WORKING TITLE

Media Packaging and
the Margins of Art

Kalani Michell

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Introduction

The Work Before "the Work." And After

It is clear that you should read this. Although it's difficult to pretend that a project, such as this one, is almost as good as done. Because it never is. In an introduction, you expect to find certain things, delivered at a glance: a pitch of the project, an incomplete summary of what authorities have said about it, a breakdown of what lies ahead, and an explication of the title one is working with for now that tries to hold a place, to unify and delineate the work, fleshing out its keywords—*working, media, packaging, margins, art*—that activate specific fields of thought and disciplinary frameworks. While all these things gesture toward a preparatory relationship vis-à-vis the project to come, they are often drafted and refined toward the end of it, like an introduction itself. "Forewords are afterthoughts. They are exemplars of the paradox of writing, hence of creating history. By definition, they precede the text, but, as a rule, they do so by deferment and insinuation. They try to impose a closure on what until then could be considered work in progress. Yet by this very gesture they keep the game going."[1]

Just think of the packaging of this book, inscribed with the title on the cover: The imposed sequence of reading will ask that you read it before the work it entitles, but the relationship between the two is far from linear. We talk about entitling *the work* because not everything has a title. A work, *Werk* in German or *oeuvre* in French, something constituted by a single author conveying cultural status, embodying valuable aesthetic qualities, and promising closure—such as a book, a film, or a visual artwork—is entitled by conferring authority and validation. It is assigned a proper name that has gone through a number of legitimizing institutional processes along the way. The title is often the end product of strategic back-and-forth negotiation aimed at enhancing the book's appeal on the market.[2] My name is underneath it, although it's the result of composite authorship.

It makes a set of claims meant to help you get your footing. But it does so from a place on the margins that remains unstable. The title compels an initial desire to arrive at a meaning, a fixed location on solid ground from which we can proceed. "This desire draws, or at least calls you to this bank where meaning can finally be stopped, fixed, anchored—with the most precise mooring of a legitimacy. You want to see the shore, you wish to discern the lines of the border."[3] These lines seek to carve out fields that supposedly don't matter, making cuts along the way and helping pin things down. To draw readers in, mobilize allies, and provide reviewers with initial keywords to facilitate the reading process, the title promises order and unity, a headline under which a whole book can be subsumed, but it implicates and demands a perpetual mode of return that can ultimately undermine this structural integrity.[4] *Working Title*, this title-pitch, wants to redirect you back to the work it does and continues to do, is interested in remaining "undecided, imprecise, unspecified, always to be specified," perpetually in the doing of something.[5] Suspended on the shore of where it might take us is where it wants to take us.

It's where the pitch is. To "pitch" a book, a film, or an artistic project is to engage in rhetorical promises of the thing to come in order to convince someone of the relevance, uniqueness, innovation, and perhaps even the beauty of the final product in its different stages of development. Storyboards, film trailers, blueprints, architectural models, and title sequences all participate in the rhetoric of the pitch. They're an impetus for getting started in a different medium or format, which can then be reconfigured after the fact. The pitch is an experiment in persuasion that is supposed to make complex things look clear-cut. Before it was published, the pitch for this book was different than what I promise here. The book only appears to be clear-cut. Otherwise, I would miss the point that I am making here. And, of course, even once the book is in print, I will pitch it differently depending on the context. It'll change depending on what my family, what my colleagues, what some part of the public, and what future applications might want to know.

So, here it is: This book explicitly thematizes the emergence and gestures of what you're reading right now, among several other common yet neglected creative media processes that contribute to the canonization and institutionalization of audiovisual media, including performance, installation art, visual art, and film. When we think about a work of art, we often imagine it in its definitive form: A book, film, or visual artwork is commonly conceptualized and consumed in terms of its highly revised, final version—meaning that the detours, false starts, and delays integral to artistic production are usually edited out in the end. What we visualize and imagine is the editorially cleaned-up, established edition. The comfort zone of hiding dissonance. Procedures of binding things up in a neat way, like the spine of a book that offers an organized, simple structure for displaying a few supposedly key pieces of information so that "the work" can be easily found and grasped at a glance.[6] Let's take an example of this logic that might, at first, seem farfetched: Friedrich Hölderlin's *Der Tod des Empedokles* (*The Death of Empedocles*), print media from 225 years ago. It's a time when the notion of "a work" came into

being in various media associated with the category of "fine arts."[7] *The Death of Empedocles* is a classic tragedy in terms of how to pin it down in the very first place. If we were to send students to the bookstore to get this canonical text, they could come back with different versions of it under the very same title.[8] The wording that you want to discuss in class does not necessarily match up all the time. This is because of the different ways it has been edited. The editors adopted various strategies for addressing the question of how to turn the manuscript into a book, how to distill drafts and multiple versions of a text into a finalized object like the one you're holding in your hands or scrolling through on your screen.

One way is Die Große Stuttgarter Hölderlin-Ausgabe (the Stuttgart Hölderlin Edition) of *Friedrich Hölderlin: The Complete Works* (1961), edited by Friedrich Beißner. The *Empedocles* compositions are presented across two volumes, and the editorial strategy is materially inscribed on their spines: There is volume 4.1, labeled *Text*, and then there is volume 4.2, labeled *Lesarten*, the interpretations. We can call volume 4.1 the coherent text, in the sense of a structure containing constituent elements that fit together, belong to each other, and cohere to make a whole. It's the final version, *die Lesefassung* in German, and is thus labeled "text." But this coherent text is in fact the product of a distillation process that has been relegated to the apparatus, to volume 4.2. We can call this the incoherent text, as it contains the variants, the various interpretations of the text. Commonly defined in the negative, the incoherent text represents a lack of comprehensibility and compatibility, calling to mind the elemental definition of incoherence, such as the physical properties of water. The coherent text employs the logic of truth and traces. It claims that the ideas in this supposedly final version are closer to the real decision-making processes that took place in the past, between 1797 and 1800. It simulates, in other words, an unfragmented source text. The incoherent text is where editors try to explain their microdecisions throughout the process of turning the manuscript into a book. These are the unpurified notes about all the problems of wording, word order, handwritten marks, slashes, and underlines that are so difficult to decipher and that are usually banished to the footnotes, to the apparatus. There is volume 1, "the text," and there is volume 2, everything else. In fact, volume 2 isn't even called or acknowledged as a text. But it is. Just one in disguise. As if it were a separate realm. It is the result of the rhetorical strategy of hiding the creative decision-making process and the mess. Matthew Kirschenbaum has written about this kind of rhetoric in his research on the "forensic imagination," discussing approaches to the forensic that synthesize a collection of traces into chains of evidence, simulating a step-by-step unfolding of truth, presenting a kind of *Lesefassung*.[9] There can be a homogenizing effect to such "synthesizing operations," giving rise to the elusive image of "the whole work," *des Werkganzes* in German, an oeuvre based on myths of centrality, continuity, and coherence.[10] In other words: *Friedrich Hölderlin: The Complete Works*. When we open up volume 1, *The Death of Empedocles* appears as a work that is stable, self-evident, and confidently centered in the visual frame of reference: a clean, unified, contained, and coherent single-authored text (figure 1).

