PART I

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ART IS...

Carter Ratcliff

Maryhelen Hendricks: It is my pleasure to introduce Carter Ratcliff and what can I say about him? Brilliant. Warm. Humane. I can say at this point, because of the variety of his publications, Carter is a Renaissance Man. And from my point of view, you are impressive to no end because you write art criticism without jargon. I do not understand art theory which uses jargon. Carter is a contributing editor of Art in America. He has published many books, including John Singer Sargent, Out of the Box, The Reinvention of Art 1965 to 1975, The Fate of a Gesture: Jackson Pollock and Postwar American Art, and Andy Warhol: Portraits. His most recent book of poetry, Arrivederci, Modernismo, appeared in 2004, and his first novel, Tequila Mockingbird, was published this year. Carter will speak for about forty-five minutes, then we’ll have a Q&A, which will flow, I hope, gently into a reception, wine, and some food, where you can continue to ask him some questions. So with that, will you please welcome Carter Ratcliff.

Carter Ratcliff: Thank you for that very nice introduction, and thank you for inviting me to give this talk. Thank you all for being here. In her first email, Maryhelen included a list of words that might complete the sentence “Art is.” Art is communication. Art is discovery. Freedom. Memory. Mirror. Pleasure. Transformation. And there are many more words that could complete the sentence. Art is many things. Or art is inexhaustible.

In thinking about the current state of the question—what is art?—it occurred to me that art is, among other things, a pretext for a way of life. By talking about the art scene, I bring a metaphor of the theater into play. The art scene is a stage and the actors on it are quite various—artists of all stripes and styles, dealers, critics, curators, collectors, others. Of course, these actors don’t see themselves as merely playing one part or another. They are living their lives, finding their places in the way of life I mentioned.

The geography of the art scene was simpler when I first appeared in New York. There were galleries along 57th Street, east and west, and up Madison Avenue to the Eighties. Soon—this was in the late 1960s, the early 70s—galleries began opening up in SoHo. During the 80s an art scene developed in the East Village and, later on, in Chelsea. Now galleries are again appearing on the Lower East Side and of course there have been galleries in several Brooklyn neighborhoods for some time now. So there are many art scenes, and each one of them is a social milieu sustained the way social milieus are always sustained: by a shared and reliable set of assumptions, judgments, attitudes.

The quickly evolving ways of life that are lived in these disparate art worlds can be pleasant. I suppose that if they weren’t, people wouldn’t create these worlds and live in them. But there’s a problem. A social milieu that centers around art is that it begins to take art for granted in a way that undermines the value of the very thing, namely art, that provides that milieu with a pretext. What I’m getting at is the way
that, for some denizens of this or that art world, art serves the same function that fashion serves for those who live in the fashion world. It provides an ever-shifting spectacle as the focus of attention around which social existences revolve. The members of each art milieu keep up with the changes, they comment on these changes with a suitable degree of hipness, they assimilate the current pattern of judgments, and by doing all that they reduce the experience of art to a routine that is, ultimately, not especially exciting. For those interested in maintaining or improving their standing in these circles are shy of directing any questions anything, not really.

I mention this because I've been hearing in conversation and I've been reading in art blogs and art magazines the explicit statement that the big question—what is art?—is no longer interesting. For a time, this puzzled me. Then it occurred to me that on an art scene that is primarily a social scene, with endless jockeying for status—an art scene where status depends on being in or out, hip or unhip—the main question could not possibly be: what is art? The main question could only be: what's hot and what's not? To which I would say: what's hot and what's not is totally boring. By contrast, the effort to define art is endlessly interesting. But only if you're capable of being interested, a remark that runs parallel to something that David Hume said in his essay, “Of the Standard of Taste,” published in the 1750s.

Hume said, “Beauty is no quality in things themselves. It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them. And each mind perceives a different beauty.” Now that's an endlessly contestable statement but it sets the mood for what I would like to say, which is that nothing is inherently interesting. Things are interesting if you are capable of being interested in them. So the question is: why would anyone in any of our contemporary art worlds, anyone who talks about art, writes about art on-line or in an art magazine, be or pretend to be incapable of taking an interest in defining art as it evolves—and as new art gives us fresh views of past art? I think it's because you can't define art without questioning art, and genuine questioning would disrupt the smooth functioning of an art scene as a social milieu, a pretext for a way of life, and who wants one's way of life disrupted? But how is it possible for a member of an art scene to get along without a definition of art?

In 1964, a case having to do with obscenity came before the Supreme Court. This raised a question: what is obscenity? Stewart Potter, one of the justices, said he couldn’t define it but he knew it when he saw it.

The art-world denizen of one of these social scenes who says it’s no longer necessary or no longer interesting to try to define art is saying: what's the problem? I know art when I see it. What this amounts to, in practice, is accepting as art whatever appears an art venue, whether it's a museum, a gallery, or a collector's living room. This is art as a pretext, the backdrop for a certain way of life. A way of being in the art world, accepting art uncritically, but knowing the ropes, the way a person in the fashion world knows which designers are up, which are down, who is ripping off whom, all that sort of thing. And, believe me, no one in the fashion world ever tries to define fashion or make any coherent statement about anything.
From art as an unexamined backdrop it’s a short step to foregrounding art as entertainment. Beyond art as entertainment lies art as a field of investment opportunities. Then there is art is an indicator of future developments in the real estate market. Remember what happened with Soho. The neighborhood was scheduled to be torn down, to open a path for a crosstown expressway. For various complicated reasons, that didn’t happen. So all those 19th-century building in Soho continued to be under-utilized, a lot of them were empty, and artists began to rent them. You could get an extraordinary amount of space for $100 a month in the mid-1960s. Galleries followed, Manhattan had a new art zone, and then various high-end enterprises—mostly fashion businesses—moved in. Artists and then galleries were priced out, which was great for the real estate market but not so great for artists.

Another function of art is to supply tokens to move around on the board of a high-stakes status game—as in, I paid more for my balloon dog than you paid for yours. At a far extreme from that sort of game is art as a quest for transcendent meaning. Art can be a form of autobiography. We can also see art as raw data to be refined in the mills of our historical methods. This list could go on much longer. Art is many things. There’s an artist and writer named George Quasha who has for the last several years been asking artists to turn “Art is” into a complete sentence. He has made more than a thousand videotapes of their responses, and they are all different, which is no surprise. But before I get to my idea of how to complete the sentence, I ought to note that “Art is” counts as a sentence in itself. “Art is” in the sense that art exists. Art is there. And its presence in our lives is so powerful that it’s tempting to suppose that there has been art for as long as there have been human beings.

![Spotted Horse mural, Pech Merle, France](image)

This is the *Spotted Horse* mural in a cave in the Pyrenees, in the south of France. It’s thought to be about 25,000 years old and it’s an extraordinary image or set of images. We tend to think of this as art. And this, too.
This sculpture is of Laocoön and his sons, figures from ancient Greek myth. Every variation of the myth gives a different reason for Poseidon having sent the serpent to torment the three of them, so that is ambiguous. But the form, the image, is very clear, for all its complexity, and this has been an extraordinarily powerful object in the history of Western art. It’s thought to be a marble copy of a bronze original from that about 200 B.C. When it was dug up in Rome in the middle of the 16th century, Michelangelo was there, and I think if you look at this and then look at Michelangelo’s later sculptures, you can imagine how deeply affected he was by this discovery. So we tend to include objects like these in our idea of what art is.
this very moment, through the 24th of the month, at a New York gallery called Salon 94 Bowery. It’s being presented there as if it were an abstract painting. Or it’s being presented to an audience that knows how to see it as an abstract painting. But my point is this: for the man who made it, this is not an abstract painting. For him and for other members of his tribe, this image maps their myths, especially their myths of origin. Members of Western culture, including white Australians, simply don’t know how to read this in the way that it was meant. There are people, ethnographers and anthropologists, who have fairly coherent ideas about it, but there’s no way that anyone can know, from outside Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri’s tribal culture, how this image was intended, what it really means.

I would say the same of Laocoön and His Sons. We consider this a part of our artistic heritage and indeed it is. It became that at the moment Michelangelo saw it unearthed. But for the Ancient Greeks it was not a work of art as we understand the term. They didn’t have our concept of art, a fact difficult to accept because so many ancient Greek statues played such an important part in the development of art from the time of the Renaissance onward. And there are so many ancient Greek statues in our museums of art. Furthermore, the ancient Greeks came up came up with some terms that are very close to ones that we use when we discuss art. Eurhythmia, for example, is something akin to gracefulness. Symmetria points to “commensurability” or “harmonious order.” This is not exactly what we mean by symmetry but you see the relationship. So there’s a connection, a cultural lineage, at work here. But what’s missing from ancient Greek culture—missing from our point of view—is the concept of art. What’s missing from our culture is the sacred cult that would give an object like this its original meaning. Historical studies allow us to come from the outside at some sense of what the cult meanings of this object were, but we can’t really know them. We can’t really understand or respond to this work in the way it was intended because our view of it is aesthetic.

But what about the word “aesthetic” which has roots in the language of ancient Greece? It does have those roots and yet it is a new Greek coinage from the 18th Century. A philosopher from that period, Alexander Baumgarten, came up with the word, which didn’t exist until then. He first used the word in the 1730s and then, about 20 years later, gave an account of it. It was quickly taken up by other philosophers and since then has integrated itself so thoroughly into our discussion of art that we tend to think there has always been a category of the aesthetic. But there hasn’t. Turning to the Spotted Horse mural, we see an extraordinarily beautiful image. We can praise it for its formal qualities, its Eurhythmia and Symmetria, its grace and harmonious order. We can praise its representational accuracy, which we see even in the spots that horses no longer have. These animals are powerfully present in these images. But it’s important to remember we have no idea why the mural was made or what it was for. We don’t know how it was intended.

This leads to a further way to complete the “Art is” sentence. Art is something new in human history. Humans have been around for 200,000 years or so. The idea of art as we understand it, the idea that hovers around us as we make art, as we respond to it, as we value it, began to coalesce in the Renaissance. So art is about 500 or 600 years old. I don’t have any objection to seeing a Neolithic cave painting in an aesthetic mode. And it’s fine with me if Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri shows his work in
a New York Gallery, if a collector buys the work and puts it on the wall next to a Bridget Riley. You can see why I bring Bridget Riley into it. Or a collector might hang it next to one of Roy Lichtenstein’s more abstract paintings. Or next to a Navajo blanket, which I mention because there was a fad for Navajo blankets among the Minimalists in the 1960s. Of course, they were looking at those Navajo blankets with no understanding of—no interest in—the reasons for which they were made. They were looking at them from inside a Minimalist aesthetic. You can see how that would work. But I think it’s terribly important to remember that theirs was an outsider’s view of a Navajo blanket. And we can have only an outsider’s view of an extraordinary image like this Australian painting.

Long before Marcel Duchamp presented his first ready-made, it was possible to see anything or any configuration of things aesthetically. All that was needed was the concept of the aesthetic, which certain adventurous sensibilities put into play several centuries before Baumgarten came up with the word. Petrarch, the fourteenth century Italian poet, provided an example by climbing to the top of Mont Ventoux, a celebrated mountain in Provence, in the south of France. In those days, Mont Ventoux was overgrown, a kind of wilderness. A shepherd told Petrarch it was impossible to get to the top of it and so he said, all right, I’m going to do it and he did. Arriving at the summit, he was stunned by the beauty of the landscape that opened up before him.

In earlier times, Europeans viewed landscapes either practically or with fear, even hostility, because who knew what inhabited them? Many dangerous forces, human or animal or neither. Who knew what demons lurked in the woods? Landscapes were not seen as things of beauty. Writing later about his ascent of Mont Ventoux, Petrarch recorded one of the first moments in the history of Western culture when a landscape was described as beautiful. This new vision of the natural world is often cited as an early moment in the transition from a pre-modern to a modern world—a world that allows one to appreciate earthly beauty without reproaching oneself for committing a sin. For there was, in pre-modern times, not only a fearful or a narrowly practical view of landscape. There was also a moral consideration: one’s eyes should heavenly things not earthly things like forests and landscapes in the south of France.

There’s an incipient secularism in Petrarch’s perception that the landscape viewed from the top of Mont Ventoux is beautiful. And it’s interesting to have on record that very early perception of earthly beauty. However, the beauty of a landscape, whether it’s the Grand Canyon or Provence or even a desert, which can be beautiful in an austere way, doesn’t make it a work of art. A well-designed, well-maintained garden could possibly count as a work of art, but not a landscape, and it’s interesting to ask: why not? I think it has to do with intention. A landscape, whether it’s beautiful or not beautiful, is the work of geology; it’s the work of weather; it’s the work of plants and animals; it’s the work of human beings as they build bridges and roads, as they reroute rivers and build dams, build villages, cities. For a landscape to become what it is, there has to be an interaction of many forces, some intentional and some not. But a work of art, by contrast, is intentional through and through. It’s a site of intention. Of course, an artist’s intentions are not all conscious, but, whether they’re conscious or not, they’re crucial. Not only in shaping the work of
art, but in initiating our response to it. For we take it as indisputable that everything in the work of art, large or small, no matter how subtle, is meant, is intended. And if it is meant, there are those of us who will take it upon ourselves to try to figure out what is being meant.

