Qiang, Mona Hatoum, Takashi Murakami, and Yinka Shonibare figure prominently at the end of the timeline, the

1
Shu-mei Shih, “Comparison as Relation,” in Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman eds., *Comparison* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 79.

period from 1890 to 1964 resists internationalization, even under the pressure of a contemporary globalism seeking progenitors. In the period before 1964, we find few non-Western artists, diasporic or otherwise.

Of the non-Western artists that are included — the Gutai group, Yayoi Kusama, and On Kawara, all active in the 1950s and 1960s — all are curiously postdated, with Gutai and Kusama located around 1980 in the performance art cluster and On Kawara in 1970 in the conceptual art cluster, both of which are dated according to milestones in the British canon. Thus, despite their priority in the history of art, these artists are rendered as secondary offshoots to a narrative of Western art that is naturalized as universal.

The *Tate Artist Timeline*, executed in 2006, over a decade ago, is no longer on the walls of the institution, and their permanent collection was reinstalled for the inauguration of the Switch House in 2016.

Responding to criticisms of both the *Timeline* and of the installation that revealed the male and Eurocentric globalism of the original galleries, the Tate implemented a series of important changes that turned the topologies of iteration inside out and back again, allowing new insights about the history of art to emerge alongside, and sometimes in place of, the histories that were there before. In addition to Francis Morris' gutsy installation of the permanent collection with 50 percent women artists in the solo displays, the reinstallation also was clearly constructed to create three different kinds of art-historical topology that twisted and combined to create complex layered narratives throughout the galleries. In addition to the comparison paradigm that the original installation used, the new installation also added two arthistorical paradigms — contacts and monographs.

Although the Tate kept the idea of thematic sections, which created clusters of artworks treating a single set of premises

from different perspectives, the installation was constructed to bring out both similarities and differences among the works — a theoretical move that mirrors that of Reiko Tomii's *Radicalism in the Wilderness: International Contemporaneity and 1960s Art in Japan*. While the installation of the artworks often cleverly brought out visual resonances, the exhibition designers placed clusters of labels together, making the dialogue between the works clear to the viewer who might not otherwise grasp interpretations beyond the similarities.

Furthermore, as in this bank of labels, dates matter. And in a context where Rasheed Araeen's work would typically have been seen as derivative of American or even British minimalism, his pioneering place in history is made clearly evident. The changes to the exhibition installation are crystallized in the graphics that introduce each section, providing some art-historical mapping without the teleology of the *Tate Artist Timeline*.

In this section, Between Object and Architecture, for example, formal and conceptual relationships are built between Saloua Raouda Choucair, Roni Horn, Carl Andre, Cristina Iglesias, Yayoi Kusama, Donald Judd, Gego, and Liu Jianhua through concept words such as space, interaction, change, movement, industrial, organic, etc. The wall functions as a word cloud of associations that suggest the possibility of this being just one of many possible clusters, what Tomii calls new "canonical comparisons" that she advocates for in an attempt to regroup narratives of modern and contemporary art.

In other parts of the installation, historical nodes, networks, and sites of contact are explicitly fleshed out as in the Tokyo Biennale exhibition *A View from Tokyo: Between Man and Matter*, with an effort made to narrate how places outside the West articulated the international.

This is an important strategy that shifts the art-historical narrative's site of iteration, engaging in a curatorial strategy that I call "worlding" after Martin Heidegger's articulation of the concept, and its appropriation by postcolonial thinkers like Gayatri Spivak and Gerardo Mosquera, as well as artists such as Lee Ufan who see worlding as a kind of world-making, allowing the construction of counternarratives that challenge dominant histories.

In the Switch House, both Buenos Aires and Tokyo are given special foci, providing views *from* rather than views *on* nonmetropolitan sites — and this is a very important distinction, which avoids a kind of objectification of the other side. The result is a conversation — a co-constitution of the global, rather than an objectification of the global that risks repeating the narrative habits and imperialist politics of cabinets of curiosities, world's fairs, and encyclopedic museums.

Here, through period photographs that Anzai Shigemi took of the Tokyo Biennale, viewers are given an understanding of how Japanese artists imagined the world in 1970 — a world in which Hans Haacke, Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra, and Daniel Buren were the global context for their experiments, which also spoke to local issues such as the rapid industrialization of Japan, its participation in the American military-industrial complex, and an attempt to articulate a distinct epistemology of being.