Die brüderliche Nänie, die uns
Zur lieben Stadt hinausgeleitete.
Ha! mir – bei allen Göttern die mich sehn –
Sie hättens nicht gethan, wär ich
Der Alte noch gewesen. Was? o schändlich
Verrieth ein Tag von meinen Tagen mich
An diese Feigen – still! hinunter solls,
Begraben soll es werden tief so tief,
Wie noch kein Sterbliches begraben ist.

PAUSANIAS

Ach! häßlich stört' ich ihm das heitre Herz
Das herrliche, und bänger denn zuvor
Ist jezt die Sorge.

EMPEDOKLES

Laß die Klage nun
Und störe mich nicht weiter; mit der Zeit
Ist alles gut, mit Sterblichen und Göttern
Bin ich ja bald versöhnt, ich bin es schon.

PAUSANIAS

Ists möglich? – heilt der furchtbar trübe Sinn
Und wähnst du dich nicht mehr allein und arm,
Du hoher Mann, und dünkt der Menschen Thun
Unschuldig wie des Heerdes Flamme dir,
So sprachst du sonst, ists wieder wahr geworden?
O sieh! dann seegn' ich ihn, den klaren Quell,
An dem das neue Leben dir begann,
Und fröhlich wandern morgen wir hinab
Ans Meer, das uns an sichres Ufer bringt.
Was achten wir der Reise Noth und Mühn!
Ist heiter doch der Geist und seiner Götter!

EMPEDOKLES

O Kind! – Pausanias. hast du diß vergessen?

FIGURE 1. Stuttgarter Ausgabe of *Der Tod des Empedokles* (1797–1800), from *Friedrich Hölderlin, Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4.1, *Text*, ed. Friedrich Beißner (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1961), 54. Photograph by KM.

Let's compare this page of *The Death of Empedocles* with the corresponding pages from a different version, Die Frankfurter Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe (the Frankfurt Historical-Critical Edition) from 1985, also known as the Frankfurt Edition, edited by Dietrich Sattler (figure 2).[11] In this other example of *The Death of Empedocles*, we have a very different presentation of the creative process. In one combined text, we have the photograph of the manuscript on the left-hand side of the page and a site-specific transcription of the microdecisions that have gone into deciphering it on the right-hand side. While the verso offers the palimpsest of handwritten scribbles, the recto presents an opportunity to understand the process by which these scribbles have been interpreted in print. It's an edition that "presents not only Sattler's reconstructed text . . . but also a variorum text, that is, a text that shows each of Hölderlin's many emendations to his text—his crossings-out, his entering of parentheses and brackets, his underlinings, his replacement texts, marginal jottings, and so on. Immensely complicated . . . ."[12] On the recto, these typographic variations point to sites of uncertainty that have shaped and mediated what we understand to be *The Death of Empedocles* up until 1985, affording a first look at the network of detours, impasses, guesses, fantasies, and assumptions that have accompanied the editing practices of Sattler as well as others whose decisions have influenced the trajectory of this text. Parentheses tell us that maybe this was text that was supposed to be deleted. Angle brackets refer to text that was enclosed. Square brackets can indicate there was some uncertainty in deciphering this text. Indentation and bold type organize editorial choices made in the presence of competing possibilities, with earlier base texts remaining visible as points of reference against which these revisions have been made. It's an edition that registers and opens up space on the page for additions, overwritten and abandoned text, watermarks, and "other hands." Far from a clean, coherent, in-frame page simulating a *Lesefassung*, we instead have a messy recto-verso presentation of the practices and microdecisions that shape what we only later come to understand as "the text" or "the work," some of which even contradict each other. This presentation of *The Death of Empedocles* resists the single-author frame of reference, showing instead what is usually relegated to the space-off, what the *Lesefassung* "leaves out or, more pointedly, makes unrepresentable," the indiscrete.[13] There is no unity of thought here, no overarching logic that organizes the page into a coherent collection of traces that have been neatly and linearly processed.[14] In this edition, a new text emerges.[15] What we are presented with here is a situation that goes far beyond the notion of a source text.

This presentation of the creative process offers a glimpse of the rhetoric surrounding the construction of this "work." Media rhetoric is essential for understanding not only *what* media mean but also *how* they come to mean. To begin to grasp how they mean, one has to first decenter the histories of a work of art or media technology that are usually organized around primal scenes of emergence primarily attributed to the genius of a single (usually white, Western, male,