I want to take a slight detour to ask why this quality of being meant, of being fully intended, is so important to us. I think it must be because of the importance the idea of the self acquired in modern times—not only the idea of being a particular individual but also the idea of individuality itself. In earlier periods of Western history, and in other cultures, certain individuals were, of course, granted great importance. Yet it is only in modern times that the institutions of the law, of politics, of the economy, of education, are so deliberately focused on the ideal of acknowledging each individual fully and equally. The Revolutions of the 18th century, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, made this explicit with their declarations that every individual is equal before the law. This was not just a new idea, this was a radical idea that profoundly changed Western society and culture.

Now, the equality of each individual is still an ideal, though we fail, as we all know, far, far short of realizing it in our society. Nonetheless, the idea of universal equality persists and it may be that works of art have their elevated value for us, in part, because it is only in them that individuals realize their individuality so fully. That is, they fully realize their individual intentions. Hence the aura of realization, of completion, of fulfillment that emanates from a work of art that one admires. In this admirable work, whatever it may be, everything is fully meant. Everything means something. Not by accident, unless meaning is conveyed by an intended accident, as in a Jackson Pollock drip painting. Looking at a Pollock, you see little speckles and spots of paint, and you know that he couldn’t have directed each one to be precisely where it was. But you also know that he intended them as possibilities, and if he accepted the painting with those speckles and spots, if he presented it as his work, then every detail in it counts as intended. Intention in art is so powerful that it can include even the accidental.

But this raises a question, the question for critics or historians, or anybody who pays attention to art. It’s all very well to have the feeling that a work of art is fully meant and rife with meaning, but how do we know what it means? How do we know which intentions the work realizes? A full answer to that question would require a book. Or you could fill a shelf with books that have tried to answer that question: how do we know what an artwork means? There’s a short answer, which is: we don’t know what it means. Rather, we can never know what it means with any very deep confidence because what a work of art means is what our interpretation induces it to mean, and no interpretation of any artwork ever settles into certainty.
This is Willem de Kooning’s *Woman I*, 1950-52. There are people who would argue with me about the earlier images that I showed. They’d say, yes, they are works of art. Once Robert Rauschenberg sent a telegram to the Iris Clert Gallery, in Paris, in response to an invitation to send a work to a group show of portraits. The telegram read: “This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so!” He intended the telegram as a work of art and so it was a work of art. And each of us can decide to respect that intention or not. Every image presents us with a decision of that sort. So there is nothing I can do if somebody says that the *Spotted Horse* mural is so beautiful that it simply is a work of art. But I would hold out for what I’m sure all of us realize, which is that we cannot pretend to be Neolithic. We can’t really know why that mural was painted in that cave. We can feel close affinities with the people who made that image. That’s part of being human. But being human also includes belonging specific cultures and societies, and the specificity of our backgrounds make it impossible, finally, to know what the mural was for, why it was made, what it means. So we can’t say anything of much interest about the intention that guided this extraordinary image into being.

But, as I said, most of us would agree that a de Kooning painting is a work of art. However, not everyone would agree that it’s an interesting work of art. A couple of decades ago I ran into a writer from *October Magazine* at a de Kooning retrospective at the Whitney, and his response was, “What’s the big deal?” At the
time that sounded pretty dumb to me. I mean, what can you say? But later I realized that, coming from that place, it was a legitimate question. For no one is under an obligation to be interested in anything and nobody can be interested in everything. We have our particular interests, our particular focuses, and October Magazine is not particularly interested in gestural abstraction, which is okay. I mean, I’m not interested in quantum physics, mostly because I don’t have any talent for quantum physics.

I have difficulties with serious music, too. Of course, I always have some response to it, whether it’s Beethoven or Stravinsky or Philip Glass. Still, when I listen to serious music, I’m a little like a colorblind person looking at an Impressionist painting. There are things that I’m just not getting. This brings us back to the point that the work of art is of interest only to those who are capable of being interested in it. And that raises another question, how is it possible to expand our capacities here? To widen the range of interest? And how can we encourage others to do the same? I’d like to get to this by way of some comments that de Kooning made in an interview, in 1960, with the critic David Sylvester. In the course of it Sylvester noted that by 1950 de Kooning, Pollock, and all their friends had worked their way from figurative art to abstract art. So the question was: why in 1950 would de Kooning go back to figure painting? This was perceived as a backward step at the time. Pollock did it, too, in those years. Why go back? Acknowledging the legitimacy of the question, de Kooning said:

It’s really absurd to make an image, like a human image, with paint today, when you think about it, since we have this problem of doing it or not doing it. But then all of a sudden, it was even more absurd not to do it. So I figured I’ll have to follow my desires.

Sylvester said:

So it’s a simple desire than doing the Women? It wasn’t a moral decision? It wasn’t a theoretical decision, it was just a desire?

De Kooning:

Yes. It had to do with the female painted through all the ages, all those idols. There was this thing I wanted to get hold of. I put it [the figure] in the center of the canvas, you know, because there was no reason to put it a bit on the side—do you see what I mean? So I thought I might as well stick to the idea that it’s got two eyes, a nose and mouth and neck. So I go to the anatomy and I felt myself almost getting flustered. I really could never get hold of it.

And this painting was famous for taking a very long time to finish. There was an essay, “De Kooning Paints a Picture,” in Artnews, one of a series: “Pollock Paints a Picture, “David Smith Makes a Sculpture.” To illustrate the de Kooning essay, Rudy Burckhardt photographed Woman I at various stages. At every stage, it looked like a really good de Kooning, but he couldn’t let it go. So that’s what he’s talking about never being able to get a hold of it. Finally, somebody just took it away from him.
But what about us? Can we get hold of it? Or, assuming we do get hold of something, what do we get hold of? There are all sorts of historical allusions from modern portraiture to Mesopotamian sculpture to be noted in Woman I. Beside those historical references, there are matters of form and space and light that one can talk about. There are psychological meanings, complex and quite fraught, that emerge when we consider the way de Kooning turns such aggressive, even violent gestures, to the project of depicting a woman. And there’s more, not all of it happy. Powerful works of art are often troubling and strange, and yet I believe there’s a familiar and even obvious way into the meanings—and the intentions—that generate the meanings of this strange and troubling painting. Our entry into its meanings is by way of our awareness of, our responses to, the painter’s gestures.

Woman I is the residue of sustained physical effort—a flurry of gestures that continued, on and off, for two years. And we know how to read gestures, just as we know how to read postures, tones of voice, facial expressions. We seem to be hardwired for that capacity and I’d like to suggest that a gestural painter evokes that capacity. Activates it by presenting us with streaks and dabs and touches of color that are charged with the kinds of meanings that we find in one another’s presences. Of course, there’s no one-to-one equivalence. The traces of paint we call painterly gestures are not, of course, actual physical gestures. They’re analogous to physical gestures. So part of learning to make sense of a painting like this, learning to find meaning in it, is learning how those analogies work. It’s an intuitive matter, not something that can be spelled out. Certainly not something that can be conceptualized. Because emotional qualities are not concepts. They cannot be taught or not directly. Yet I believe that one’s responses, if they’re articulated fully enough, can be exemplary. They can give students and others a sense of how to get into, or in de Kooning’s phrase, to get hold of a work of art.

Other sorts of meanings are easier to conceptualize and they’re more readily teachable. Nonetheless, it is extremely important for teachers and critics and historians to show, by example, how we find our way to the emotional, to the felt meanings of artworks. This is clearest in the case of a gestural painting like Woman I or a big sculpture by Mark di Suvero, with its massive beams and their heroically aggressive gestures. Yet it’s the case for all artworks, even heavily intellectualized ones. Even for those that rely, for most of their meaning, on readily identifiable subject matter. That’s because works of art are, first of all, objects. Next, they’re images. Both as objects and as images, works of art assume postures, they take up stances, they make gestures. Speaking metaphorically, we can say that even patterns, textures, configuration of space, qualities of light convey attitudes or make gestures. Or, it may be that space and light, whether fictive or real, respond to the gestural energies of other elements in the work. Interpretation begins with our responses to these complexities.

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These immediate responses occur because of the ways in which we are wired or, to speak a bit more formally, because of the configurations of perceptual/neurological endowments. Coming alive to meaning in art begins with becoming aware of responses that are in their first stages automatic. We don’t choose how to interpret
somebody’s facial expressions. Whether we get it right or whether we get it wrong, it’s something that happens, maybe not unconsciously but preconsciously. We can bring our interpretations to consciousness, but, as I say, we’re wired to have these responses without the need to think about them. That’s why it’s so easy for us to apply metaphors not only to artworks but to pieces of furniture and buildings. You say a building is squat, you say a building is threatening, you say a building is happy. And these descriptions are not entirely metaphorical. I think there’s a space between actual expression, human expression, and the expressions of humanly-made artifacts where we respond to qualities that are real or at least not entirely the work of metaphors. This would be hard to prove, but that’s how I often feel in the presence of a powerful work of art—or a powerful building, for that matter.

So the first stages of interpretation are immediate, automatic, though of course shaped by our culture and our previous experience. Further stages of interpretation follow as we begin to elaborate the personal, social, and cultural significance of the immediacies of experience. Each viewer is an individual. Every person with his or her own interests, values, and agendas. So each of us gets hold of a work of art in his or her own way, none of which is the one right way. For a work of art counts as a work of art only if its intentions, hence its meanings, are not circumscribed. And if intentions, hence meanings, are not circumscribed, they’re potentially unlimited. Thus there is nothing, no cue or concept or sign or signal that could ever bring interpretation to an end. In principle, interpretation could go on forever. In practice, it has to stop at some point. And it’s always worth asking: why did I stop here?

It might be sheer exhaustion, but might be because I have arrived at something of value—something of value to me, specifically, that made it possible for me to treat this point as a stopping point, as provisional as it might be. It’s important for us to take responsibility for our interpretations as fully and as consciously as possible. This is a matter of moral responsibility, moral principle. But it’s also a practical consideration, for if you stick with it long enough and passionately enough, the interpretation of an artwork becomes self-interpretation. You ask yourself: why did I stop here with this set of meanings? Why do I favor this thoroughly personal interpretation over the all the endless other possible interpretations? Why do I feel that I see this work of art fully when I have seen these particular meanings in it? With questions like these, the discovery of meaning in art becomes self-discovery. Even self-transformation. This can happen only when you grapple with a work of art—a work whose meanings are, in principle, anyway, inexhaustible.

So what then is art? It’s all those endlessly varied images and objects and installations and performances that present us with that life-sustaining exhaustibility of meaning. So we ask “What is art?” not in the hope of arriving at a neatly definitive answer but to confront the impossibility of finding a neatly definitive answer. An impossibility worth confronting as courageously as we can for it is art’s resistance to a single stable definition that keeps it open and present and, therefore, alive.

Thank you.

MH: Do you want to do some questions?

CR: Yes.
MH: I'll help.

CR: Okay.

UM1: Maybe art exists in order to create metaphors and freshen our perception.

CR: Well, freshen our perception – do – do you mean –

UM1: Almost like, as Ezra Pound said, to make it new.

CR: Yes.

UM1: As we go through time, we get caught in these grids and our responses contract–

CR: Well, yes. I started out by talking about how that can happen even with people who are deeply involved with art. Or at least with an art scene. There are art-world denizens who have pretty automatic responses even to art. Or mostly to art. But when you say – did you say freshen our perceptions? Do you mean something to make them more vivid? Or to give them more –

UM1: I'm suggesting that contract rather than dilate our souls, towards our noticing of the world.

CR: Yes.

UM1: So the art would present a metaphor that would mirror back to us a view that would –

CR: Defamiliarize.

UM1: Yes.

CR: In fact, there's an aesthetic theory that the Russian Formalists, as they were called, developed. It turned on—the Russian word escapes me, but it means estrangement. They came up with it early in the 20th century, about the time of Pound, with his call to make it new—and you see this in a Romantic like Coleridge, too, a different version of the idea that we fall into perceptual routines, we develop very narrow ideas of what things mean and signify and so on, and art can rescue us from that narrowness, those routines. I almost can remember the Russian word, but it – it means to strangify things. The closest we can come to proper English would be to estrange.

UM2: Ostranenie

CR: Ostranenie. Right.

MH: Question?

UM3: You use the word “interesting” as a kind of a guiding idea in your presentation, but you did not reference Donald Judd who kind of took it as a kind of key –
CR: Yes.

UM3: To specific objects. That a work of art need only be interesting

CR: Right.

UM3: So do you think he’s right?