Finally, the last art-historical paradigm woven through the installation was a monograph — a series of monographic artist rooms that focused attention on individual artists. Some of them were paired, like Richard Deacon and El Anatsui, whose work on display at the Tate is part of the same series as Anatsui's *Ink Splash*, 2010, on view in *Topologies* now at The Warehouse. And some of them were individual, like the one for Sheela Gowda. In these rooms, viewers were given the opportunity to understand individual artists more deeply and to inhabit their

worldviews as individuals aside from instrumentalized global histories.

While this approach is controversial in that it creates new canons of art history, it is still work that needs to be done in order to decenter and move beyond annotating our current narratives. The Centre Pompidou's rehang of their permanent collection opened in 2013 seeking to present, and I quote here from the website, "A critical reinterpretation of the history of art in the 20th century. It breaks with long years of consensus on the uniform, linear, and progressive narrative proposed, with slight national differences, by all Western museums. This consensus is now undergoing a crisis — it demands to be brought up to date and reestablished on new foundations. We must address two interrelated ideas — a critical reinterpretation of Western modernity, and the context of globalization." This ambitious and radical rehang, conceived by Catherine Grenier to be an "exhibition manifesto," is an important and courageous milestone in the history of multiple modernisms. At the same time, however, it was hampered by its insistence on the multiplicity of modernisms.

Although it has become a recent convention to refer to non-Western modernisms as multiple modernisms, global modernisms, or discrepant modernisms — there are lots of terms — this model demurs when it comes to questioning the founding assumptions of modernism in Europe and North America. In this multiple model, Western modernity and Western epistemologies remain untouched, save for a superficially critical reinterpretation, which places it within what Grenier calls the "context of globalization."

Opening with a wall of covers from the world's avant-garde art magazines — I think *Azimuth* was there, and Amédée Ozenfant's *The Four Races* from 1928 — the exhibition promised a modernist mediascape and ideoscape that reached equally to all corners of the world. Resisting the Tate's impulse to rely

upon formalist comparisons, *Multiple Modernities* pursued a “contact paradigm” — or what Yoshitake calls a synthetic approach in her curatorial strategy at The Warehouse — beautifully embodied by the mapping of avant-garde journals in the entryway to the exhibition.

With covers from even the most obscure journals, one began the exhibition with a utopian sense of modernist discourse emerging as an imagined community that reached to all corners of the world. Turning to Ozenfant’s *The Four Races*, one might imagine Grenier channeling Ozenfant’s apparently universalist vision for the viewer, making a statement about the interconnectedness of the 20th century.

What she does not mention, however, and does not seek to decolonize, is the way in which this vision of the global is intimately connected with Ozenfant’s beliefs about the colonial system, as revealed by Romy Golan in her 1995 book *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars*. Steeped in assumptions about the Occident as Action, and the Orient as Idleness, Ozenfant’s painting does not envision a planetary partnership, but rather a global order in which Europe functions as a virile protector of his three muses with dominion over the world.

After the exhibition’s opening universalist gambit, the first few rooms began with Orientalism and primitivism in the work of Henri Matisse and the Blaue Reiter. Although establishing the cosmopolitanism of the 20th century, this installation failed to question the colonial narratives and art histories that produced a contact zone in which only European artists were named, celebrated, historicized, and rendered as subjects.

This was by no means an isolated installation. Time after time, the great masters of the European canon are named, their horizons expanded, their reach broadened to embrace the cultures that fascinated them. The installation of objects

from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East in the context of Orientalism, primitivism, and chinoiserie maintains their identities as mute objects of inspiration — their makers unnamed, and lost to history.

There are two installations based around the figures of Michel Leiris and André Breton. Where the exhibition did show modernist artists from the non-European world, the emphasis was on what they learned from Europe and how they disseminated European learning to their countries of origin, rather than what they might have brought to this global crucible of transnational cultural exchange.

This is the case for Sanyu, a Chinese artist who worked and studied for many years in Paris, who is often credited for defining a new poetic line situated between the conventions of ink painting and oil painting, which had deep resonances in the postwar French painting of artists such as Henri Michaux and Pierre Soulages.