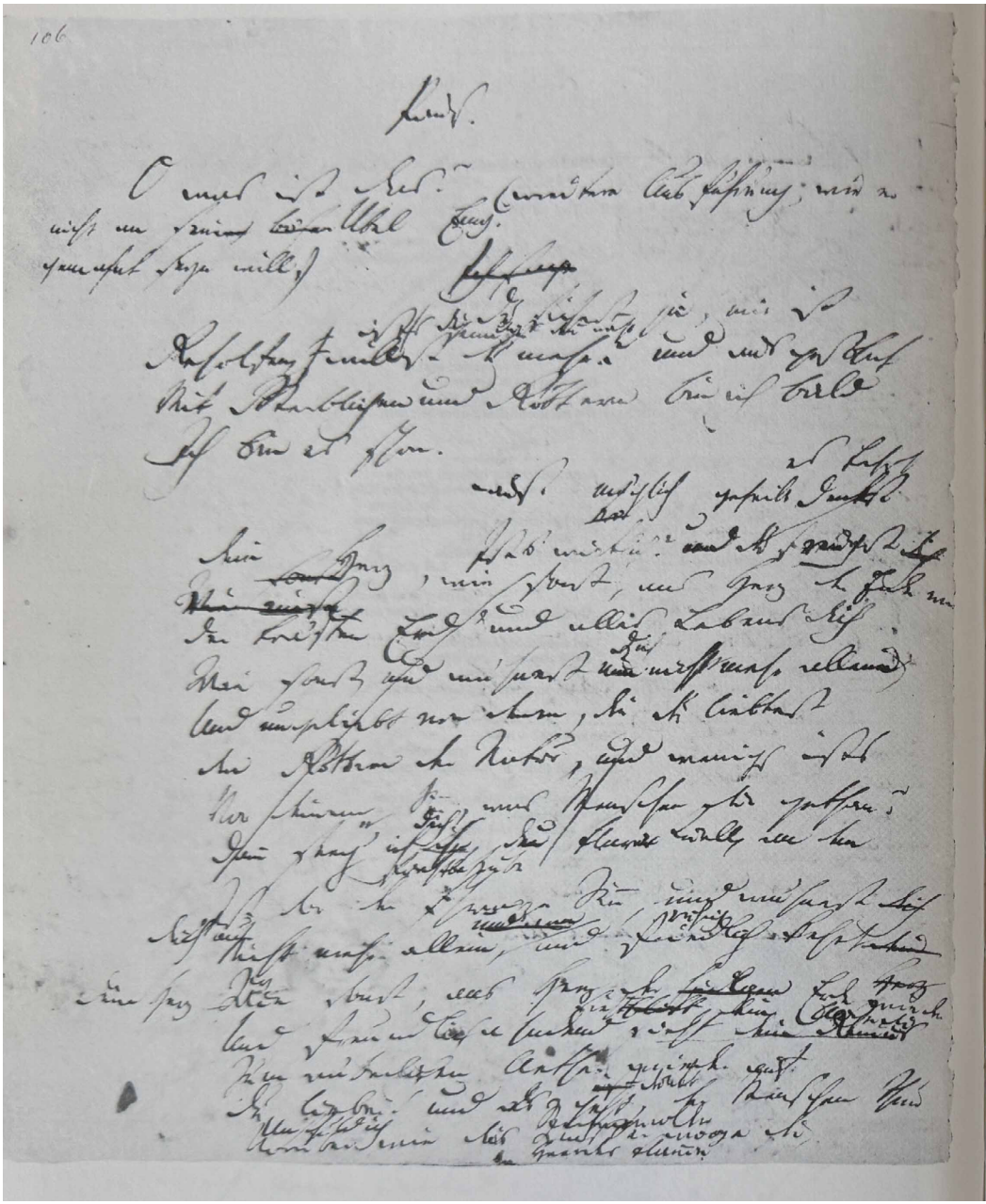


FIGURE 2. Frankfurter Ausgabe of *Der Tod des Empedokles*, from *Friedrich Hölderlin, Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 12, *Empedokles I*, ed. Dietrich Sattler (Frankfurt: Verlag Roter Stern, 1985), 212–13. Photograph by KM.

Paus.

O was ist das?

⟨weitere Ausführung, wie er
nicht an sein(e(n))(bösen) Übel Emp.
gemahnt seyn will(,)⟩

(Ich sage)

Du siehest ja, mir ist
dir diß den nicht
ist(s) genug?
Geholfen,(/)willst du mehr? und ausgesöhnt

Mit (G)Sterblichen und Göttern bin ich bald

Ich bin es schon.

es kehrt
Paus. möglich geheilt (denkst)
(Tra)
Dein Herz, Ists wirklich? und (du) freu(e)st (dich)
((sonst) wie sonst, ans Herz der Erde wie[der)
((Wie einst))
(Der kräften Erd' und alles Lebens dich)
(dich)
(Wie sonst, und wähnest (nun) nicht mehr alleine,)

(Und ungeliebt von denen, die du liebtest)

(Den Göttern der Natur(,) und wenigs ists)

(Vor deinem Sin, was Menschen dir gethan?)
(n dich)
(Dan seeg' ich/(ihn), d(en)u klare(n)r Quell, an dem)
furchtba trübe

Ist dir der (schwarze) Sin, und wähnest (dich)
Dich nun (und arm)/ ruhig
Nicht mehr allein,/und friedlich kehrt (dein)
w (Herz)
Dein Herz,(W)ie sonst, ans Herz der (heilgen) Erde wieder
sieht(blikt) dein Auge dir
Und freundlich ahnend (sieht dein Genius)

Zum väterlichen Aether wieder auf.
(ist) dünkt
Du lieber! und (d)es geht, der Menschen Thun
Unschuldig Reegenwolke
Vorüber wie d(ie)es Wasserwooge dir,
Heerdes Flamme

professional) artist or inventor, since, as Lisa Gitelman illustrates, "no inventor is the beginning of a circuit, sprung whole, like Athena from the head of Zeus."[16] The messy process of the establishment of new media, which is not a simple, happy-ending, linear, teleological success story, entails taking the broader network of practices and actors into account, including those that led to detours, failures, and speculation.[17] Gitelman explains, for example, that in order to understand what the telegraph meant, it's not just Thomas Edison who should drive the media historiographical narrative but also all the letters and notes from everyday amateur players, the users, "makers and purveyors," which recount the dreams and anxieties about the telegraph.[18] They are essential parts of a broader, messier, less coherent media historiography, therein affording a revised history of this medium that is "plural, decentered, indeterminate, as the reciprocal product of textual practices."[19] Contrary to the rhetorical claims of a forensic approach that aims at a collection of evidentiary traces capable of modeling a linear unraveling of the truth, one never "just" collects traces, because by collecting certain things, one is already making certain claims: what is worth collecting, what is irrelevant or useless, in what order it should be shown, and what form of presentation this showing should take. In 2026, in the context of the introduction to this book, what's important are the media processes offered up for observation and scrutiny side by side in the double-page spread and the messiness and indiscreteness of the creative process that tends to remain hidden, excluded from "the text" and banished to the space-off, the apparatus. A praxeological approach to audiovisual media and technology demands a reorientation of perspective, entailing a move away from intention (of the author, artist, inventor, professional) and instead toward use: the practices, dreams, hopes, detours, and failures that constitute the creative process.[20] This approach opens up the possibility for a twofold focus on media practices that doesn't elide self-observation but necessitates it. We must observe our own media practices together with and alongside those we study, the several situations on the way to and among our observations.

The question motivating this book is how to make this kind of praxeological perspective on the creative process more visible, and thinking about a relationship *among* media can help with this. When Luce Irigaray considers how to recognize and make visible the overlooked labor assumed by women and the ways in which the commodity exchange of women serves to uphold the market and dominant power structures, she speculates on the possibility for women to be valued "among themselves." To fashion women as commodities, their materiality, their bodies, must give way to principles of exchange that uphold the fiction of "productive" labor: "The exchange operation cannot take place in terms of some intrinsic, immanent value of the commodity. . . . *Commodities, women, are a mirror of value of and for man*. In order to serve as such, they give up their bodies to men as the supporting material of specularization, of speculation. They yield to him their natural and social value as a locus of imprints, marks, and mirage of his activity."[21]

What women in this position mirror back is the construction of dominantly valued activities and labor, not their own. The way in which commodities gain value depends on something external, something outside of themselves. Thus, they can exist only in relation "to" something else, never "among" themselves. But women, perhaps, can. "Women among themselves" is a potential, an imagined relation in which women are no longer mere commodities that maintain the mirage of "productive labor" for dominant power structures, creating the conditions for traditional notions of value to be recast. It's not only about revealing the "mirage" of so-called productive activity but, importantly, about what happens in the process: Women among themselves no longer need to suppress those properties of themselves that don't directly contribute to what is deemed valuable according to this fantasy of labor. This shared space elicits a fuller articulation of materiality and specificity outside the purview of prevailing value systems invested in maintaining hierarchies. "Amongness" implies a cooperative environment that can engender other means of deriving value.