CR: I think he’s right except that I don’t agree with what he thought was interesting. I mean, he did some good pieces, but I feel that he had a bee in his bonnet about fictive space. He started out as a painter and pictorial space seemed to trouble him. Almost like a 17th-century Puritan being against fictional writing. And there are still people who don’t approve of novels, precisely because they’re fictional. But Judd transposed objection that to pictorial space which, of course, is fictive. Or if you like, fictional. And he made wall pieces, with very stark configurations that would not, he hoped, generate any spatial fictions. He found—probably not to his or to anyone else’s surprise—that you can’t do that. Any two-dimensional work can be seen as generating fictive space. So he brought his art out into three dimensions. There was a lot of that going on in the 1960s. Allan Kaprow said the next step after Pollock is to extend painting or the painterly gesture into the third dimension and that led to Happenings. Judd really seemed to be morally opposed to fictive space. Others, like Allan Kaprow, just thought that, okay, fictive space, blah-blah-blah, we’ve had Cubism, we’ve had Pollock, let’s get out into three dimensions, let’s do something more interesting, to use that word again. Because the possibilities for any medium go through cycles. They get exhausted and then people make a leap in a new direction. Then there’s a return to something that was set aside and the cycle begins again. I don’t believe in progress in art, but it’s pretty clear that there are cycles in art. Of course, things are left out and new things appear with each turn of the cycle. It’s kind of a spiraling thing.

In the 1960s there was a magazine Art & Literature, edited by the poet John Ashbery and some of his friends. One of the issues contains a conversation between David Hockney and Larry Rivers, about what they wanted their art to be. Do you want it to be beautiful or do you want it to be interesting? Those are two sensibilities very far from Judd yet they were thinking about “interesting” art. The notion of the beautiful was pretty well exhausted by that time, so artists found other things to talk about. Though I think maybe beauty came back. How could it not? There are cycles.

UF1: You talked about that art didn’t exist in certain ways until the Renaissance.

CR: Yes. I believe that our idea of art originates in the Renaissance. In modern times, we can have an aesthetic view of anything from an ancient Neolithic mural to a Greek statute, as Duchamp showed with his ready-mades. But the notion of an object or an image meant primarily as the realization of an individual’s intentions is new, a possibility certain artists of the Renaissance came up with
UF1: Well, my question is: if we didn’t – Vitruvius in 100 A.D., defined architecture as utility, firmness, and delight.

CR: Yes.

UF1: So the question I would have then is, what is the Greek meaning of delight if not an intention to create something in addition to the function of the building and its ability to stand?

CR: Right. Well, in ancient Greek and Roman culture, there was a strong interest in those non-functional, non-utilitarian qualities, and in response to those qualities, the Greeks developed a very rich vocabulary. Which Roman writers translated into Latin. So there is an immense body of texts in Greek and in Latin in which people talk about everything from how realistic a bronze form is to how beautifully proportioned it is—how it seems to embody a transcendent idea of beauty and so on. So my argument is not that no ancient painting or sculpture or building was considered beautiful or delightful in its own time. My argument is that beautiful objects in those days were not intended by their makers in the way that works of art are intended now. In ancient times, intention wasn’t individual, wasn’t a vehicle of the maker’s individuality. So a sculptor from the Fifth century B.C., like Phidias, had a relationship to his work that is quite different from Michelangelo’s relationship to his work. In ancient times, sculptors and painters were considered craftsmen, and Michelangelo, not to mention Leonardo da Vinci, put a lot of effort into arguing that they were not merely craftsmen. There was an intellectual, even a spiritual, element to their work that raised them above that level to the one that, in modern times, is reserved for artists.

In earlier stages in Western culture, that elevated place doesn’t exist. So it was not until the Renaissance that anyone saw artworks as we now see them, as objects and images that require a focus on individual intention—or that are valued as sites, so to speak, of highly developed individualities. A great example of an early modern individual is Benvenuto Cellini. His biography is almost like a manifesto of what it is to be an individual. A fully, aggressively self-conscious individual. You just don’t find that in Phidias or Myron or any other ancient sculptor. No ancient Greek painting has survived and yet certain painters from that time and place are remembered for having introduced, say, tonal modeling or a certain kind of outline or whatever. The ancient writers admire them for these innovations and yet they’re being seen as craftsmen, not as we see artists. Their innovations were in the field of teche, a Greek word that we often translate as art but is closer to our idea of technique than to our idea of fine art. Which is not to deny that much of what we consider to be fine art, whether we see it as beautiful or sublime or whatever, evolved from Greek art, from Greek and Roman architecture, from ancient forms of all kinds.

MH: Time for one more question.
UM4: I have a question regarding intentionality. All through my graduate school career, I was taught to not concern myself as an artist with intentions because we can never know what an artist’s intentions really were.

CR: Yes.

UM4: And often artists themselves, don’t know what their intentions are –

CR: Right.

UM4: And so it kind of muddies the water a little bit.

CR: Well, here’s the thing. This is a complex argument. There are theorists—mostly literary theorists—who say that, to figure out what a work of art means, you have to begin by establishing the intention of the artist. There are various methods, none of which is particularly convincing, for determining the writer’s or the artist’s intention. I feel it goes the other way around. So, first of all, you’re right, we can’t know an artist’s intention. Artist themselves can’t possibly know all of their intentions. De Kooning says more than once in the course of his comments on art that Cubism was a silly idea. What did the Cubist painters know about the fourth dimension? Setting out to depict the fourth dimension in a Cubist painting was, for de Kooning, a silly idea, a superficial idea that happened to produce some interesting results. If you could quiz de Kooning, he’d probably say they had other intentions that they didn’t know about it. And I would say, we can’t know about them either. Not with any certainty. So it’s not a matter of working from intention to meaning, it’s a matter of working from meaning to intention. And it’s important to bear in mind that the meaning of a work of art is indeterminate. No work of art contains a stable meaning that just lurks there, in the forms and colors of the work, waiting for us to bring it out into the open and link it up to some intention that we have tracked down somewhere else. The meaning that a work of art has is the meaning it has for you in the course of your response to it. And the meaning you attribute to the work is legitimate insofar as it is, can I use the word, sincere? And courageous and really deals with your experience.

Ultimately, then, what counts is the work that you’re experiencing. There may be reasons to be interested in the psyche of the artist, but when we are looking at a painting or a sculpture or whatever it is, we’re attending to its presence in our lives. We’re attending to our experience of that presence. Whatever meaning we find in it is, by logical necessity, the meaning that we attribute to it. The question is: how fully, how sensitively, how intuitively, how richly do we do that? Then you work back from the meaning you attribute to the work of art to artist’s intentions. As for nailing those intentions down in a definitive way, I don’t think we can do that or that it’s necessary even to try to do that. We just ascribe intentions on the basis of the meanings that we find.

MH: Thank you.

CR: Thank you.
TYPOLOGY OF TYPOGRAPHY: METHODOLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY HINTS TOWARD NEW EXPRESSIONS WITHIN VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN.

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Typography, it surrounds us, engulfs us, and, yes, becomes us. We consume it everyday and we cannot escape from its messages of social media acronyms, fast food deals, stock market woes, and even to love letters sent—and for that matter, everything in between as well as all that surrounds it past thousands, beyond millions, of picas. Point made; typography is ubiquitous. Yet the question of how it has engulfed our planet too often goes unimagined. Furthermore, the question, why is it even what it is, goes unfathomed. What drove typography to be a permutation of line gesture? How is it that the foundational forms of typography are three simple shapes: a circle, a square, and a triangle? Examining how the basic components of typography are interconnected, related, and arranged—its topology—can provide theories to these queries. Subsequently we can begin to divide and group typography into classifications according to similarities and differences. This leads to a fairly straightforward explanation to the history of typography via the process of topology. It’s time to dive deeper.

Typology is most commonly found in archaeology as the classification of things according to their physical characteristics. This designation of typology, applied to typography, is not unlike the rationalization of traditional classifications in typography from ancient times to the present. The significance of applying typology to typography suggests an un-attachable universal synthesis connecting technology, socioeconomics, politics, culture, and directive to the design and application of typography in visual communication throughout history. Typographic characteristics and ideologies have outlasted their associated influences enabling continual renewal and change with this synthesis in mind. Yet designers and practitioners continue to work in the midst of these challenges and often discount that type application and design are highly interrelated by these influences of art and humanity.

Over history, typographic letterforms have been understood as form and counterform existing in two-dimensional space. Through this inquiry of typology of typography—an examination of form and symbolism in typography throughout the twentieth century—initiates a dialogue concerning influence of typography for the twenty-first century. Moreover, the examination into the typology of typography exposes the possibilities toward a new paradigm in defining typographic interpretation. Daringly, typology of typography presents an ideology that typographic form can exist, and more importantly can communicate, in three-dimensional space suggesting typography can be articulated and understood as sculptural form.

To validate this assumption it must begin with an overview examining the history of typography. Categorizing typography is often confused due to the word type,
whereas type has the meaning of a particular kind or group of things. The word typography is Greek in origin and is derived from the Medieval Latin word *typographia*—*typos* meaning an impression or cast, and *graphia* (or *graphy*) relating to the artistic use of pictures, forms, or shapes. The first known use of the word typography is dated to 1610 and is described as the style, arrangement, or appearance of printed letters on a page. Before typography came into being, letterforms and alphabets still existed and were an everyday form of communication. Nonetheless, the Latin alphabet that we know today went through drastic transformation during a time of immense unrest in the world. This proposition will begin with the Latin alphabet entering the preceding stages of Europe’s Industrial Revolution—the age of movable type—through typography today in it’s many forms. Since a typographic timeline can be overwhelmingly in-depth, and quite complex, an overview of typographic classifications will be more direct. The classifications of typography and its numerous sub categories is often varied between typographic scholars and occasionally contested. For sake of this discussion the categories will be classified into the following: Old Style, Transitional, Modern, Egyptian or Slab Serif, Clarendon, Sans Serif, Decorative or Display Type, and Digital Typography. Keep in mind the classifications will be discussed with a brief introduction but more so in correlation to their typology.

Western typography had its foundations in Europe as Old Style and Transitional classifications—in that chronological order—and contained the first Roman types such as Caslon, Garamond, and Baskerville. These typefaces were designed between the 15th and 18th centuries; keep in mind that type design today can be classified into this style or any other style; date of creation is only a part of the classification practice. This was the time of the Reformation in Europe. The two most important developments were the rising prices due to increased sophistication in business practices and a shift in trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. This also led to a robust agricultural system having a strong development in rural industry. The main continuing problem was the absence of industry. Thus, the increased need for publications in agriculture and business began and introduced periodicals and the Newspaper. Earlier these publications began as handwritten documents and the increased demands pushed publishers to adopt the process of moveable type introduced by Guttenberg. Typeface creation was rudimentary to say the least, yet beautiful with a humanist touch—one such typeface is Jenson. The characteristics of these classifications are the axis of the letter form inclined to the left, subtle contrast in stroke weight whereas the thinner areas of the stroke tend to be on the weighty side. Serifs are brackets with subtle curves with the heads often being angled. As technological advancements in the printing and papermaking industry improved, the design of typefaces took advantage of these developments. Later, with typefaces such as Baskerville, much finer character strokes can be reproduced allowing for subtler character shapes with curved, stroked axis more inclined and usually having vertical stress.

With these advancements and the early stages of the European Industrial Revolution, typography moved into a new paradigm. The Modern classification of the late 18th century began and includes Neoclassical & Didone typefaces. Culturally the region was changing artistically as the Neoclassicism and Romanticism had dictated, typographic design cultivated into highly mannered and
unmistakably composed in their design, and typography moved toward simplicity, stability, and purism influenced by classical designs from Greek and Romanesque periods. Neoclassicism was the artistic part of the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment—an idealistic era that emphasized objectivity, reason and empirical truth. At first these typefaces were labeled classical designs until it became evident that these designs were not updates of earlier styles but were altogether, new designs. Contrast between the thick and the thin forms of the letter stroke became more abrupt and dramatic than ever before. The axis of curved strokes became completely vertical and this vertical stress was reflected with little or no bracketing on serifs. Stroke terminals were developed and became a “ball” shape rather than the earlier letterforms hint to the broad pen.

Slab serifs, such as Rockwell, were chaotic since their inception. In the early 19th century culture and economy took a turn, cities became filthy, unwholesome, and congested. Streets were very often unpaved and covered in uncollected rubbish that was allowed to accumulate. Some of the population couldn’t afford basic necessities to live while the majority had only enough wealth to sustain their lives. Napoleon had recently returned from Egypt inspiring a trend of Egyptian culture throughout Europe. Soon after, the major type foundries produced many Egyptian, or slab serif, typefaces under a different design that suggested the style of Ancient Egypt. As printed material swayed from the production of books toward advertising, posters, and flyers, Slab Serifs became dominate. Slab serif typefaces became popular in the 19th century as they were frequently used as large headlines in newspapers and in advertisements, yet rarely used in body text due to their inability to be reproduced in small scales. These typefaces have heavy serifs with minimal or no bracketing and unnoticeable variance in stroke weight. These were referred to as slabs in relation to the building blocks of pyramids.