The label on the right reads, "In 1921, Sanyu was one of the first Chinese artists to study in Paris. *Nude Woman* is one of his numerous ink drawings of the female nude based on the Western tradition of drawing from life. An admirer of Matisse, whose influence on him is obvious, his line constructs the space and occupies it with a solid presence. Sanyu combined the practice of Chinese calligraphy, with its simultaneously taut and fluid line, and the modern practices of drawing."

A third point that I will raise today about *Modernités Plurielles* is the fact that the exhibition was limited by existing national collections, which embodied period tastes and assumptions about the art of the global South. The exhibition was, as a result, plagued by issues of quality — works that had been chosen from within the *habitus* of colonialism, as understood by Pierre Bourdieu, that assumed an almost caricatured performance of tropical identities in the case of Henry Valensi,

a French artist born in Algeria, for a metropolitan audience that was expecting this within the visual discourses of modernism.

Thus, although *Modernités Plurielles* was an exhibition that sought to trace transnational cultural flows, the fact that the installation was structured around center-periphery exchanges, and the fact that it was unable or unwilling to retheorize the matrices of colonialism and imperialism that shaped the exchanges, ultimately reinforced power relationships between center and periphery. As a result, the exhibition, which was meant to “renew the conventional approach to modern art,” instead entrenched the idea that modernism was articulated in the center and disseminated to the periphery.

More precisely, the *Multiple Modernisms* show was embedded in a system of beliefs or doxa about transnational cultural relations that I call cultural mercantilism.

What I demonstrated in my first book, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism*, was the fact that perceptions of originality, influence, inspiration, and derivation, as well as questions of language — what is theory, for example — are embroiled in discourses of domination, which I call cultural mercantilism after the concept that countries accrue wealth by importing primarily raw materials and exporting manufactured goods, thus increasing the added value. Cultural mercantilism denotes the discourse of modernism that regulates the reception of cultural trade. It characterizes European inspiration from the raw materials of other cultures as japonisme, primitivism, and Orientalism, and refuses the production of all other modernisms by describing them as derivative. Cultural mercantilism is, for example, the discourse that naturalizes Vincent van Gogh’s copy of Utagawa Hiroshige’s work as “inspiration” and Claude Monet’s *La Japonaise* as japonisme, while calling Kuroda Seiki a derivation of Western models.

In the case of the Centre Pompidou's *Modernités Plurielles*, these modes of representation were left intact and reproduced in the installation, reinforcing the cultural mercantilist discourse that celebrated the "inspirations" of French artists from their exotic others, while producing the work of their modernist peers from non-Western countries as derivations — digested versions of European modernisms.

Our third and last case study is much more recent. *Hello World: Revising a Collection* was a global activation of the collection from the five museums of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin as the Neue Nationalgalerie building was under renovation this year. The exhibition was installed at the Hamburger Bahnhof with 200 works from the Nationalgalerie collection that were supplemented with 150 works on loan from other museums within the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin network — a very large set of museums that are connected to form a national collection, including the Ethnological Museum, the Museum for Asian Art, the Central Archive, and the Iberian-American Institute.

And there are lots of things that could be said about what objects were where and how they were collected and what value they have — and how they're even conceived of as art objects or not art objects. But I'm not going to do that due to time constraints. But the website characterizes the effort as follows:

> *Hello World: Revising a Collection* is a critical inquiry into the collection of the Nationalgalerie and its predominantly Western focus: What would the collection look like today, had an understanding characterized its concept of art, and consequently also its genesis, that was more open to the world? How might the canon and the art-historical narratives themselves have changed through a widening and multiplication of perspectives? With these questions as starting points, the exhibition unfolds in 13 thematic chapters as a many-voiced collaboration of internal and

> external curators, encompassing the whole exhibition space of the Hamburger Bahnhof [in Berlin].

Having learned from the experiments of those exhibitions that preceded it, *Hello World* is a fascinating case study for both its successes and its failures. Mounted within the context of a Germany that is only just beginning to think about its colonial history, and also within the context of a cultural establishment that understands the importance of memory work and reconciliation, *Hello World* did not make the mistakes of *Modernités Plurielles*.