It opens up an opportunity for cooperation to take place, for a space that is shared among highbrow and lowbrow art forms, artistic and entertainment media, professionals and amateurs, originals and redos, glamorous and bureaucratic work, histories of success and failure, the final product and the pitch, with the value systems underlying the "standards" and principles for this often invisible work of classification coming into question along the way.[22] This book focuses on the work that a diverse array of media processes do among themselves, meaning not solely in relation to highbrow, legitimated artistic media forms such as painting, sculpture, literature, and film. Compared to lowbrow media forms such as video games, television, sketches, magazines, and paperwork, highbrow media are more easily classified as a "work," something that is structurally whole, coherent, single authored, stable.[23] While less legitimated, lowbrow media forms typically derive their artistic value from their ability to resemble and approximate legitimated media forms, a reorientation toward "amongness" draws attention to the ways in which the category of art maintains its authority through a range of unspoken hierarchies. To take cinema as just one example of such biases: TV is legitimated when it no longer resembles entertainment trash but rather suggests an auteur's touch, becoming "quality TV" that is "complex" and "cinematic"; video games are celebrated when they take on traits of art house films, becoming "serious" and "slow"; and storyboards are valorized when they demonstrate indexical proximity to the final product, becoming a prequel to the finished cinematic masterpiece.[24] In many instances, what "lowbrow" media forms mirror back is the construction of dominantly valued activities and labor, not their own.

This book seeks to make space for the work that these media do. The work before "the work." And after. It focuses on a range of media processes typically perceived as so obvious and indispensable that they can easily go unnoticed when

seen next to the glamorous, creative, big decision-making processes involved in artistic production. Homing in on five western European and transatlantic case studies from the 1960s and 1970s, it explores an era frequently discussed in terms of the emergence of "alternative" media, including the rise of different film and video technologies, performance art, and strategies of dematerialization; the remediation of "artistic" media in "entertainment" media forms; and the institutionalization of older media technologies.[25] It probes a broad spectrum of such "alternative" media forms to interrogate how they have been institutionalized and canonized, packaged and contained, since their emergence, and what other, less visible media processes might be cooperating with them along the way. If we wanted to give in to the logic of legitimated art forms and glamorous work, we'd call the five chapters of this book case studies on the following:

1. Marina Abramović's blockbuster performance retrospective based on her forty-year performance career (1969–2010), *The Artist Is Present*, at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, culminating in her iconic titular performance in the atrium that offered visitors the opportunity to sit across from her, in her presence, in silence for as long as they wanted, or until the museum closed.
2. Joseph Beuys's performance *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird überbewertet* (The silence of Marcel Duchamp is overrated, 1964), in which he spells out the now-infamous title of the work on a painting in front of him, often interpreted as a critique of the father figure for supposedly abandoning his art in his later years, for staying silent about it.
3. Marcel Broodthaers's 16 mm experimental film *La Pluie (projet pour un texte)* (The rain [project for a text], 1969), showcasing him as the protagonist in a classic scene of writing, in which he composes a text alone at his desk with an inkwell, dip pen, and several blank sheets of paper, a project that is typically contextualized as a reference to Broodthaers's earlier career as a poet.
4. *Aspen*, an unbound magazine shipped from New York (1965–71), which distributed works of art to its subscribers by avant-garde artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Hans Richter, and Sol LeWitt but which was, after several years, financially unsustainable, an example of a "failed" utopian art experiment of the time.
5. An experimental documentary by Hellmuth Costard, one of the cofounders of the Hamburg Film Cooperative, titled *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (The little Godard: To the Production Board for Young German Cinema, 1978), which offers a glimpse into the shifting landscape of film production in West Germany by documenting several film sets around Hamburg and features cameos by renowned filmmakers Jean-Luc Godard and Rainer Werner Fassbinder.

But these case studies as I classified them above were not delivered into the world as cases. Such a system of classification assumes these objects can be thought of in terms of proper names and a single medium: a performance, a film, a work of visual art. But media never come alone. So, instead of buying into the mirage of creative work and productive activity that seeks to uphold these materials as a priori case studies, it would be more helpful to have a closer look at their casing, which has taken a lot of work to achieve—seemingly unspectacular work that too often remains invisible. To get a first glimpse of the space-off surrounding these "works" of performance, film, and visual art, which seemed, initially at least, so neatly demarcated, we have to find a way to articulate and conceptualize media among themselves. We have to start unboxing them. Known as a popular genre of YouTube videos made by "amateurs," unboxing videos narrate the arrival and meticulous unpacking of a prepackaged product, anything from an iPhone or a DVD to a Grammy award or COVID-19 vaccines. While the hype is often attributed to a consumerist impulse—namely, the materialistic desire for products one can't always afford—one key starting point for the actual work done in unboxing videos is something not usually thought of as valuable at all: the box. Along with its intricate system of packaging, it's normally tossed away as the superfluous and maybe even annoying barrier to the valuable product it delivers and makes accessible. If there's a common denominator across all of these unboxing videos of all these different products, it's that they insist on the box as something worthy of our immediate attention.

They take media packaging seriously, and we can do the same:

1. What Abramović stages in this retrospective is an autobiographical history of the medium of performance from the 1960s to 2010 via reenactments, photographs, and videos, as well as film and photography crews on the ground at the time, some of whom are even interviewing visitors to her MoMA megashow as they wait in the seemingly endless line to cash in on the ultimate prize: the promised experience of pure, presumably unmediated "presence" with her. It's a promise that has since seen many medial afterlives: from an HBO making-of documentary and a catalogue of visitors' photographs taken during the show to a number of parodies, reenactments, and mockumentaries, including her own recent remake of the event in 2022 in New York.
2. Joseph Beuys's performance "work" that implicates another artist in its title is in fact a collective action that includes two other simultaneous performances and three other artists. It's transmitted via live television, therein becoming the first collaboration between artists in West Germany that incorporates television as a medium of production and distribution. And it's saved only in the form of photographs taken by Manfred Tischer, the exhibition of which results in a landmark copyright case about Beuys's status as

the singular owner, author, and creator of this original "work" that progressed across several years of litigation to the highest German civil court.

3. The seemingly romantic scene of writing into which Broodthaers inserts himself is filmed against the backdrop of the fictive museum in his Belgian backyard, his irreverent proxy Musée d'Art Moderne (Museum of Modern Art). In the film, the solitary work at his makeshift desk (one of his museum crates) is continually interrupted by the rain from above that spills over him, forming illegible scribbles and ambiguous shapes on his ink-stained pages. In this way, "the work" he produces becomes a *Project for a Text* that resists completion.
4. *Aspen*, advertising itself as "the magazine in a box," doesn't just simulate a miniature art museum. It openly announces and thematizes its own packaging: the box in which it arrives. This is what *Aspen* understands as its innovative promise to subscribers. With this unbound form at their disposal, they can unpack—play with, set aside, listen to, closely investigate, watch, discard, build, perform, toss around—all sorts of materials in their living rooms in whatever order they please, from records, films, and sculptures to photographs, performance scores, and pieces of cardboard.
5. Costard's film, shot with amateur Super 8 equipment, departs from an essential process of film production that is supposed to remain in the background and that is rarely thematized in film analysis: the process of pitching the film, or drafting the film funding application. It thereby documents and comments on various working conditions at the time that are part of a new bureaucratic logic of funding applications, including his own experiments with less expensive, alternative film formats, Godard's negotiations of artist residencies as he enters his Dziga Vertov video phase, and Fassbinder's work on television co-productions.