A debated classification known as Clarendons, also as the given name to the typeface design Clarendon, arrived in the mid to late 19th century created as bold faces to complement text composition as Slab Serifs didn’t lend themselves well to body text. With contrast in stroke weight slight and a short to medium length serifs, Clarendons survived as a workhorse in all aspects of visual communication. Many of these typeface designs were later reproduced in larger point sizes as alternatives to slab serifs and other display types. Clarendon style typefaces have an obvious stroke weight difference in comparison to serifs that tend to be longer than former slab serif style.

Art and culture continued to shape society and the rejection of traditions and value became the norm, as did judgments of criticism. This was the introduction of Impressionism as artists took a stand in the name of artistic freedom and innovation paving the way for the avant-garde. Exploration and expressiveness led to a less descriptive form of art. Mark Twain coined the latter half of the 19th century as the “Gilded Age”—meaning it was a period sparkling on the surface but degrading underneath. As an era of intense bias the Gilded Age was also an era of reform. Simultaneously the Arts and Crafts movement and Art Nouveau initiated social and artistic ideals that pursued the significance of design and craftsmanship during a time of the Gilded Age that was expressed prominently in decoration and architecture. The late 19th century saw the arrival of new communication
technologies such as the surge of mass-communication in the form of newspapers and magazines. The late 19th century exploded into an array of artistic form which included Modernism and expressionism in the arts and was also an era of rising big business. Society became fast paced, streamlined, and simplistic in model—art and design followed its example. This focus in simplicity directed type designers to the introduction of sans serif (or sans-serif), one without serifs, typefaces. In the beginning of their existence sans-serif typefaces were usually used for headlines rather than body text. Today sans-serif fonts have become the standard for body text both on on-screen and in print.

Time to be creative... With the growing demand for individuality, expression, and extreme importance on our disposition and attitude, we have become a very expressive, ever shrinking world; here is where we enter the final classification known as the Display or Decorative class. The display classification encases any typography that reveals an aspect of culture—such as tattoos and graffiti—and typically conjures a particular state-of-mind or idea. This style is often time-sensitive and drops in and out of style quickly. Most of these illustrative typefaces use unconventional letterform and proportions to accomplish distinguishing characteristics and theatrical results—even appearing three-dimensional in form. Here is where typology and typography have merged and the discussion of 3-dimensional typography begins. Type, whether on screen or in print, is understood as form and counter-form in 2-dimensional space. However, we can begin an examination to expose the possibilities toward a new paradigm in defining typographic interpretation.
MEATZZA FEAST
FIERY HAWAIIAN
PACIFIC VEGGIE
FIERY HAWAIIAN

Pizza Press by Terrance Weinzierl

Dearly discarded... Society has entered a time of communication overload where we are suffocated with signage, advertising, posters, media, magazines and newspapers, and so much more. Life is chaotic and fast moving as we are bombarded with information, expectations and noise. The hectic environments we have consumed have become a collection of past ideals and cultures in a violent clash of past and recent technologies, artistic expression (good and bad), economic struggles, and societal norms. Among this noise there is a chance for serenity. How we decide to communicate now and into the future can alter the current anxieties and struggles we presently face.
Love by Robert Indiana

Typography is something that we are taught at a very young age. We learn that the form of letters with their shapes and counter-form inform us of a particular phonetic sound and when combined expresses an idea. It is very similar to identifying objects and being able to identity their differences. Similar to seeing an elephant, there are variances that inform us whether the elephant is an African elephant or an Asian elephant. Or a roadster for that matter—is it a ’36 or a ’38 coupe? Is it a hardtop or a convertible? We’re able to look at the form we see and interpret the data gathered to give us these answers.
Typography is no different! We’ve learned what a letter “a” is—an “a” is an “a”—but what differentiates them is the style of the form. 3-D type has become something that we recognize without question, but what would be thought of it 400 years ago? This ability and established societal norm didn’t just happen overnight; it took thousands of years to make this an expected form of communication. Current day typography explores 3-dimensional space in a false paradigm where type remains 2-dimensional with depth. This argument questions the reality and practicality of 3-D type. Three-dimensionality is defined as having, or seeming to have, the dimension of depth as well as width and height. So the argument that present day 3-D type is truly 3-D is a viable argument—yes. However when 3-D type is viewed from the side it becomes a solid form that no longer communicates. Conversely if the complete shape of depth, height, and width was activated throughout a 360 degree viewing plan, that will become distinguishable regardless of viewing vantage point, a recognition that can be taught. Much like when approaching an elephant, you know it’s an elephant, so would the identification of a sculptural letter “a.”
At first, typography as sculptural form to communicate a message sounds absurd in quick context. However, theoretically, if we began to use sculptural letters, and continued to do so over a period of time, type as sculptural form can be taught, learned, and accepted as the norm in our society. Our world would then become more pleasant to be in and existence more natural and beautiful. Thus, daringly, Typology of Typography presents early ideologies that typographic form can exist, and more importantly communicate in 3-dimensional space suggesting typography can be articulated and understood as sculptural form, true three-dimensional typography.
JE SUIS ARTISTE

Patricia Denys
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What is the job of an artist? The role? The intent? The motivation? Why work at all? If the role is to create what most regard as beautiful, to show imagination and creativity, to be decorative, the artist seems to be embraced and admired, even exalted. If the chosen path by the artist is political in nature, expressive or provocative, the receiver may feel uncomfortable when confronted with questions regarding morality, tradition, ethics, culture, and possibly the fear of transformation. The protean artist has the ability to change into many different forms; to change, to move forward. Historically, culturally and societally, the artist faces the questions: What is my job? What is my work? Why do I work?

In 1937, the same year as the Rape of Nanking, during the Spanish Civil War, the quiet village of Guernica in Spain was having its usual market day. That was the day that German and Italian mercenaries led by Franco obliterated the town by aerial bombardment. Pablo Picasso’s reaction to this horrific act of war was to create the most powerful antiwar statement in Modern Art at the time in the form of a massive 11’ x 25.6’ oil; “Guernica.” Later, when a Gestapo officer noticed a photograph of “Guernica” in Picasso’s apartment he asked, “Did you do that?” “No, you did,” replied Picasso. “Guernica” is a political painting. Artists such as Francisco Goya, Honoré Daumier, the Dadaists, and more recently, Judy Chicago, Art Spiegelman, Sue Coe, Ed Sorel, Gerald Scarfe, and the staff of Charlie Hebdo have made political art that questions, confronts, and provokes.

JUDY CHICAGO

Judy Chicago has promoted a consciousness of moral importance in her major works, all of which have been collaborations. “The Dinner Party” was created between 1974 and 1979 and is a monumental installation that addresses women in history. Chicago purposely chose the dinner plate to use as her visual analogy to women. She said, “It seemed as though the female counterpart of this religious meal would have to be a dinner party, a title that seemed entirely appropriate to the way in which women’s achievement—along with the endless meals they had prepared throughout history—had been consumed.”¹ She further adds, “At some point I decided that I would like the plate images to physically rise up as a symbol of women’s struggle for freedom from containment.”²

In 1993, after eight years of research, Chicago and her husband, photographer, Donald Woodman, premiered “The Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light” which incorporated painting, tapestry, stained glass and photography. In her book, Holocaust Project, she wrote, “I wondered again whether art could really help in confronting the Holocaust so that its lessons could be applied. Perhaps the Nazis were afraid of modern art for a good reason. Visual art has the power to provide us with a way of facing aspects of reality that are too painful to approach except through the oblique path that art allows.”³
Chicago commented her research had led her to the conclusion that it was essential to dehumanize human beings in order to "process" them:

I had learned that during the Industrial Revolution pigs were the first "things" on the assembly line. I began to wonder about the ethical distinction between processing pigs and doing the same thing to people defined as pigs. Many would argue that moral considerations do not have to be extended to animals, but this is just what the Nazis said about the Jews. Others argue, or believe subconsciously, that animals exist for human use. They assume that people are more important than other species and are horrified when human beings are treated like animals.6

She continued:

Some people have been offended by the fact that we are suggesting parallels between the destruction of European Jewry and the genocide of other cultures and the mass slaughter of other species. But I believe that it is this larger context of genocide and destruction that created the conditions for the Holocaust and that, in the future, people will look back upon the massacre of other species during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as being genocidal in nature. But that will be a shared view only when we evolve to the point where we understand that all species have the right to coexist on the Earth and that other creatures do not exist merely as means to human ends.5

As philosopher Theodore Adorno, a German Jew forced into exile by the Nazis wrote, "Auschwitz begins wherever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they're only animals" (qtd. in Patterson, Eternal Treblinka, 53).6

ART SPIEGELMAN

Proving that the comic can shape cultural ideology, Art Spiegelman won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for his graphic novel, Maus: A Survivor’s Tale. Thanks to interviews with his father, it is his account, in comic book style, using cats and mice as characters, of his parents’ experiences as Polish Jews in the Holocaust. He said that it was not until he left home that he realized “... that not everybody had parents who woke up screaming in the night.”7

Maus is two volumes: Maus I: A Survivor’s Tale and Maus II: And Here my Troubles Began. Spiegelman drew Jews as mice, the Nazis as cats, the Poles as pigs and the Americans as dogs. "By using these mask-like faces, where characters look more or less the same, a sketchier drawing style, I am able to focus one’s attention on the narrative while still telling it in comic strip form. So that distancing device actually brings one closer to the heart of the material than a true comix [sic] approach," Spiegelman said.8

Spiegelman explained the original impetus for Maus:
At first, the genesis of that first-three page “Maus” strip was that I was asked to take part in an “Underground Comic” that Robert Crumb was part of, and a few other Underground cartoonists who were based in San Francisco were part of. The only editorial premise was one used anthropomorphized creatures rather than people. At first I wanted to do comic strips about black oppression in America using cats and mice. As I started I realized that this was a ridiculous thought in that I just didn’t know enough about the situation to be anything other than a liberal wimp with good intentions, but not enough underlying knowledge about the situation to do uhm [sic] any meaningful work. I realized that my own background included material of oppression which could be more directly applied.9

Echoing the comments of Judy Chicago, Spiegelman added, “The rhetoric of the genocide that the Nazis used had to do with the extermination of vermin; it wasn’t murdering people, it was squashing parasites, lice, rats.”10

SUE COE

Sue Coe’s web site is appropriately called “Graphic Witness.” Coe has researched and illustrated subjects such as slaughterhouses, factory farming, the subject of containment, the cruelty towards animals in entertainment, AIDS, prisons, apartheid and war—ugly things. Things we prefer to turn away from, and worse, ignore. Coe puts these images out into the world for all to see and to be imprinted by. She witnesses and records through her art. Those recordings go beyond her personal experience to collectively become our experience.

In an email, Coe said to me:

The intolerable treatment of animals raised for food and the slaughtering of those animals were the subjects for Coe’s work, Dead Meat, published in 1995 after six years of work. How does an artist convey the terror in innocent animals’ eyes before death, the sound of chain saws on still breathing bodies, the odor of blood and the jobs of the workers who wade in that blood and flesh every day? How does one stand there as fellow humans compound the horror by adding to the misery of these animals who have no federal laws to protect them? How does an artist convey the sordid reality? Coe viewed first hand slaughterhouses in the United States (to which she was allowed access) and documented that journey with her sketchbook and interviews of the workers and the managers of those facilities, those “killing floors.” Apparently, an artist’s sketchbook did not appear threatening, as in New York State at one slaughterhouse, the head slaughterer pointed the bolt pistol at Coe and said, “This is to kill artists, women and animals.”12

Factory farming denies the beingness and the connectedness to Nature of over 10 billion animals annually in cloistered slaughterhouses.13 Animals are processed, disassembled, packed, and dressed. The majority of animals we eat are female and mothers. The females are impregnated forcefully while under physical restraint called a “rape rack” and held in “iron maidens” for the birthing process.
The female pig is moved to a farrowing crate to give birth. After 2-3 weeks, the piglets are taken from her and the process starts again with her being re-impregnated. After 2-3 years, her body is too broken down to continue and she is considered “spent.” It is then that she is hauled off for slaughter. A 400 pound sow cannot stand, lie down comfortably, much less walk. She cannot turn around. Animal behaviorist Temple Grandin described this as follows, “It’s like being stuffed into the middle seat of a jam-packed jumbo jet for your whole adult life, and you’re not ever allowed out in the aisle.”

During her study of slaughter houses in order to improve them, Grandin witnessed terrified cattle being hoisted up by chains around their rear legs at Spencer Foods in Iowa. In her book, *Thinking in Pictures*, she said, “As I watched this nightmare, I thought, ‘This should not be happening in a civilized society.’ In my diary I wrote, ‘If hell exists, I am in it.’ I vowed that I would replace that plant from hell with a kinder and gentler system.”