Indeed, with its curatorial team of eight internal and five external curators, its starting point was an attempt to "world" the global, to invoke Heidegger's term once again, to create a conversation among multiple perspectives, recognizing the differences between speaking *about* and speaking *from*. As a result, the exhibition is structured very differently from that of either Tate Modern or the Centre Pompidou in that it is a centrifugal or center-fleeing exhibition, seeking to overcome the Western Eurocentrism of the global vision presented in both attempts with multiple voices, multiple sites of iteration, and multiple stories.

And here you can see the names of all of the chapters. There are lots of them, and each one is curated by a different curator, more or less. The exhibition begins with the Agora, based on the ancient Greek notion of the main assembly place in the city, and here conceived of as a global meeting place and site of debate for the many perspectives that the exhibition curators hoped to bring together.

Framing the entire exhibition from a contemporary art perspective, and thus, also implementing multiple temporalities in the exhibition, the *Agora* also sought to lay out some of the contemporary resonances of the exhibition, such as migration, in Alfredo Jaar's *(Kindness) of (Strangers)*, 2015;

global inequality, in works such as Antonio Olé's *Township Wall*, 2018, and the role of neoliberal capital in the globalization of the art market in Mladen Stilinovic's *An Artist Who Cannot Speak English Is No Artist*, 1992.

However, perhaps in part because the *Agora* was curated solely by Udo Kittelmann, who was also the director of the five-member museum network of the Nationalgalerie, it was also unfortunately a missed opportunity — an empty agora with few perspectives from outside of Europe and North America, little debate, and much hand-wringing about the state of the world.

Kittelmann's next section was much more effective, however — although his inability to see beyond his training in the European tradition was also a handicap here. In the section entitled *Where Do We Come From? Adapting Sculptural Forms*, Kittelmann borrowed from Paul Gauguin's famous title to mount a critique of primitivism and investigate the role of African art and aesthetics in shaping the work of the European avant-garde. Eschewing a mode of presentation that has been critiqued since the 1984 Primitivism exhibition, and that, I will remind you, figured in *Modernités Plurielles*, Kittelmann's galleries did not demonstrate the "sources" of modern primitivism by juxtaposing examples by celebrated primitivists with anonymous examples of African art. This section included works by Rudolf Belling, Paul McCarthy, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Alexander Archipenko.

Installed in cases and on plinths not unlike those that were used in primitivism in 20th century art, here, Euro-American primitivism was left to defend itself against the text, which read:

> The colonialist-imperialist conditions for how these objects and reproductions were acquired mattered far less to the circles of the European avant-garde than their formal properties, which appeared to challenge the received wisdom of sculptural practice. The historical contexts in

> which these Indigenous artefacts were collected, received, and appropriated by a "modern primitivism" are illustrated by archival material. The associative interplay among the sculptures, objects, and documents makes it quite clear that the claim of the European avant-garde to originality needs to be taken with an extra-large pinch of salt.

So this is Kittelmann's text, and just to recap, all of these works are actually Euro-American works, despite what you might assume from looking at the works.

Cleverly juxtaposed against this module was a section entitled *Colomental: The Violence of Intimate Histories*, co-curated by Sven Beckstette, curator of the Hamburger Bahnhof with Azu Nwagbogu, founder and director of the African Artists' Foundation. Observing that there were no works of contemporary African art in the Nationalgalerie network collection, the exhibition began by critiquing the collection, then brought in contemporary artists — some African, some German — to comment on the colonial relationship between Africa and Germany and the assumptions that entailed.

One example of this dialogue was the inclusion of work by German artist Dierk Schmidt and Malagasy artist Joel Andrianomearisoa, who both critique the histories of colonialism, but from two very different perspectives. Schmidt's work on the Berlin Africa conference of 1884 to 1885, where the fate of the continent was decided by a handful of European powers who met to negotiate their jurisdictions over the continent, demonstrated both the injustice of the conference, to which African powers were not invited, and also suggested steps toward making reparations.

Andrianomearisoa, on the other hand, mined the archives in his hometown in Madagascar and presented a pictorial history of the colonial encounter through enigmatic appropriations that showed Malagasy colonial subjects dressed up for a ball.

By deliberately fragmenting and reframing the photographs to appear as though taken by an unseen interloper, perhaps from the future, the artist interrogates how identity and belonging were framed by colonial notions of civilization.