As evident in the mini unboxing video we have just made here, the media processes cooperating together in this series of case studies involve various actors behind the scenes, a diverse range of materials and media forms, and local sites and contexts that all too frequently remain invisible in the cleaned-up, established editions and conventional histories of audiovisual art.[26] This book seeks to intervene in the purification procedures that commonly displace such working processes to the apparatuses and footnotes of monographic studies and standard histories of "finished" works of art in the name of producing the coherent text, something akin to figure 1. It does so by dwelling in and on such media processes, those "active thresholds mediating between . . . states."[27] In other words, it does so by staying with figure 2 and the indiscreteness, without maintaining a pretense of order.[28] It takes unboxing seriously, and sometimes literally, employing it as a strategy for approaching and visualizing incoherence. Not just the actual container that a product arrives in, but the messy process of unboxing, "in all of the pageantry

that is required to do so. You know, like digging through the bits and bags and stuff."[29] Instead of unpacking the mix of objects one by one, treating each one as if its characteristics and effects emerged in a vacuum, untouched by the others among it, it surveys the possibilities that arise from the spillage. This book wants to dig through the bits and bags and stuff of audiovisual media history to offer a glimpse of what a praxeological perspective on this media culture might offer. It begins by insisting that the casing of its case studies is something worthy of our immediate attention.

Such a broader, messier perspective on the creative process that takes into account this mix and cooperation of other decisive, if less visible, media reminds us of Marshall McLuhan's claim in *Understanding Media* that "the 'content' of any medium is always another medium."[30] But beyond merely insisting that these are mixed-media works involving a range of actors and operations, this book seeks to interrogate the classification of "the work" itself. This is the ongoing work of categorizing, regulating, and excluding being done in order to keep these materials situated as neat, easily definable, coherent case studies, a situation in which we are necessarily implicated when writing about them.[31] Before these avant-garde materials and big names arrived at the venerated art institutions and cinemas and on canons and syllabi where we now frequently encounter them, a range of seemingly unglamorous, insignificant, mundane media processes enabled them to get there. Processes that are routinely understood as simply additive or preparatory for "the work" of art in the making, for something more valuable yet to come.[32] Boring prerequisites that will soon be forgotten and meaningless work we need to complete to play the game.[33] But what exactly are the rules of this game and how is it shaped? Why might we be hesitant to openly acknowledge the various prerequisites, formalities, operations, better alternatives, microdecisions, and false starts—the long waits (chapter 1), copyright battles (chapter 2), ink spilled over endless drafts and delays (chapter 3), packaging problems and unboxing dilemmas (chapter 4), and paperwork and project pitches (chapter 5)—that affect the conditions of possibility for "actual" creative, artistic work? To resist a notion of the canon inevitably organized according to materials-as-artifacts that are oblivious to how we engage with them, remaining stable over time whether they're 225 or 65 years old, and to resist the value of the author's name as a sole unifying force, the chapters of this book are, by contrast, structured along the lines of those media processes usually thought of as unimportant, tedious, intermediary steps along the path to a finalized work, from annoying interruptions in the circulation of materials to standard prerequisites required to play the game: (1) waiting, (2) authorizing, (3) delaying, (4) unboxing, and (5) pitching. Mobilizing the verbal nouns of these processes as key concepts running through each chapter allows us to talk not just about media forms and objects but also about media effects, practices, and techniques.[34]

So, rather than merely decry and try to disavow the author function of Abramović, what if we stayed with it for a while before walking through the doors

of this esteemed institution, dwelling on this threshold as Pippin Barr's video game version of her culminating performance does? If you missed the three-month retrospective at MoMA in 2010, this browser-based video game launched one year later gives players another chance to sit with a pixelated Abramović. It does so, however, by foregrounding what is usually noted only in passing about this procession of performance art history from the 1960s to today: the process of *waiting*. Waiting was a fundamental component of the MoMA retrospective. To get the chance to see Abramović in 2010, many visitors slept outside, and others created complex numbering systems to manage the chaotic lines that demarcated the barriers to this promised, almost religious image. In Barr's version in 2011, the game is no different. Waiting is its entire mode of gameplay. After making it through MoMA's front door, the objective is to get in line and not lose your place in it as it moves, even if takes, on average, several hours to make it to the front. It recasts the march toward the ultimate, precious image of the artist and prize of presence by positioning waiting as a process that participates in the rhetorical promises, value assertions, manufacturing of scarcity, and conditions of access, which we think come before "the work" of art, preceding our experience of it, but which in fact co-construct it. Waiting is not just an everyday nuisance of modern life but an index of power distribution, perceived value, and structural and institutional relationships (chapter 1).

Instead of dismissing the copyright case involving the performance by Beuys and the photographs taken by Tischer—another author/owner/creator in the mix—as either too empirical to be theoretically interesting or too implicated in a binary system of thought about open-access activism to be analyzed with any sense of nuance, what if we contemplated the process of *authorizing* of "Beuys," this well-established "author's name"?[35] This would present a possibility to examine the ramifications of this legal case with the aim of historicizing the media effects it records and initiates, as well as the presumed possibilities of the diverse media forms implicated in the landmark dispute. Addressing what the photographs of *The Silence of Marcel Duchamp Is Overrated* are believed to do means taking into account its broader media infrastructure, including how the event was situated within a collective performance and relied on the medium of television for its production and transmission. Notably, this collective performance comprising three actions simultaneously performed in the television studio was, in terms of meaningful dialogue, also completely silent. So, what does this photographic series by Tischer from the 1960s "say" about the "original" silence (of Duchamp, of Beuys, of the live event, of the medium of performance or television) that, according to the law, should have been kept silent? By factoring in and taking notice of the various other participants implicated in the case—those performing in the studio, working in the studio, watching at home, and later viewing the exhibition of photographs in a museum and debating their properties in court and in the court of public opinion—we can more critically observe the ways in which photography is

not just positioned in terms of artifact, as an unauthorized document of the past, but also how it is at once articulated as a future medium within these timely discourses on authorization (chapter 2).

If Broodthaers's performance on film can't be encapsulated by autobiographical narratives that frame it as a romantic scene of writing featuring this poet turned filmmaker, but is rather an experiment with the process of incessantly *delaying* what we are used to expecting and that which we have been promised—namely, the finished work, closure—then shouldn't we recognize the ongoing status of this performance of contingency by considering the various remakes and redos of it that likewise experiment with spilling into the space-off? Haegue Yang's iteration of *The Rain (Project for a Text)*, an installation from 2006/2007 titled *Quasi MB—In the Middle of Its Story,* as if it were a quasi-object, is interested in a form of recalling and redoing that can activate more than just a reply or response to a referent (MB, Marcel Broodthaers) that is presumed to be fixed.[36] In a series of eighteen panels containing texts, images, and photographs, she chops up the imaginary leftovers of Broodthaers's ink-stained pages, making them into draft notes on deviations, speculative histories, and nonlinear microdecisions and sketches. It's a way of insisting that there is no source text in remaking a situation, as you can, in engaging in the process of delaying as a generator of chance, start anew and relate to endless points and contexts in the process, indulging in the stopovers along the way and in the gestures and possibilities of the oscillation between durability and effacement (chapter 3).