Coe’s motivation for her work is perhaps best summarized by her reaction to a passing cattle train made during a visit to Colorado. “The suffering of these animals is mute. For the defenseless, the gentle, the wounded, the ones who cannot speak, life consists of indescribable suffering.”

She described the conflicts she felt while recording the atrocities and inhumanity of the slaughterhouse.

Every part of my being says to stop it, save them, which is impossible. I think of “art” and how I am going to draw it all. Will anything change when people see? This “art” thought comes so quickly after the failed rescue thought, as an attempt to comfort myself, like the idea of the “spirit” of the animal going on to another place. I feel sick and my legs are shaking—my hands too—I concentrate on acting “normal.” Various animals are killed. I look for a way out.

Later she stated, “The screams fall out of the air, as if they never existed.”

On yet another kill floor, she related the scene:

> The door slowly closes. The older man grabs the front and back legs of a goat, swinging it to the ground. He pins the goat down by putting his boot on the other leg. The second goat watches and backs away as close to the closed door as possible. The younger man electrocutes the goat and then cuts its throat. The second goat cries like a child, she shakes. . . . the floor is covered with blood and I can see my reflection in it.

Coe further remarked, “The Holocaust keeps coming into my mind, which annoys the hell out of me. I see this reference in so many animal rights magazines. Is this the comforting measuring rod by which all horrors are evaluated? My annoyance is exacerbated by the fact the suffering I am witnessing now cannot exist on its own, it has to fall into the hierarchy of a ‘lesser animal suffering.’”
A downed animal is what the meat and dairy industries call an animal that is too sick, diseased or disabled to stand on its own. As there is no financial gain in euthanizing an animal that is suffering, that bellowing animal can be dragged by a chain, pushed by high pressure hoses, prodded electrically, fork lifted or hoisted to the kill floor. Others may be left to die on top of each other—however long it takes.

Coe described in detail the experience of one such downer:

The downer is too heavy to get up. She cries as a chain is attached to her leg, and a winch drags her along the ground to a truck. I can see her skin rubbing off, and her bones grinding into the pavement. I can see the white of exposed bone and blood. She can’t lift her head up, so her head, ear, and eye start to tear on the stone. I watch the man operating the winch, and he looks impatient. I start to think of school songs, so my eyes still see but my brain is occupied. At school, we sang those grinding religious ditties: “There is a green hill far away.”

As she reaches the truck, the cow rolls over, exposing her udders, which are full of milk. This is the total degradation of a life.21

I specifically asked Coe how she managed, after all these years, to keep researching and depicting such horrific subjects as factory farming. She responded:

In the face of enormous denial and the silence of collusion at the destruction of all life, we struggle on, and many more will continue on after us, because there is just no other choice. If my work, saves just one life, or makes people happy that they have chosen to be vegans, then that is good enough. Personally—I have no “hope” whatsoever for our species—but understand and am comforted by, the idea that the planet will survive in some other form, and continue to evolve, long after we have have [sic] vanished.22

EDWARD SOREL

Other artists, and cartoonists, have challenged societies and cultures and proven that a visual such as a cartoon can be viscerally powerful. Edward Sorel whose work for The New York Times and The Village Voice began in the 60s. Sorel has done work for The Atlantic Monthly, Vanity Fair and The New Yorker, a publication for which he has created forty-five covers. Sorel’s art has appeared on the covers of The Atlantic, Harpers, Fortune, Forbes, The Nation, Esquire, American Heritage, and The New York Times Magazine. Among his fellow students at Cooper Union were Milton Glaser and Seymour Chwast and, in 1953, the three artists created Push Pin Studios.

In a NY Times interview in 1993, Sorel said, “I was never a theorist. I respond viscerally to injustice. I think every cartoonist responds viscerally to injustice and dislikes bullies.”23 In 1963 Victor Navasky, now editor of The Nation, invited Sorel to serve as art director for the Monocle, a magazine of political satire. This helped push Sorel’s work into a political direction. “Being at the Monocle put me in the middle of
people who were politically aware, says Mr. Sorel. It also showed me you could be funny and pointed at the same time.’  

‘I was politically angry,’ he says, ‘I saw the cold war as an excuse for an entrenched power to stay entrenched, and I must say that nothing in recent history has dispelled this notion.’

Another political influence on Sorel’s art was the Vietnam War. “Pass the Lord and Praise the Ammunition,” 1967, depicts New York Cardinal Francis Spellman in clerical garb and Army boots on the advance, with a rifle and bayonet. An outspoken hawk on the Vietnam War, the conservative Catholic cardinal had been military vicar general of the U.S. armed forces since 1939. In 1972, Sorel used the illustration for the cover of his book, Making the World Safe for Hypocrisy.

In November 1997, in an interview in The Atlantic, Sorel said, “Well, I’m one of those who regard organized religion as a dangerous force. I try whenever possible to do anti-clerical cartoons. The only place that will print them is The Nation, which has a very small circulation and pays almost nothing.” During a joint interview with fellow artists Jules Feiffer and David Levine that was published in the spring 2003 Lincoln Center Theater Review as “Memories of Three Left-Wing Cartoonists,” Sorel was asked about his prior remarks that he hated the Bush administration and Saddam Hussein.” ‘All I said was that we have our religious fanatics fighting their religious fanatics, which leaves me without a side to root for.’

In a later interview in The Atlantic, Sorel continued:

“Right-wing forces are still ignoring facts and promoting divisiveness. Liberals are still gutless. Religion is still the greatest threat to peace and self expression. Nothing has changed except that we now have a president who says he’s a black man, and now have homosexuals who can marry and be as bored as married straights are. The only big difference is that I am now old. My sense of outrage at the stupidity and cruelty of those in power remains the same, but my desire to do anything about it has atrophied.”

GERALD SCARFE

Gerald Scarfe began working for Punch magazine and Private Eye during the early sixties as a satirical cartoonist, and in 1967 he began a long association with the London Sunday Times as their political cartoonist, also carrying out reportage assignments in Vietnam, the Middle East, India and Northern Ireland. Scarfe has now been political cartoonist for the London Sunday Times for over 40 years, and has also worked for The New Yorker magazine for over 20 years.

In an interview with The Guardian, Scarfe said. "An artist’s job is to present a new view of the world, seeing things anew for other people. With people in power, I use the worst techniques I can find.” He further comments, “If people are crazy, you don’t know how far they’ll go. I saw awful things in Vietnam, and was hijacked in Northern Ireland by the IRA, who stuck guns into my back. One of the members saw my sketchbook and remarked, ‘Ah, you’re a brave drawer.’ It was a surreal compliment.”
In an interview with *BBC News*, Scarfe said he had been particularly enthralled with Margaret Thatcher over the years:

“I didn’t agree with her values, but she was amazing material,” says Scarfe. “I always gave her a stabbing, aquiline nose, drooping eyes and a small mouth, full of bloody incisors.

“I could depict her as anything cutting, stabbing, slicing, biting, aggressive—like a dagger, a knife, an axe or scissors.

“She grew progressively more scythe-like and cutting over the years that I drew her.”

Years later, in 2015, Scarfe’s, “The Thatcher Drawings” a major exhibition at The Bowes Museum in England, was very well-received.

**CHARLIE HEBDO**

The *Charlie Hebdo* staff called their newspaper a “journal irresponsible,” attacking ideas, not people. They considered themselves irreverent and the French newspaper’s point was satire and no one or ideal was left out. In the West, France in particular has a strong tradition of irreverent publications. Radical anticlericalism is a French intellectual tradition. For centuries, the country’s state religion, Catholicism, has been the target of anticlerical thinkers including Voltaire, the Marquis de Sade and filmmaker collaborators Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel. Mockery was focused on inconsistencies and absurdities of Church dogma.

*Charlie Weekly* began in 1970, as a companion to the monthly *Hara-Kiri* magazine. *Hebdo* was critical of the ideologies of all religions. They considered themselves to be equal opportunity offenders. According to *Le Monde*, they actually targeted Christianity more often than Islam, and religion as a whole was not the subject addressed the most. *Le Monde* stated that of 523 *Charlie Hebdo* covers published from 2005 to 2015, only seven singled out Islam for ridicule (10 others were cited as mocking multiple religions); many more mocked Christianity and the racism of the French right.

Comics are regarded as mainstream in France. The cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo* were cultural celebrities, often interviewed, acknowledged and on television. Wolinski was the recipient of the Legion of Honour. Cabu was a co-star of a children’s program (“Dorothea!”) as the staff artist.

At 11:30AM Paris time on Wednesday January 7, 2015 two masked gunmen dressed in black and armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles got out of their car and approached the offices of Charlie Hebdo, located in Rue Nicolas-Appert. They entered number 6, Rue Nicolas-Appert, before realizing they had the wrong address. They then moved down the street to number 10 - where the Charlie Hebdo offices are on the second floor. Brothers *Cherif and Said Kouachi* —asked maintenance staff in reception where the magazine’s offices were, and then shot and killed caretaker Frederic Boisseau. The men first had the wrong address, but
when they found the offices of Charlie Hebdo, they shot and killed the caretaker first.

Corinne Rey, (pen name CoCo) one of the staff cartoonists of Charlie Hebdo had just returned to the building after picking up her daughter from day care when the gunmen threatened her, forcing her to enter the code for the keypad entry to the Charlie Hebdo office on the second floor. Wednesdays were weekly editorial meeting day. Everyone would be there.

Once on the second floor, they were heard yelling, “Allahu akbar, we’ll avenge the prophet!” The gunmen then opened fire and killed the editor's police bodyguard, Franck Brinsolaro. Upon entering the meeting room, they shouted, “Where is Charb? Where is Charb?” Finding their target, editor Stephane Charbonnier, known as Charb, who was seated at the head of the U-shaped meeting table, they aimed and fired. Charbonnier had been on the Al Qaeda’s most wanted Westerners list so he was first to be killed of the staff. After calling our the names of the four lead cartoonists, they continued to spray gunfire and within 5 minutes had killed the artists along with three other editorial staff and a guest attending the meeting. “Witnesses said they had heard the gunmen shouting, ‘We have avenged the Prophet Muhammad’ and ‘God is Great’ in Arabic while calling out the names of the journalists.”

In total, 12 people were killed in the attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices: eight journalists, two police officers, a caretaker and a visitor. The murdered were:

Charlie Hebdo editor and cartoonist Stephane “Charb” Charbonnier, 47, who had been living under police protection since receiving death threats

Cartoonists Jean “Cabu” Cabut, 76,

Bernard “Tignous” Verlhac, 57,

Georges Wolinski, 80, and Philippe Honore, 73

Elsa Cayat, 54, psychoanalyst and columnist, the only woman killed

Economist and regular magazine columnist Bernard Maris, 68, known to readers as Uncle Bernard

Michel Renaud, who was visiting from the city of Clermont-Ferrand

Mustapha Ourrad, proof-reader

Police officer Ahmed Merabet, 42, who was shot dead in a nearby street after the attack

Frederic Boisseau, 42, caretaker, who was in the reception area at the time of the attack
Franck Brinsolaro, 49, a police officer who acted as Charb’s bodyguard

From the January 7, 2015 FaceBook page of Captain Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd:

The Loss of Charlie Hebdo is Also a Blow for the Rights of Animals. The Animal Rights Movement lost four great and talented activists today with the murder of cartoonists John (Cabu) Cabut, Stéphane (Carb) Charbonnier, Bernard (Tignous) Verlhac and Georges Wolinski

They were four of the 12 people (including two police officers) killed in the horrific terrorist assault on Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris. Five other people were injured in the shooting.

Just yesterday Charlie Hebdo had contributed one of their cartoons to the activist organization L214 which campaigns in France for animal rights.

The assailants have apparently escaped and there is now an international manhunt underway although the police claim they have three suspects.

Charlie Hebdo is also the only French newspaper to clearly condemn bullfights, the enslavement of dolphins and big game hunting. The magazine also ran a weekly animal rights cartoon.

Not only is there no justification for this violent attack it will also prove to have very negative consequences for Muslims in France and Europe. Marie Le Pen’s Nationalist Party will benefit tremendously as anti-Islamic feelings rise. These assassins are simply uneducated intolerant thugs who have done a horrible disservice to French Muslims.

One of the gunmen shouted, “We have killed Charlie Hebdo.” Knowing the French, I doubt they will now let Charlie (sic) Hebdo die. If anything freedom of expression will be stronger. Freedom must never submit to the tyranny of fanatical religious intolerance.

Charlie Hebdo is a satirical publication. The name derives from Charles De Gaulle and Hebdo meaning weekly. The magazine carried satirical cartoons and articles about all the many political parties and all religions. The Catholic Church had sued the magazine quite a few times.

These were brave, talented and beloved people whose deaths will not be accepted meekly or quietly.