In the back part of the same building, a similar dialogical structure is created between two exhibition modules about the mobility of culture in Europe and Asia. The first is *Making Paradise: Places of Longing from Gauguin and Tita Salina*, and the second is *Arrival, Incision: Indian Modernism as Peripatetic Itinerary*.

Making Paradise was curated by Anna-Catharina Gebbers, a curator at the Hamburger Bahnhof. This is a chapter that tries to do too much, from recovering the history of Indonesian modern art, to exploring the history of transnational passages between Indonesia and Europe through ethnographic photography — the figures of Gauguin, but also German artist Walter Spies and Javan artist Raden Saleh, who spent some time in Dresden — to presenting the eco-critical work of Indonesia's Salina. Creating murky equivalences among Modernist European masters who gained access to their imagined paradises through colonialism, and the cultural negotiations of colonial subject artists, this section embodies an earlier kind of undertheorized and underhistoricized transnational curatorial practice, which celebrated cultural diversity and hybridity without addressing questions of aesthetic quality or political context.

The pendant exhibition to *Making Paradise* was *Arrival, Incision: Indian Modernism as Peripatetic Itinerary*, curated by Natasha Ginwala, an independent curator with expertise on Rabindranath Tagore. This section took Tagore's time in Berlin and his influence on the Berlin art scene of the 1920s and 1930s as a starting point from which to investigate crossings between India and Europe. Unlike *Making Paradise*, *Arrival, Incision* rigorously traced both the migration of Indian artists to Europe, and the exile of Jewish artists from Nazi-controlled

territories to India within the political contexts of their movements. Furthermore, by focusing on major artists from both places with high-quality works, the result was a far more visually compelling and art-historically useful intervention.

Downstairs in the main building was an education module — an artist intervention into the Marx collection that was frankly mystifying — and one of the more tightly argued and most coherent sections, curated by Gabriele Knapstein, the head of the Hamburger Bahnhof; and Melanie Roumiguière, a curator at the Hamburger Bahnhof. And that was *Communication as Global Happening*, which took as its starting point the 1966 global happening organized by Marta Minujín, Allan Kaprow, and Wolf Vostell, simultaneously in Buenos Aires, New York, and Berlin. Encompassing a tendency that was itself global, this was perhaps the most straightforward section, making links beyond Europe and North America to Latin America and Asia that never should have been excised.

While the main building created pendant exhibitions with some conceptual logic, the Rieck Halls, a long series of connected galleries, proceeded with much less coherence in terms of themes addressed by each module, formal resonances, historical links, and even installation design, which varied widely. Rather, the modules seemed to be organized somewhat regionally, treating the Americas in the first pairing, the former Eastern bloc in the second pairing, and East Asia in the third pairing. The most successful sections proposed new micro histories that functioned as interventions into the history of modernism, such as:

Sites of Sustainability, curated by Zdenka Badovinac, the director of the Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana, which explored alternative practices and institutions in the former East and their connections with Western Europe. This exhibition, which mainly shows works from the Moderna Galerija's Arteast 2000+ collection, is a view from the former East, reflecting

on how art was used to shape the conditions of work in an institutional vacuum and how the collectives and networks that they formed created sites to sustain themselves — self-organized spaces, parallel economies, and self-histories.

Platforms of the Avant-Garde Der Sturm in Berlin and Mavo in Tokyo, curated by the aforementioned Knapstein with Tomoko Mamine, a specialist in postwar Japanese art. This section focused on the cultural exchanges between Berlin and Tokyo through Der Sturm and Mavo and was extremely effective in the way that it traced the transmission of culture through avant-garde journals, centering itself on Tokyo and not on Berlin, again, reworlding the site of iteration. And here, I'd just like to point out that there are lines that extend from Mavo and Tokyo to all of the different journals that are mapped on the wall, which is quite different from the butterfly collection of the *Modernités Plurielles* installation at the Centre Pompidou, where it was really about demonstrating that they had all of these journals in their collection, rather than trying to re-world or re-map different trajectories of connection.

There was also *Portable Homelands: From Field to Factory*, curated by Clémentine Deliss, which traced journeys to and from Armenia, including the realist works of Heinrich Vogeler from the former GDR, as well as the networks of publishing organs produced by traveling artists and intellectuals from the Armenian diaspora in cities ranging from Addis Ababa and Istanbul to Paris and New York. By activating the GDR history of the Nationalgalerie collection and revealing its own transnational world passing through Armenia, Deliss demonstrated the complex transnational networks of the socialist world, as well as resistance to socialist realism in global art history.