Rather than just nostalgically lamenting the utopian "failure" of *Aspen*, expediently contextualizing it as one of several alternative media projects in the 1960s that sought to circumvent commodification and that soon after became economically unsustainable, and rather than just compiling an inventory of the famous names it distributed, what if we took our time to carefully examine the way in which Phyllis Johnson envisioned and designed the packaging of this product in the unbound form of the box and the different logic of ordering names, categorizing media, and determining value that the process of *unboxing* it might enable? From this vantage point, we can interpret the role of this box less in terms of a time capsule or a fossil capturing an exceptional but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to democratize the experience of highbrow art otherwise encountered only inside the doors of celebrated museums, and instead interpret it as advancing as a way of thinking through various media objects that did not end when the magazine folded in the early 1970s. Similar to the *Wunderkammer*, the cabinet of curiosities, or maybe more in line with a *Wissensschrank*, a knowledge chest, this kind of box can include exclusionary partitions between media objects that seek to categorize and classify, and it can also, by insisting that media categories are produced in cooperative settings, make the threshold of the box, and our modes of valuation, more flexible, permeable, and playful (chapter 4).

If Costard ironically announces in the title of his film *The Little Godard* that he has to drop "big" names in order to try to make it as a "little" filmmaker, why can't

the subtitle of the film, *To the Production Board for Young German Cinema*, be read literally: as a pitch for recognition and approval, as an appeal to take seriously the rhetoric and gestures of paperwork and the process of *pitching* that make a film possible to begin with? In one of the opening scenes, for instance, he films himself writing and thinking aloud about how to write the film pitch, turning it into the product that is promised and showing the work that is truly valued: one's own creativity with bureaucratic codes. This film is interested in lingering on the media process from which it originates. Its gaze shifts back and forth between paperwork and other more familiar processes of film work, such as Fassbinder's glamorous sets and extravagant props, continually questioning the relationship between the two. This allows for the mundane yet decisive labor of paperwork, first and foremost, to be made visible on-screen and, second, to be seen together with cinema's more established site of labor: the film set, complete with crew, cameras rolling, and stars and famous directors in action. It demands a revaluation of the terminology we instinctively rely on to describe what we consider the "creative" work of film to entail (chapter 5).

The case studies as packaged here extract materials that would ordinarily be tightly bundled up in a monograph and place them among new materials we have yet to fully consider. They are based on either unpublished material or material unavailable in English, such as the Beuys-Tischer copyright case (chapter 2), the reenactments and redos of *The Rain* (chapter 3), and *The Little Godard* (chapter 5), or more well-known materials interpreted via an interdisciplinary reorientation, as with *The Artist Is Present* (chapter 1), *The Silence of Marcel Duchamp Is Overrated* (chapter 2), *The Rain* (chapter 3), and *Aspen* (chapter 4). Taking the emergence and gestures of these common, yet neglected, media processes into account helps visualize the messiness of the creative process, making space for a critical consideration of how such indiscrete processes contribute to the canonization and institutionalization of audiovisual media during this time.[37] While each of these processes might feature most prominently in one of these chapters, they're not artificially contained by that division. They often spill over into other chapters, interacting with and building upon each other throughout the course of the book to add complexity to central questions about collective authorship and composite media. This structure allows different names (Pippin Barr, Manfred Tischer, Haegue Yang, Phyllis Johnson, and Hellmuth Costard) and different media forms and practices (video games, photography, television, legal texts, boxes and containers, YouTube videos, rubbish, paperwork, and amateur formats) to unsettle conventional Western art historical interpretive frameworks of achieving unity, ensuring coherence, and neutralizing contradictions, which are traditionally accomplished by charting the development of a particular artist's "oeuvre" according to influence, periods, and styles.[38]

A range of approaches facilitates the indiscreteness that is sought after within these case studies, including those that are historical, interpretive, and analytical,

drawing on ideas from literary and media theory, science and technology studies, and media historiography in the hopes of chopping up, even slightly, dominant teleological media histories. This book builds upon recent work in studies of media cooperation, from case studies of paratextual media such as title sequences, trailers, storyboards, models, and sketches to media theories of the threshold, interface, infrastructure, cooperation, grafting, and logistics.[39] By focusing on a cross section of materials from western European and transatlantic contexts, this book suggests new lines of inquiry for area studies within such media theoretical frameworks and incorporates German- and French-language materials and media theory into broader discussions about film and media historiography.[40] It makes space for these disciplines to mingle, exploring prominent topics within German and European studies, such as the legacy of 1968, German cinema, European performance and installation art, and German-language print culture, as well as within film and media studies, including remediation and convergence, media paratexts, archival theory, and bureaucracy studies.

A closer engagement with this broader media infrastructure and space of cooperation, including the lesser-known names entangled within it, encourages an integrated consideration of the institutions and their standards of classification, processes of legitimation, and rules and regulations that have shaped how we have come to know these materials as case studies. The institutions that are critically explored in this book include art museums (MoMA, Centre Pompidou), archives (the Joseph Beuys Archive, Deutsches Literaturarchiv), platforms (YouTube, UbuWeb), and funding agencies and systems (Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film, avances sur recettes). Even while many "alternative" artistic media projects from the 1960s and 1970s reportedly developed out of a desire to circumvent institutional conditions perceived as historically and politically problematic, Andrea Fraser observed in 2005 that "nearly forty years after their first appearance, the practices now associated with 'institutional critique' have for many come to seem, well, institutionalized."[41] Fraser insists that lamenting the fact *that* some of these practices have or have not been institutionalized could miss the opportunity to consider *how* they have been institutionalized or written out of art and media history. Importantly, this includes how we continue to contribute to this institutionalization and exclusion based on how we interact with such practices—how we write about them in the present.

Studying media practices and forms in their time of emergence, before they have been institutionalized and the discourse on their classification, effects, legitimation, and practical implementation has been settled and stabilized, allows the anxieties, dreams, and contradictions about them to be more fully taken into account. It affords an opportunity to investigate the rhetoric that legitimates knowledge. "[Media technology] relies upon rhetorical processes, the conventions of which contribute to a 'thick' description of culture, revealing the way . . . culture sees itself and hinting at the way it identifies and legitimates 'the facts.' . . . Artifacts become knowable in part because they are enmeshed within the back

and forth and round about of telling what they are, and because telling devolves upon discernable rhetorical conventions, like genres and specialized vocabularies, that are themselves largely the result of unconscious consensus."[42] The instances in which media classification, legitimation, and institutional entrance are still flexible and up for negotiation make them especially appealing to scholarship interested in a richer, more complex, and likely more conflicting history of media, such as Douglas Crimp's work on photography officially entering the art museum in the 1960s or Haidee Wasson's research on the establishment of MoMA's film library in the 1930s.[43] These become exemplary instances in which one can observe the media rhetoric on photography and film, precisely because their normative definitions, promises, and proposed functions are still being negotiated between various actors involved in their institutionalization. Such instances are not just based on the moments of heroic, well-known decision-making but include all the back-and-forth, roundabout discussions and microdecisions that may lead to success, institutionalization, and canonization, but often do not, and are thus usually neglected in the historical record.