In May 2015, in an Op-Ed in the New York Times, PEN American Center President Andrew Solomon and Executive Director Suzanne Nossel, defended their
organization’s decision to award the PEN/Toni and James C. Goodale Free Expression Courage Award to *Charlie Hebdo*. They stated in part:

Great satirists—Jonathan Swift, Rabelais, Voltaire, Alexander Pope, Mark Twain, Stanley Kubrick—have all offended and been excoriated for it; Daumier was imprisoned after depicting a grossly overweight king excreting favors. Satire is often vulnerable to being construed as hate speech, especially at first blush. Many contemporary American voices jeer at vulnerabilities as a means of unmasking them—think of Joan Rivers, Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy, Louis C.K., “South Park” or “The Colbert Report.”

*Charlie Hebdo*’s staff members knew that producing satire aimed at venerated targets was dangerous. Their valor lies in their dauntless fortitude patrolling the outer precincts of free speech. While many question the defense of that far-flung territory because of the bigotry that can lurk there, *Charlie Hebdo* has guarded it vigilantly, keeping it open for all should a time come when we, too, may need to challenge taboos and risk sacrilege. Without those who stake out the border provinces, we would all be forced to dwell in an ever-shrinking expressive terrain.  

I asked other artists their views on *Charlie Hebdo*. Here is Edward Sorel’s response:

I have nothing original to say about *Charlie Hebdo*, except to say I am NOT one of those who feel those satirists “had it coming.” All organized religions are a threat to world peace and an impediment to our pursuit for happiness. They too seldom get the ridicule they richly deserve.

When I asked Judy Chicago for her reaction to the *Charlie Hebdo* murders, she responded, “Fascism and patriarchal fundamentalism in another form on the rise again.”

Humans are capable of exploiting their ability of taking power over others: human, animal and the planet itself. We demonstrate this as we confine, oppress, batter, slaughter, abuse, rape, pillage, torture and kill for our own gain whether it be for philosophical, spiritual, political, religious, personal, or financial reasons. We are capable of taking what we want, by force if need be, and remain in our minds, the “superior” species describing ourselves as the best, the most intelligent and even “God-like” under certain flags or subscriptions to rituals. The artists, who have chosen the path to question, and to interpret difficult ideas, have been jolting and graphically haunting voices as witnesses of atrocities committed against our own species and others who share this planet. Artists who have chosen, and those who will choose, to dislodge current thinking by questioning what has become acceptable or what is often hidden, in the past or even unnoticed presently can face a path of possible great danger to themselves; especially now in an age of international risk, uncertainty and confusion even if art is the weapon.
NOTES

2. Lucie-Smith 72.
10. Witek 91.
17. Coe, *Dead Meat* 96, 100.
22. Coe, “Fwd: Questions Tonight”
27. Stossel.
30. Samadder.
33. Captain Paul Watson, “The Loss of Charlie Hebdo is Also a Blow for the Rights of Animals” *Facebook* 7 January 2015, 19 August 2015

35. Edward Sorel. "Re: Hello from Patricia Denys.” E-mail to author. 21 June 2015.


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I teach an introductory biology course, a core course for non-science majors, called Scientific Inquiry. It focuses on the processes of science and comes in a number of “flavors” depending upon who is teaching it. I have used evolution as the theme because it is the primary theory in biology, its focal point. In the past few years, I’ve emphasized plant evolution because I am attempting to fight what is called “plant blindness,” the malady in which people don’t think about or even see the plants around them and fail to appreciate their importance. Yet plants are the major source of energy used by living things and pivotal in maintaining an environment that supports life. With topics like environmental change, food security, and bioenergy becoming ever more dominant in the news, it is important for students, for all of us, to appreciate the plant world that surrounds us.

Last year, there was a move to reorganize the faculty in my college, which would have meant that I would be moving from the College of Professional Studies, where I had taught for some time, to the biology department in the liberal arts college. Since I plan to retire in a few years, it was not a major issue, but as I considered it, the thought occurred to me that maybe I could transfer to the department of art and design instead. This may seem an absurd move for a biologist, but for years I have been interested in the relationship between art and biology. Since I didn’t have a lab because I’m not in the “real” biology department, I have done research on the history and philosophy of science, with a focus on art. For example, I am intrigued by Agnes Arber, a British plant morphologist of the first half of the 20th century. Her father was an artist and gave her lessons from an early age. She did all her own illustrations and wrote a book called *The Mind and the Eye* (1954) in which she argued that morphology required not only the analytic mind but the imaginative inner eye as well in order to make sense of plant form. She spurred my interest in botanical illustrations through her first book, *The History of Early Printed Herbals* (1912). Because of this and other research projects, I had some art background, though nothing formal. I finished the coursework for a certificate in botanical illustration at New York Botanical Garden, but failed the portfolio!

With this shaky background, I wasn’t sure my idea would fly, but I decided to ask my boss, figuring if he laughed or frowned, that would be the end of it. But he encouraged me to talk to the chair of art and design department, Belenna Lauto, who was surprisingly encouraging, saying that this fit with her plan to make the department more interdisciplinary. As it turned out, the reorganization never took place, but Belenna asked me to create a section of Scientific Inquiry designed for art majors. This was even better than going to the art department. I am teaching that course: Scientific Inquiry. Evolution and Art, for the first this semester. I should have waited to report on it until I had taught it for at least a full semester, but the topic of this year’s conference fit so well with what I wanted to say that I just had to talk about my course this year.
I don’t have any student evaluations to report on, no assessment data beyond the anecdotal, however, I can report that I am having a wonderful time. I should note, that as with most good ideas, this one didn’t turn out precisely as Belenna and I had planned. I changed the time I usually teach from 7:30 am to 10:40 am, because we figured art majors were not early risers. At the start of the registration period, Belenna sent out a message to art majors telling them about the course. However, only 8 of the 35 students who are enrolled are art or graphic design majors. The other students are from every major from business to criminal justice to English, and while this is a core course that should be taken within the first two years, there are representatives from all four years. This mix has turned out to be wonderful. I assume a few of the non-art students took the course because of the title, but that most selected it because they needed to fill the 10:40 am slot on their schedule. This doesn’t bother me; I’ve spent my career dealing with people who are not interested in science. The worst case is that they are interested in neither science nor art, but art has got to be a little more attractive than science and math.

WHAT MAKES THIS COURSE DIFFERENT

I spent the summer reworking my course to include more art, which really meant including more examples of art in the service of science. For example, Nicholas Joseph von Jacquin used watercolor drawings to document the plants he saw on an expedition to the Caribbean because he found it impossible to press specimens and preserve them from dampness, fungi, and insects (Madriñán, 2013). In a later case, The Flora of the Bahama Archipelago was delayed for a year so that it could be richly illustrated by Patricia Fawcett (Stevenson & Stevenson, 2014). I have been including such references for years, but now I was more purposeful and felt I had permission to do this more extensively. Because I knew that I was not addressing just art majors, I did not add as many art-related topics and assignments as I had originally planned. I used the same basic themes—after all, this is a science course, with an emphasis on evolution, and I didn’t want to change that. But I did add more visuals and examples such as the evolution of eyes, of color vision, and even of art itself. I changed some of the readings, adding Jonathan Kingdon’s (2011) excellent essay on sketching animals in the wild and Nigel Pitman’s article on Thomas Struth’s large-scale photographs of a Peruvian rainforest (http://nautil.us/issue/101/in-our-nature/six-pictures-of-paradise-rp). I hope to teach this course next year, and I can see that I will make some changes. If anything I would be a little more daring in my use of art since it seems to be well-received by a broad range of students.

I have always asked my students to draw on the first day of class. Lately, I have asked them to draw a tree. The results are wonderful in the variety produced. No two are the same, and this was true this year. I definitely flushed out a few art majors; one girl in particular created a entire scene in the time it took the non-artists to create a column with a cloud-like mass of leaves on top. But my goal is just to get everyone drawing, something many of them might not have done for years. A few classes later, I gave students peanuts in shells and asked them to draw the nuts, pairing drawing with observation, the skill that is at the core of biological inquiry. At the same time, I assigned them to select a tree they encounter regularly, either on campus or where they live or work, a tree they can observe over time. These observations will be the subject of their third essay, and I would like them to record
changes over time, which should be relatively easy this time of year. I tell them that I am trying to counter “plant blindness” to get them to notice not only the trees but the other plants, including weeds, that are all over the place. My mantra is: the more you look, the more you see. The art majors already know this, but a reminder doesn’t hurt them, and I hope it gets the others students to be more aware of the world around them, particularly the living world.

Before class began the other day, one of my more engaged students called out that his plant blindness had been cured! He had seen a tree! And he had even taken a picture of it. I consider this a good sign. I can remember when I took a course in geology, something in which I had little interest. All of a sudden, the rock cut-throughs on the NY Thruway were interesting; beach erosion was worth noting. I didn’t become a geologist, but I have never looked at geography in the same way again. This is what I hope to achieve with my students. Stephen’s declaration, which I greeted with a rather irreverent, but heart-felt, “Praise the Lord,” was to me a step in the right direction. And perhaps his enthusiasm will get a few more students to at least glance at a tree.

PORTFOLIO

Students are assigned a portfolio that is due at the end of the semester. They have to select a topic from a list I provide. Once someone has chosen a topic, their initials are put next to it, and no one else than pick that subject. I vary the list from semester to semester. One time it was all food plants, another all trees, another economically important species. I was going to make all the topics art-related until I discovered my dearth of art majors. So I broadened the topics, including not only ones on botanical illustration and plant photography, but others on plants of Southeast Asia, horticulture, and fungi as food. I don’t know what they will be like, but I can’t wait to see the results. I have used the “portfolio” format for years, in the broad educational sense of a collection of materials on a topic, each with a caption and accompanied by an essay describing the experience of creating this collection. This year I expect some of the portfolios will be closer to the art definition than the educational one, but we’ll see. In any case, I think the term indicates the move that has been going on for years of art education pedagogy, or at least vocabulary, moving into education in general, with not only portfolios but curation and exhibition.

THE MAJOR CHANGE

I would say that the major change to the course has been less a change in what I cover, than in how I cover it. I put more emphasis on the visual and on nurturing visual literacy. This has been one of my course objectives for the past few years. In a sense, I have been building up to this course. I begin on the first day by having students look at and think about a work of art that is very much about natural history. It is Charles Willson Peale’s The Artist in His Museum (https://www.pafa.org/collection/artist-his-museum) which is in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and was painted when he was 80 years old. He is standing in front of a curtain that he is pulling back to reveal his natural history museum, with stuffed birds in small dioramas, a turkey carcass at his feet awaiting taxidermy, and a
mammoth skeleton half hidden by the curtain. This painting tells a great deal about the place of natural history in the United States in the early 19th century. I am attempting to set the stage for observation of nature, for the historical context in which I want to present evolutionary theory, and the relationship between art and science. Peale and his sons, especially Titian Peale, were exemplars of that relationship. This semester, I made more of a point of stressing the art/science linking presenting Peale as a gifted portrait artist who was also a naturalist and founder of the first natural history museum in the country.

Later on I also present the work of such artists as Maria Merian who again exemplifies the art/science link (Reitsma, 2008). I note that she was the first natural history illustrator to treat her subjects ecologically. While the likes of Mark Catesby often paired a plant and an animal that wouldn’t even be in the same habitat (Meyers & Pritchard, 1998), Merian pictured the stages of butterfly development with the plants that those insects would lay their eggs on and feed on. For the 20th century, I use the work of Alexis Rockman and Mark Dion who are friends, but produce very different kinds of art. Rockman (1995) often presents what look like realistic views of nature that turn out to be surreal and apocalyptic. Dion, on the other hand, comments on natural history collections, such as his collection of prints of mounted plant specimens called *Herbarium* that he marked with the stamp of the Henry Perrine Herbarium (http://www.artspace.com/mark_dion/herbarium). Perrine was an early Florida collector who herbarium was lost in a fire. Dion deals with the idea of loss in nature by leaving the labels blank.