Ultimately, however, the lack of formal, conceptual, or historical resonances between sections other than their relations with Germany both constructed Germany as a point of reference

and failed to create a larger art-historical intervention. That is to say that the plurivocality of the exhibition, which felt like 13 independent exhibitions, ended up producing additive histories that failed to shift discourses of the center and succeeded only in proposing a series of annotations to the history of art.

In this refusal to create a narrative, replacing it with 13 points of departure, lies an important concept for curating global art history that evaded the Tate's first installation, as well as the Centre Pompidou's installation, which is this concept of worlding. The notion of worlding is here of great importance as understood by Heidegger, who in his 1927 Being and Time glossed the gerund as a way of understanding the "bringing near" that constitutes an ongoing process of world-making that is embodied, never stable. Heidegger's notion of worlding has been generative in many disciplines and has been particularly useful for artists and theoreticians from the global South resisting hegemonic narratives about the world.

For example, for Brazilian theorist Renato Ortiz and Cuban curator and critic Gerardo Mosquera, worlding is a political act that could happen from anywhere. And worldings from the periphery could provide counterhegemonic narratives about the world. For Lee Ufan, the embodied subject of worlding, as opposed to the objectification of the world, carried possibilities of alternative worldings — of the world as understood from their own perspectives, an understanding of what Reiko Tomii terms their own "international contemporaneity," the idea that "we are contemporaneous with you."

In his 1970 and 1971 text "Beyond Being and Nothingness: On Sekine Nobuo," Lee wrote, "Instead of turning the world into an object of cognition, like an objet, the act releases the world into a nonobjective phenomenon, the horizon of perception. That is, the act points to the manner in which the world 'worlds.'"

The manner in which the world "worlds." This radical phenomenology insisted upon the embodiment of the worlding subject, relativizing Eurocentric perspectives in a vast field of alternative stories.

As we have learned from *Hello World*, however, these stories cannot be constructed as entirely independent of one another, or canonical narratives are left untouched — paradoxically allowed to remain dominant. Beyond the important spadework of filling in the blank spaces on modernism's map, the intellectual architecture of art history must be decolonized and reimagined to cope with multiperspectival and multidimensional narratives and their theoretical consequences.

New topological corollaries might be found that allow for multiplicity, yet define new points of contact and contiguity. As Mika Yoshitake writes in her catalogue essay for this exhibition (fig. 2):

> Topology, derived from the Greek topos, "place" and -logy, "study," centers on the mathematical concept of geometrical transformation, in which space and shape can be continually expanded, contracted, distorted, and twisted while the structure of the object remains constant throughout. Taking this formal definition as a launching point, topology denotes a field of semantic and sensory relations where the movement and transformation of an entity, rather than a static object itself, constitutes the artwork. Turning away from the fixed structures of Euclidean geometry and empiricism, topological corollaries include connectedness through a breakdown of boundaries, the use of open structures, and a networking or crossing of disciplines that critiques the autonomous status of art and systems of knowledge.

In creating new topologies of global art history, we can no longer rely on linear models of thinking, but must create a

Fig. 2

Topologies, The Warehouse, Dallas. Installation view, May 14, 2018 - April 15, 2019. Photograph by Kevin Todora

three-dimensional confrontation of worldings, a conceptual paradigm that puts multiple sites in relation and generalizes from multiple sites, operating in a register that literary theorists Shu-mei Shih and François Lionnet describe as "small T theory" or midrange theorization. And this might get back to earlier questions that we were having. For Lionnet and Shih, this move back to theory and epistemology is a political one, and an important one that both creolizes the universal, as our three exhibitions have sought to do, and acknowledges the generalizable, abstract possibilities of knowledges articulated at the margins.

The radicality of topology as a model for understanding these new histories is one that is at once a refusal of provincial linear histories and also an assertion of more complex fabrics of entanglement that include formal, conceptual, and historical relationships. Topology allows for the worlding of narrative perspectives, but insists upon weaving these disparate threads into a multilogue. It asserts that the nation is no longer the only scale of analysis, but is supplemented by shifts in scale that range from the planetary to the city to the neighborhood or the family to "describ[e] the fields of forces experienced by individuals."