This book offers up a spectrum of case studies focusing on exemplary instances in which the negotiation of claims, dreams, and anxieties about media is still underway, meaning that there are plenty of other media processes that could be considered in addition to them, and the ones included in this book might not, in the end, be the most important. But by having a first look at these historical instances and situations from a praxeological perspective, we can begin to allow these projects to be seen as more than mere fossilized artworks from a linear notion of time that lies behind us. In various ways, they are still ongoing, and by attending to them at present, we're also implicated, through this encounter, in their cross-temporal and multimedial iterations.[44] This shift in perspective disrupts the belief in the singular historical source text, a belief that still manages to make its way, even if implicitly, into media studies scholarship. Schüttpelz argues, for example, that media history is commonly written based on an assumption that such unfragmented source texts about media developments and emergence exist.[45] Invention-driven histories of media are a predictable outcome of this assumption, such as the citation of photography as a singular invention by a single (usually white, Western, male) actor and national origin story (Louis Daguerre or Nicéphore Niépce and France, or William Henry Fox Talbot and England).[46] However, when this media history can be more fully unpacked and unboxed by untangling the chain of the failed fantasies, speculation, anxieties, detours, and deviations within the unpurified, chaotic notes about media prior to their stabilization, then a multiplication of players and actors can be observed in the negotiation of value systems about composite media still in flux. Broadening the frame of perspective beyond the model of the single author serves to incorporate the work of the backstage, the extras, the stagehands, the amateurs, and the below-the-line actors, allowing the spotlight on the artist to dim so that

crucial questions of labor and participation in the creative process can become more pronounced.

So, here it is, a last pitch, before the next. A promise of a return on the reader's investment. *Working Title* attends to these crucial questions by proposing a richer, if messier, understanding of media objects and effects today, allowing for hidden histories of labor, failure, and amateur practices to tell broader narratives about how existing scholarship continues to construct canons, determine power relations, and navigate questions of originality, creativity, and belonging. For this reason, its case studies are not focused solely on the act of "revealing" the invisible, failed, unglamorous, logistical, and bureaucratic work and processes that have not been legitimated and institutionalized, which is a gesture that could take part in the positivistic rhetoric of uncovering "the real" media behind the facade. Instead, this book proposes that it would be more helpful to understand these histories of other work, media, and names with and alongside the histories of the "glamorous" work, author functions, and the fetishization of the homogenizing effects of the whole work (*des Werkganzes*) with which we are likely more familiar. While *Working Title* engages in debates on a variety of media historical and theoretical concerns raised by its particular case studies, ranging from discourses of media legitimation and institutionalization, copyright law, the value of the original vis-à-vis the redo, the enduring appeal of certain models of authorship, and the presumed integrity of "the work," the stakes of this book extend beyond these specific scholarly topics. These case studies not only gesture toward pressing questions about contemporary media culture. They also become a point of departure for finding the language and methods of approach that will help articulate these questions in nuanced ways, including concerns about the implications of the widespread circulation of art-as-commodity and the shift to affect economies (chapters 1 and 5), or what is at stake in thinking along the lines of elemental media forms and sustainability when a media object has to be continually redone and reanimated in another object (chapters 2 and 3), or what it means to think of our media use in relation to shipping, to drag that whole history of production through the medium of the box (chapter 4). Histories of global capital, ecology, and containerization are implicated in these media processes that we too often neglect or set aside for the more glamorous and conventional histories of the finished work. This book offers some first ways to reposition their urgency and significance. Closely examining the various media processes running through each chapter—waiting, authorizing, delaying, unboxing, and pitching—can allow them to be seen as something much more significant than simple intermediary stages along the path to a finalized product, more than routines that are merely mundane and can be dismissed and forgotten at the end of a supposedly necessary purification procedure. As with the title pitch at the beginning of this introduction, the act of looking at them before we relegate them to the apparatus opens up the possibility of interrogating our modes of value creation. It's a means of advancing different ways of thinking about our

systems of value and legitimating terms of medial and aesthetic classification. The instances in which such media processes emerge invite us to dwell in the uncertainty they present and to pause on the threshold of valuation, regulation, and classification before we sort them out, offering an opportunity to perceive something meaningful, nuanced, and maybe even reenergizing in them as well. But dwelling, waiting on the doorstep of valuation, is anything but easy. As we will find out in the first chapter of this book, we have to work for it. For this, we'd better get in line.

1

In Line to Wait

So, here we are, standing in front of MoMA, and we want to get in (figure 3). First steps into my project. First doors in a book.

Getting there does not mean that you are already in. Entering an institution is no walk in the park. Sometimes the world is sick. "Reopening Unclear, Try Again: Met, MoMA, and more go dark over coronavirus concerns."[1] Sometimes the institution dresses up for a celebration. "The galleries and offices of the Museum of Modern Art's long-standing Manhattan premises on 53rd Street closed in 2002 for an ambitious building and refurbishment programme. . . . Called MoMA QNS, the opening of the new venue in July 2002 was marked with a three-hour procession from the 53rd Street building . . . . Reproductions of some of the Museum's most important works . . . were carried through the streets of New York."[2] Sometimes individual drama and tragedy occur. "New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) closed its doors on Saturday afternoon after a man jumped the reception desk and stabbed two employees. . . . The suspect . . . was denied entrance to the museum after his membership was revoked for previous instances of disorderly conduct. . . . He was ostensibly at MoMA to attend the 4.30pm screening of the 1938 screwball comedy *Bringing Up Baby*, starring Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant."[3] This film, of all things! We really wanted to see it. We had been looking forward to it so much. We had already read what to expect. We had already imagined it. And now this! The world is turning upside down, the paintings are running wild in the streets, the police are beginning to investigate. All this had a long run-up. In retrospect, we could almost see it coming. We were there too early, there too late. We have miscalculated. "There is no door without a lock, even if the lock is realized as a purely linguistic prohibition."[4] We will have to wait for another time, another opportunity.

FIGURE 3. Street view of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. March 14, 2014. Photograph by littleny via Getty Images.

Closed doors highlight the work of distribution and efficiency. While they might be counterbalanced with reproductions, public rituals, and an insistence on new forms of mobility fostered by the prospect of institutional continuation, these are measures that also seek to circumvent the most seemingly trivial elephant in the museum space: the process of waiting for the doors to open. For the chance to cash in on one's own expectations. Waiting, this key process, is often explained away in these contexts with arguments about the realities of blockbuster exhibitions at major art institutions that need a range of systems to organize flows of people, such as specific opening hours and queuing practices. But this can sidestep the complex process of waiting so pervasive that it is often just casually considered a reality of modern life, relegated to a notion of "dead time." Thinking about waiting as a constitutive media operation shows that it's not only a frustrating process but, sometimes, also a quite rewarding one that already says a lot about what is in store for someone and how it will be shared and with whom. So, I am bringing up my baby. Starting the conversation before it has officially begun. Waiting is embroiled in conflicts about power distribution and perceived value.[5] It can be filled with its own logic of dramaturgy, constructions of subjectivity and potential community building, as well as possibilities of intervention and innovation in the face of this frustration and conditions of exclusion. "While waiting is often occasioned by limitations in access to goods and services, its significance cannot be understood simply by reference to imbalances between supply and demand. Its

devaluating and dramaturgical aspects are beholden to social, cultural, and psychological dynamics too. Among other things, how people wait—the time spans they are made to wait, their willingness to wait, their discontent with having to wait, the meaning they attribute to the wait, etc.—varies according to race, class, gender, profession, context, and culture, and is informed by the scenography of the wait."[6] The closed door in modernity is never just operationally closed but is also, simultaneously, a sign of this closure, of distinction, difference, and exclusion. "To step through a door means to subject oneself to the law of a symbolic order, a law that is established by means of the distinction of inside and outside."[7] Why did I want to enter the institution again at any cost?