**GRAPHICS**

I am also including more graphics in Evolution and Art than I have in past iterations of SCI 1000C. In preparing for the course, I have been collecting visualizations from sites such as Seeing Data (http://seeingdata.org) and Information Is Beautiful (http://www.informationisbeautiful.net). There are many great, fact-filled and striking diagrams, particularly dealing with food and with environmental issues. Many of these are static graphics, some are interactive, and some in video form. I am using a variety of these in class. However, I don’t want to just flash them on the screen and then move on to the next topic. As with paintings, I want students to analyze these images and the information represented, particularly when it involves quantitative data. Issues such as information density, readability, and clarity need to be addressed. I am not teaching a graphics course, but there is such a close relationship between message and medium that it is impossible to just talk about content. Also, I want to remind students that here is yet another area where art and science cannot be separated. This is as important for non-artists as for artists; the former will be the consumers of graphics and need some orientation as to what makes good and bad visual presentations. In order to develop this sense, I show some particularly striking and effective videos, such as one on the preserved plant collection at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (https://aeon.co/videos/how-our-developing-understanding-of-plants-changed-our-knowledge-of-life-itself), and good graphics such as a Visual Compendium of Succulent Plants (http://visual.ly/visual-compendium-succulents) that not only displays them but indicates the evolutionary relationships among them.
WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

I already have learned lessons that I can use next time I teach Evolution and Art. First, as usually happens in a new course, I was a little too ambitious and have to cut back on what I plan to do. While this is still a science course, the art aspect does require time. It is not so much that I teach less science, but that I present it differently, using more art to get my points across. Also, I have to accept that I will never have a class entirely of art majors, the mix I have now will probably be similar to what I have in the future. And like other forms of diversity in a classroom, I think this is a good thing. It keeps the conversation from veering too much into art, and reminds me that I also have to avoid going overboard on the science. The major advantage of this course, from my limited perspective at this point in the semester, is that including more art helps me to deal more effectively with scientific inquiry. After all, biology is the most visual of the sciences. Observation is important in doing biology and images are important in communicating about it. I think this is a great example of the theme of this conference that the liberal arts in their broadest sense are enriched by art and inextricably linked to it.

REFERENCES

A NEW AESTHETIC: CHINESE GRAPHIC DESIGN AFTER 1979

Stephen Goldstein
Fitchburg State University

In 1979, in the People's Republic of China, there had been no word for Graphic Design (Pingmiàn shèji) since 1949. The only art or graphic design permitted in China for 3 generations was propaganda arts in service of the state. Paintings, posters, and hand painted billboards of revolutionary workers and images of Chairman Mao in many sizes from hand card to posters to billboards. (slide).

In 1979, the Chinese government began an Open Door Economic and Social Policy in the selected cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. The Open Door Policy made economic growth possible as the state gradually withdrew from its tight control of citizen’s expression (slide).

Thus opened the door to another cultural revolution to create a new, and still developing, visual language of art and design that embraces modernity in aesthetic, cultural, intellectual, and commercial terms, as well as social and political terms though rarely on Chinese soil (slides).

In the economic growth and developing contact with the west, a new aesthetic of art and graphic design emerged out of the vacuum in communications that had enveloped China for three generations.

Tommy Li, a Hong Kong designer, is among the many designers and artists to remake the image of Chairman Mao as an act of self expression (slide), though it is important to note, not for exhibition in mainland China.

In the decade that followed, dramatic changes soon began in design education and practice and university programs began to move away from the antiquated academic and professional system of long apprenticeships and rote learning to achieve mastery. The modernized graphic design education would embrace problem-solving models based in Western design theory and practice joined with the rich five thousand year-old Chinese artistic and calligraphic traditions.

Soon to be celebrated schools were the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), China’s best art and design school, and Tsinghua University, China’s MIT, both in Beijing, as well as the Nanjing Institute of the Arts in Nanjing and China Academy of the Arts (CAA) in Hangzhou. These were prominent among a number of schools to rapidly adapt to new ideas.

In investigating and reporting on Chinese graphic design, I am documenting what Philip Meggs, author of the definitive history of graphic design, called “The immediacy and ephemeral nature of graphic design... with its links with the social, cultural, and political life of its culture enable it to more closely express the [spirit] of [its time] than many other forms of human expression.”¹
My research in Chinese graphic design is concerned with identifying the complexities of information exchange and cross cultural identities in Chinese society to advance an understanding of what Gyorgy Kepes termed the “language of vision”.2

In 2007 I co-authored an article, “The Graphic Language of Min Wang”, for Baseline, the seminal British graphic design magazine, on the graphic design programs being created for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and on the design and art direction of Wang Min, the design director of the program whose identity design had helped China win the Games3. I was intrigued by the highly evolved design thinking and branding in the work I encountered, the level of accomplishment of the wayfinding design programs, and how China’s designers had developed their own visual language in the relatively short time since 1979.

Wang Min is the dean of the School of Design at the Central Academy of Fine Arts and a leader in both design education and practice in China’s embrace of Western design thinking. Educated at Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts, he later studied with Alvin Eisenman and Paul Rand at Yale University’s Graduate School of Art and joined Adobe’s Creative Services department in 1990 as one of their earliest employees. Wang also did work for clients and developed a strong cross-cultural perspective that would prove a prescient design strategy on his return to China in 2001.

Wang Min’s The Forbidden City logo and poster, 1994 (slide) were made for Beijing’s Forbidden City that was the royal palace during China’s last two dynasties, the Ming and Qing, and is now a national park.

As design director for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games’ graphics program his skill in fusing modern Western design, traditional Chinese esthetic and cultural influences, with Olympic Game design traditions, enabled the development of an extraordinary design program created by him and his design team, called ARCOG, made of CAFA faculty and students. (slides).

The Pictograms of the Olympic Games were inspired by calligraphic inscriptions of ancient Chinese seal script, oracle bone writing, bronze script, and other ancient writing systems. (slide) The seal scripts shown were adapted to create ideograms, at right, for the Olympic sports recognized by a diverse audience at the games.

Next is the Beijing Olympics logotype with the Olympic rings as it was used in the games and all promotional materials. (slide)

Designers rapidly moved to Shenzhen, a southeastern coastal village bordering on Hong Kong, that exploded into a major manufacturing city, where people could almost see across the border to the then still independent British colony of Hong Kong.

The design revolution that began in Shenzhen and other zone cities was driven, in large part, by the examples and practices enviably created by designers in Hong Kong and Japan.
China has since become an extraordinarily rich environment, with designers exploring western design movements and philosophies to create a unique visual language of cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration, all serving to advance China’s stated objective to become a leader in the design industry.

Henry Steiner, a pioneering modern designer, was a Viennese born émigré to the US who studied under Paul Rand at Yale University. He went to Hong Kong in 1964 to design *Asia Magazine* and stayed to help create a modern design movement that would be a major influence on designers in China.

Steiner is especially noted for his designs of a series of bank notes for the Standard Charter Bank in 1978, revised in 2003 (slide). Each banknote design is based on mythical Chinese animals used to reflect an orderly arrangement and straightforward hierarchy based on denomination. Spherical “see-through” features in the upper right, among a number of elements used for security, represent the Chinese elements earth, fire, wood, and metal. The historical scenes on the reverse sides look toward Hong Kong’s Harbor and Victoria Peak.

He and other Hong Kong designers developed a cross-cultural design movement that became a model for mainland Chinese designers in joining 20th century western design thinking with their 5,000 year old artistic and calligraphic traditions to develop a new visual language.

Design books were very hard to come by until the late 80s. Chinese designers would plead with visitors to leave their books behind as reference material. The first modern Chinese poster competition was held in 1992, judged by designers from the Hong Kong community, to great success in which many mainland designers achieved wide recognition.

In 1995, Steiner and Ken Haas published *Cross-Cultural Design: Communicating in the Global Marketplace* (Thames & Hudson, 1995), the first anthology to examine and document the accomplishments of leading graphic designers practicing for clients outside their own countries.

Kan Tai Keung is an influential design pioneer, working in Hong Kong. Tai Keung arrived from China and began as a tailor’s apprentice at age 15 while studying painting with artist family members and enrolled in design courses at China University in Hong Kong. His work frequently uses elegant traditional calligraphic characters in abstracting elements of Chinese cultural identity contrasted with modern design. He was the first Chinese designer in *Who’s Who in Graphic Design*.

His poster for his exhibit at the PMQ Gallery in Hong Kong joins calligraphy and photography in symbolic modernist design. His “...generous use of neutral white ground is linked to the fundamental aesthetic principle of void placement (bubai) in Chinese calligraphy and painting.”

His project “Chong Qing Identity Guideline” for the city of Chong Qing in southwest China is a three volume boxed set identity and graphic standards manual for managing a citywide graphic identity (slide).
Yu Bignan (b. 1933) is a key pioneer who, unlike most, was able to leave China in the early 60s to study abroad and continued his Chinese university education in a graduate program at the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig, Germany.

He was one of the earliest modern designers in China and a professor of book design and chair of the department at the Academy of Arts & Design, at Tsinghua University, China’s MIT, in Beijing and was the first elected Chinese member of Alliance Graphique International (AGI).

His work emphasizes the significance of the traditional Chinese arts of painting and calligraphy as the basis of visual language in modern Chinese design (slide).

Xu Bing (b.1955) is another pioneer of modern design who came to wide recognition in the 1980s. His experience in China during the turbulent Cultural Revolution period transformed his thinking and views of China’s traditional culture and the function of language and calligraphy in communication.

His thought-provoking work examines the foundations of Chinese culture and the nature of communication, calligraphy, and art making through graphic design, conceptual art, sculpture and animation.

He lived in New York for 18 years, winning a MacArthur grant, and exhibiting his very large and small scale art and design projects widely. He is currently Vice President of the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing where he received his BFA and Masters degrees and taught printmaking. CAFA is one of the most highly regarded art and design schools in China.

His challenge to the failure of authentic communication in Chinese society is seen in Dada driven projects as Book From The Sky (1988). For that project he produced a four volume 604 page book in the style of fine editions from the Song and Ming dynasties, but actually made of an invented and incomprehensible calligraphic vocabulary of visual signs that resemble traditional Chinese characters. It has been exhibited as both books and a scroll.

His graphic novel, Book from the Ground, (2012), narrates the story of a day in the life of an urban worker told with ideographic signs made of wayfinding, corporate, chemical, food, game insignias, and instructional signs that challenge conventional readings of visual language and Chinese calligraphy, in particular, offering a language readable by all. The work recalls Iliia Zdanovich’s 1923 book Le-Dantius as a Beacon and James Joyce’s novel Ulysses.

Lu Jingren is one of China’s most influential modern book designers and illustrators and winner of many awards in book design. After the Cultural Revolution, he began his design career in the late 1970s at the China Youth Publishing House. In 1989, he studied book design in Kobe, Japan with designer Sugiura Kohei and learned a great deal about the "senses" of design that guides him.
In his book designs Lu creates multiple levels of texture and meaning focused on the senses he sees engaged in reading a book. His designs emphasize the book as an interactive three-dimensional object in which a text may unfold as a scroll as often as a single page to turn.

“The “Flip Book” is a conceptual book designed in two attached sections with multiple entry points. Work from each major Chinese geographical area opens with a section divider featuring perforated flaps that peel back to reveal the area’s name. The tabs are metaphors for opening windows to reveal what had been forbidden until the late 70s.”

Among a new generation—often called the third generation—of Chinese graphic designers to embody contemporary aesthetics are Jianping He and Jiang Hua both born in 1973, coming of age long after the Cultural Revolution ended.

Jianping He studied art at the China Academy of Art at Hangzhou. He moved to Berlin to study at the Berlin University of the Arts and remained in Berlin where he opened Hesign Studio. With a remarkable blend of type, images, and photography, his posters exhibit the majesty and serenity of traditional Chinese landscape painting interrupted surrealistcally with modern elements that provoke social commentary.

He also uses photomontage in to create an unexpected surrealist visual metaphor on cloning titled “Humans and Science” for an announcement of a conference staged by students of the Berlin University of the Arts.

Jiang Hua taught graphic design at Ningbo University and is now a member of the design faculty at CAFA forming his design studio in 1998.

In his design work, Jiang explores modern Chinese typography, its development, basic structure, and history. This research forms the basis of his unique methodology, visual explorations, and creative approach in his recent work.

The poster design is of his typeface Eastern Zhejiang, a Chinese typeface, published in 2003 for Eastern Zhejiang Culture Magazine.

Jiang said “So many of us are talking about design in China or design in a Chinese context, and I deem it the responsibility of educators, schools, and design institutes to carry out serious research on the topic. This, in my opinion, starts with typography.”

Ma Quan, another new generation designer, is a professor of design in the Academy of Art & Design at Tsinghua University, China’s MIT. He is both a graphic designer and environmental graphic designer focused on visual identity design and visual communication design for city planning. His texts are widely used in planning & modernizing public visual identity design, wayfinding, and large-scale outdoor advertising for cities in China.

His “Art and Science” poster was designed for an “Art and Science International Exhibition and Global Symposium.” A cloud of @ signs serve as a visual metaphor
using the ideogram for Tai Ji, the traditional Chinese cultural sign for infinite energy and interaction.

Wu Yong’s book designs are exceptionally elegant designs that often emphasize three-dimensionality and combine traditional Chinese book arts, modern shaped page layouts, die-cuts, and unique folds to illuminate the subject matter. Yong studied at the Academy of Art & Design at Tsinghua University in Beijing with Lu Jingren, graduating in 1988, and then joined China Youth Publishing House as a designer. He too started his own studio in 1998.

His Chuan Shi You Bao (The Precious Stamps) book, from 2010 is designed to suggest stamps in a museum display. This two-volume conceptual book design contains antique postage stamps embedded in die-cut pages covered with transparent film.