Topology is constantly in flux and in motion, and thus "static ideas of space as a container [are] replaced by understandings of movement space," which are flexible enough to narrate stories of diaspora and cultural mobility within the context of global geopolitics.

Just as the works in this exhibition provoke us to reconfigure our ideas of space and time, to turn our perceived landscapes inside out, and to reveal not structures set in stone, but processes — so too can we define new topologies for curating global art history.

Thank you.

Host: All right. Does anyone have any questions?

Audience Member: First off, thank you so much. This is a really fascinating talk, and it's wonderful to hear about how different people are trying to grapple with this idea of reinserting or countering the Euro-American dominant history. So I think this is really interesting and important work.

And I think one of the things that frustrates me — and I think that you showed it very briefly here, and I think you splashed a *Guardian* article up that referred to, I think, Lynda Benglis or something like that, and disregarded several other artists who needed to be mentioned — is, I think there's a tension between what happens in the Academy, what happens in curation, and what happens in news media, right?

And I guess the thing that I bang my head against the wall about is, you know, how these things get reported on, right? And ultimately I think one of the things that we're trying to influence all the way down the line is, how do we get somebody who knows nothing about famous Euro-American artists to begin to recognize these names enough to say, hey, if I include a blurb about X artist, somebody isn't going to just close the window on the browser and just say, "too long, didn't read" and move on.

And so I guess my question really is, is it just a matter of we need to keep putting these ideas out there; we need to keep celebrating these other artists and alternative histories in hopes that it will someday eventually trickle down? Or how else do you see maybe really effectively changing the dialogue that happens in more popular culture in news media?

Ming: That's a really good question, and one that I think is very important. I think on some level, yes, we just have to keep on putting things out there — but I don't really think that's enough. I think that it's really important to make that conceptual shift

for audiences. And it's really important to take people along with you and help them — help audiences who don't know very much about art history to understand why the history you're telling is an important way of rethinking the history of art. Not just for people who are thinking about the peripheries, but about the history of art as a whole.

I mean, who wants to believe in art history that's just false, right? I mean, it's just about trying to tell a better story. Also, one has to think about what the larger sociopolitical resonances are of telling an interconnected cultural history at a moment of rising populist nationalism all over the world.

So, this is really important work that we have to do, because it's changing the way people think. And it goes to the level of teaching in universities. It goes to the level of not being too esoteric about how we present works in the public sphere. You know, like the way I write for an academic audience is totally different from the way that I write for a curatorial audience. And again, different from how I write wall labels for exhibitions.

This is the reason why I brought up that example of Tate Modern's strategy to put up three labels. Putting those three labels together, I thought that was genius! Because it's a very simple way of getting audience members to look at, acknowledge, and understand three different works from three different places and to help them to reorient their thinking. And so that's something, for example, that Okwui Enwezor's *Postwar* show in Munich did not do as effectively. It was a brilliant exhibition, which brought in all sorts of new works and put them on the walls, making important interventions into the ways in which we as experts construct the History of Art. But it is important to remember that Mr. Mueller walking off the street was going to go in there. He was going to see the German works that he recognized — and then, you know, the Korean work that sort of looks similar — and think to himself, "Oh, so we influenced the Koreans, too."

And so it's really important to try to undo those narratives and to get people to see why they were constructed in the way that they were constructed and how we can rethink them.

About The Warehouse, Dallas

Created in 2013, The Warehouse is a contemporary art space in Dallas, Texas initiated by Cindy and Howard Rachofsky and their late partner Vernon Faulconer to advance scholarship and understanding of postwar and contemporary art. It stages annual exhibitions curated by a rolling roster of international curators — this has included Gavin Delahunty, Independent Curator; Leigh Arnold, Nasher Sculpture Center; Thomas Feulmer, The Rachofsky Collection; Mika Yoshitake, Independent Curator; Rodrigo Moura, Museo del Barrio; and Allan Schwartzman, Founding Director, The Warehouse and The Rachofsky Collection. These exhibitions are developed specifically to suggest new perspectives on art and invite fresh questions that expand accepted notions of history. Devoted to education, The Warehouse offers special programs and public days; hosts visiting artists and art professionals; and publishes scholarly books.

www.thewarehousedallas.org

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