Cao Fang, a professor at the Nanjing Arts Institute, incorporates ancient Chinese themes, rich cultural symbolism and emphasizes complex digital layering in her work.

The poster, “Live Culture-Type Culture,” designed for an international poster exhibition in 2001 uses collaged and layered signs, calligraphic writing, and typographic characters in an expressionist design to illustrate the history of writing and printing which she knits smoothly together. The bold Chinese character repeated across the poster is the logogram for "living."

Han Jiaying is also of the new generation of designers with a solo design practice is in Shenzhen. Working on a range of identity and branding projects, he poetically deconstructs traditional Chinese calligraphy, combining it with cultural signs to create new signs and new interpretations.

This poster was designed for Frontiers magazine in 1997. The tranquil Chinese character for Mei (beautiful) is transformed into a Dada inspired image with half of the ideogram’s strokes reconstructed as a handprint, creating conceptual tensions between a calligraphic and a pictorial sign for beauty.

Han Xu is an innovative graphic designer and a professor of graphic design and motion graphics at the respected China Academy of Art (CAA) in Hangzhou. His poster designs are often a complex mix of traditional Chinese characters and modern Western design that create new signs in a “conceptual balance.”

His poster “Image of Istanbul–West and East”, 2003, uses conceptual wordplay on the name ‘Istanbul’ to contrast the city’s ancient traditional cultural roots with its Westernized economy and social structure. The poster was part of a Chinese program to recognize Asian cities outside of China.

Tommy Li, a leading third generation Hong Kong based designer, brings a Western and postmodern visual language to his graphic design work, which he combines with elements of traditional Chinese arts. Li incorporates layered, textured, and deconstructed digital design in his work, particularly in publications such as Vision
Quest a bilingual (English and Chinese) large-format magazine he designed, with contributors, and published (1999–2002) that addressed a wide range of social and cultural topics.

Slides: Cover and spread for Vision Quest Magazine, no. 1, 1999, designed and published by Tommy Li.

Another Hong Kong designer who uniquely embraces modern Western design is Stanley Wong. A graduate of the Hong Kong Technical Teachers’ College, he refers to himself as a “social worker of visual communications.” His designs juxtapose Chinese aesthetics and modern visual language to emphasize social messages that frequently call attention to interpersonal human relations.

His poster here from his People poster series, 2003, features human body parts combined with strokes of Chinese characters to form a complete single Chinese word for Eye.

The internet has given the Chinese a “new form of public space”, as writer and former Eye Magazine editor, Rick Poyner said and a platform for ideas that otherwise cannot be expressed. Wang Min has said “Our modernization path should be characterized by synthesis, innovation and sustainable development. We should find our own way based on our own culture and tradition.”

Large quantities of information can now be seen and shared in China most of the time. Chinese designers and artists are able to navigate around the tight controls still placed on expression by the PRC to communicate with the west and each other. The opportunity of open bandwidth will allow China’s designers to increasingly share ideas and build design movements that increasingly reflect their own voice and culture.

NOTES

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The representation of artists in the art historical canon is very specific. Only a specific narrative is built and is perpetuated through that lineage. Even though there are a diverse lot other people searching and executing solutions to similar visual investigations, those are not recognized. The solutions may have come earlier but the trajectory was not meant to include anyone other than the white Eurocentric voice. This was established and furthered through colonialism and the thought that if you are not one of the normal groups whomever you are conforming is a must. Now, in the last century there has been a great push of diverse voices to be heard and participating in the contemporary conversations around art and more. One diverse concept that surfaced in 1945 was Art Brut.\(^1\) This newly developed thought created a different platform in which to engage, view, and think about art and creation. It directly translates into Raw Art, created by people who were either clinically insane, untrained, and or from extra cultural backgrounds.\(^2\)

Diversity has not been so present within art prior to the last century but within the last century the conversations are becoming less marginalized. Within this essay I will discuss aspects of diversity in contemporary art by discussing the life and work of Judith Scott. While she was alive, she was mute and described as an outsider. Now her work is present in exhibitions all over the world and her works have been collected by museums. Does this legitimize her? No, the fact that she has developed her own unique voice within a set of standards that she has set for herself, not only is a parallel studio practice technique to other contemporary artist, she also navigated expressing herself in an unique way with diverse materials. Labeling her as an outsider artists is marginalizing and provokes the thought that she is somehow a lesser artist than another. The intent I will describe is not only present within the precision of her objects but share how others who watched her exclaimed it. The ways on how art is addressed and described needs to change. More people are pushing their way into the mainstream of the art world forcing new views to be used when acquainted with art. In comparison to Judith Scott there are other artists that work with similar visual constructs. While these constructs are conditions that each individual creates they are just as valid as each life matters.

In the 1940’s Jean Dubuffet started to collect art to further describe and illustrate examples of what he defined as Art Brut. Jean Dubuffet also wrote articles for an illustrated publication called L’Art Brut, which was started in 1964.\(^3\) As he describes, Art Brut or raw art is work that is created and escapes the cultural conditioning and truly proceeds from original or normalized mental attitudes.\(^4\) This is powerful. This shows that there are possibilities for legitimacy beyond the traditions in how to evaluate and approach art. This new field of thought created a stand for future artists to be appreciated and seen.
Judith Scott was an artist, born with Down syndrome and a twin in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1943.\textsuperscript{5} She was institutionalized for great deal of her life. Unfortunately there are not many known records of her time in the institution, Cleveland State Hospital.\textsuperscript{6} But at the age of 43, Joyce, Judith’s twin sister decided to get legal custody, guardianship of her.\textsuperscript{7} It was not until then that people discovered that she had been deaf and that lent to why she did not speak. In several interviews Joyce says that with a friends help they discovered the Creative Growth Center and decided it would be a great place for Judith Scott to attend. The Creative Growth Center is an organization that provided a platform for art making and the facilities to do so for the last eighteen years of her life.\textsuperscript{8}

Creative Growth Center opened its doors in 1974.\textsuperscript{9} The center is an organization that provides an environment focused on adult artists with developmental, mental, and physical disabilities.\textsuperscript{10} They provide a professional studio for artistic development, gallery exhibitions and representation, and a social atmosphere among peers. In this environment Scott was among professionals and colleagues. The director of Creative Growth, Tom di Maria, said, “It was about two years she did nothing but soon she started to make objects she was deeply invested in”.\textsuperscript{11} He shared this in a short segment about the artist on BBC Culture Show in 2011. This is one of a few institutions devoted to fostering a creative setting for artists with developmental, mental, and physical disabilities.

Judith Scott made her first sculpture in 1988.\textsuperscript{12} It was an object that was comprised of found sticks, paint, string, and the work engages object making from a specific view, different and completely unique. This object is horizontal, linear, and arranged with different textures resembling a cocoon or nest. The first few objects that she continued to make were similar to this object, comprised of arranged and wrapped sticks.

The next iteration of her work developed into larger, round, spherical, or multidimensional sculptures. Some of the works are similar to reliquaries and present a similar function. The purposes of European reliquaries are to house a holy relic and may possibly be in the same form of the relic inside. Scott’s works are similar to reliquaries in that fashion. Within her sculptures there are objects that she collected that may have been her relics or items of which she claimed ownership. After building an inner structure she then encased the diverse materials in an abundance of yarn, string, and or whatever linear soft material she had. In some of her works she exposes the items too.

Many connections can be made to what the work is, but without the articulation of the artist the viewer must acknowledge the objects as what they are without inference. Especially with knowing the history of art and the developments with modernism and post-modernism this artist is not addressing or working within any of these conditions. Her own condition as shown in this image is that they are parts of her and she is attached to them.

She has been described as an outsider or self-taught artist, but the important aspect of her life that gets talked about the most is that specifically. Beyond her disability, the work has a presence and power. It exists within art, but is there a place outside of
tradition or mainstream for art to exist? Yes! An artist who created and operated outside the cultural conditioning of western society and created art was what Jean Dubuffet described as Raw Art. This applied to Judith Scott also. The objects are honest and proceed from tradition towards innovation, originality, and unpredictability.

People who worked at the Creative Growth Center saw the way she was working and how her work developed. One person explained that her practice is similar to a trained artist because she made decisions that furthered the process and development of the work she made. Tom di Maria said, “She enjoyed making and would make until her hands bled. She valued her work and made specific aesthetic decisions, specifically as she grew more comfortable with the process”. In 2000 he also explained that Scott began to make larger objects that were almost too much for her to handle by herself and it seemed uncomfortable for the work to be that large because she wanted to hide or protect her work”. When she worked on those pieces she was unable to have complete control and so she only made a few of substantial size. Some of her work has been x-rayed and viewing the slides you can see that her work has precious items within them. It was explained that as she furthered this work she started to care more about her dressing in the morning. There could be a connection to her placing her and others valuables within her work to protect them, the care she showed her works by hugging them, and that she worked everyday for eighteen years.

Judith Scott’s production time was limited to eighteen years and through that time she developed a body of work that was highly complex. Scott was formally addressing non-representational subject matter that was abstract and limitless. In terms of formal analysis how and where does her work exist? It is difficult to decipher because she could not speak for herself. Despite her inability to communicate by way of tradition skills I believe she is still corresponding with the world in her own way. As I interacted with her objects many avenues were present to intermingle with her work.

Figure 1
As the works are viewed there are consistent aspects that cooperate within the objects, compete visually, and are still balanced. Within this untitled work (figure 1) from 1993 it has its own information. No other work is the same as this one or even developed the same visual engagements. The composition is specific; the colors and form are very direct. The execution of the shape is arranged and then specific colors that are piled on top emphasizing that specific shape. It is cohesive. The orange circle in the center of the object is emphasized with yellow underneath, purple shapes flank the orange circle, and the purple color emphasizes the orange. The orange also compliments the purple. The continuation of the orange on the underside is adding to the cohesion of the color balance within this untitled work. There are a mass of lines present and are quite abundant. The lines are on top of each other and soon become the actual existence of the object also resemble tendons or muscles pulling back and forth. Another aspect of the object is how the linear elements of the work actualize the form, which is furthering the balance of the piece in proportionate thirds.

![Figure 2](image)

In comparison to Judith Scotts piece that is untitled, Annabeth Rosen’s work titled “Cherry” (figure 2) is carrying a similar disposition from an entirely different point of view. The work by Scott is contained but seems as if it can effortlessly float in the air. In contrast the Rosen sculpture alludes to something beautiful and seductive but it is very substantial and visually heavy. Of course the works have differing immaterialities but they both are containing or restricting the viewer access to an interior of the mass presented. One work is completed with the abundance of line and the form is conducive of those specific lines. Within Rosen’s work, the clay seems to be flowing but is static and unmoving and provides the surface for the mass that it has over
come. This is a similarity between both works, in which each is dependent on the form within. Also the works are confining but a different between Rosen and Scott is that one is Scott has a freedom that Rosen is tightening with the density of the clay. Both Scott with the layered lines over the preexisting form and Rosen with a lack of view within the form of her sculpture *Cherry* are similar. What makes one an outsider artist and the other an inside artist? How can these decisions be placed on artists especially when through their practice they are still processing the world and it is being translated through their work?

Within contemporary art there has been an influence of how art is created and how it is viewed. It is moving at a slow pace. Even though there are constructs and conditions that have influenced how art is validated it can change. Just like all lives matter, artists matter too. In comparison to Judith Scott there are artists working similar to her like Annabeth Rosen and more.

In 1945 *Art Brut* was thought about and shared with the world by Jean Dubuffet.\(^\text{16}\) Raw Art is supposed to be created by people who are clinically insane, untrained, and or are from an extra cultural backgrounds.\(^\text{17}\) Within the last one hundred years there has been grand pushes of diverse participation and expansion in art. The system that created art and the conditions in which we live in were created by the white Eurocentric powers. The world that we live in today was solidified by colonialism and the groups that were colonized were thought of as not "civilized". What is a civilization and what is culture?

Researching and investigating within the art historical canon, there is a limited view of diverse voices represented and it is very specific and one sided. During the process of research, Judith Scott’s work was being exhibited at The Elizabeth Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum earlier this year. The exhibition was a survey of some of the close to two hundred objects that Scott created during her eighteen year period at the Creative Growth Center.\(^\text{18}\)

Diverse voices have been lacking representation within the mainstream and art historical canon but within the last century conversations have been and are becoming less marginalized. Judith Scott's life and work is included in diversifying the narrative and the more people included, more people can be accepted. While she was alive, she was mute, was institutionalized for over thirty years, and described as an outsider. Does the facilitation of her work being exhibited in museums and galleries nationally and internationally legitimize her? The unprecedentedly high market values of modern and contemporary artworks; the demands of a celebrity culture in which the more acclaimed artists are treated as "stars"; a system that reveres art works that are not necessarily original but sensationalized make it even harder to be an artist.\(^\text{19}\) Judith Scott was an exceptional individual creator of unique artifacts.

**NOTES**


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