Returning to *Bringing Up Baby*, that 1938 film that, in our fantasy, was screened behind those closed MoMA doors, the film we now have in mind, we notice that it also opens with a scene about belonging in a museum and can tell us quite a lot about the process of waiting. The protagonist is a scientist working in a museum of natural history, modeled after the American "museum of origins" with its brontosaurus skeleton, twelve minutes north of MoMA, across from Central Park. "A hope is implicit in every architectural detail [of the American Museum of Natural History]: in immediate vision of the origin, perhaps the future can be fixed. . . . Entering this building, one knows that a drama will be enacted inside."[8] Indeed it will, even if—and actually because—one has to tarry for a while on its doorstep.[9] In the opening shot of *Bringing Up Baby*, a motionless scientist, Dr. David Huxley (Grant), does not say a single word as he sits atop the scaffolding surrounding his nearly complete brontosaurus, his fist fixed to his chin. While the pose mimics Auguste Rodin's famous sculpture of a thinker, *Le Penseur* (cast 1904), Dr. Huxley's head is "visually aligned with that of the pea-brained dinosaur head decorating the wall behind him."[10] Huxley is informed that he'll soon be meeting a Mr. Peabody, a representative of a potential museum donor like the historic one from Yale's "museum of origins" with its brontosaurus skeleton. We see Dr. Huxley get overly excited about his abilities to impress Peabody, and we learn from his then fiancée that confronting dinosaurs in one's home first means being able to behave, demonstrate etiquette, and not inadvertently mark oneself as belonging to those who are not privileged: "David, no slang. Remember who and what you are."[11] It just helps to have manners, an education, and a plan. And to know how to execute it. (Literally.) Throughout the film, Dr. Huxley's serious, and seriously important, meeting with Peabody is constantly postponed by his misadventures with Susan (Hepburn), who is all about slang. His desperate refrain—*I'll be with you in a minute, Mr. Peabody!*—clearly lets us know that not only will this meeting not happen in a minute, but it will not happen . . . ever. Waiting, Roland Barthes writes, is part of *A Lover's Discourse*, and whether one is "waiting for an arrival, a return, [or] a promised sign," the anxiety manifests, especially in the context of this museum, in a distinct way: "I have no sense of *proportions*."[12] By the last scene, David has come to life by using the reconstruction of the old stone fossil as a swing to mimic his

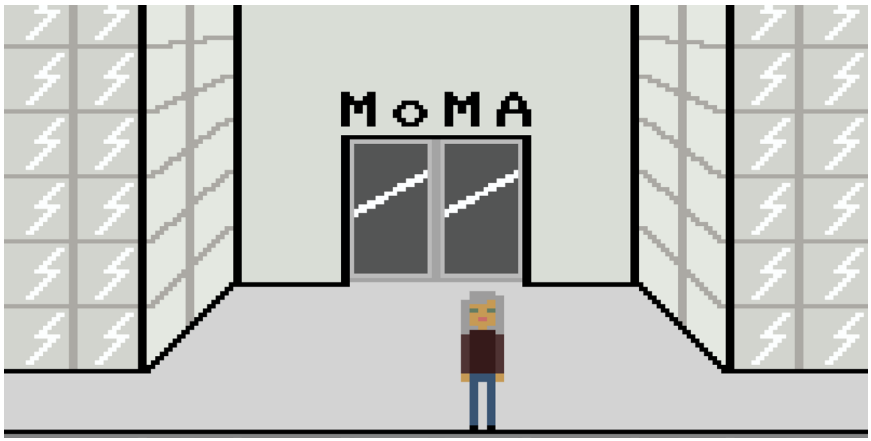


FIGURE 4. Pippin Barr, *The Artist Is Present* (2011). Screenshot. Courtesy of the artist.

newfound, misbehaving love: Swingin' Door Susie.[13] He is one step further, more than in his wildest dreams.

This place in which to showcase the story of life by way of strict Western scientific categories, classifications, authentic reconstruction, and dignified, professional behavior becomes a home for rubble. By the end of the film, it has broken down under the strain of all the mix-ups, failed deliveries, false starts, moments of denied access, doppelgängers, preposterous delays, ownership claims and confusion, costumes, impersonations, and reenactments. When seen all together, these assorted and continuous interruptions in the pure reconstruction of the past as a model on four legs in little modules, from the tip of the tail to the top of the head, are what make the film, this old time-based medium running from A to B, notoriously funny, and what make it fun. And art (if you are interested in that). Since you can't arrive anywhere and have to make do with the road instead, you could also spend some time with Kant here: "*Bringing Up Baby* (1938) is the . . . purest example of . . . the achievement of purposiveness without purpose (or say directedness without direction)."[14] It's a film that's all about the failure of logistics and other kinds of media processes we tend to brush aside. And about what happens when we linger on the threshold of the museum's closed doors (figure 4). When the biggest attraction is not yet fully assembled.

In 2011, one of MoMA's most successful shows of recent years was recreated for domestic use for those who couldn't make it inside in time. From the get-go, or the first game levels in this case, the re-creation foregrounds an aspect of the show that was usually relegated to a footnote in this procession of performance art history from the 1960s to today: the process of waiting. A video game draws on the experience of the museum show about which so much has been said. It concentrates on the essentials. When the exhibition *Marina*

Abramović: The Artist Is Present opened in 2010, many visitors waited all day and never made it to the front of the line to sit with the self-proclaimed "grandmother of performance art."[15] This exhibition was itself a line: a chronological step-by-step walk through the phases of Abramović's forty-year performance career.[16] The line begins in the late 1960s: restagings of her earlier works performed by "'other people' employed by the museum" and accompanied by videos and photographs of these earlier pieces.[17] It culminates teleologically in her latest commissioned work, *The Artist Is Present*, which is the ultimate prize that we have paid at the entrance to see, and for which we'll have to wait. In the various medial "afterlives" of the show, this performance has taken center stage: from the HBO making-of documentary *Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present* (2012) and a catalogue of the photographs made during the show, *In Your Eyes: Portraits in the Presence of Marina Abramović* (2010), featuring visitors who sat with Abramović; to later mockumentaries, such as *Waiting for the Artist* (2019) by *Documentary Now!*, starring Cate Blanchett as the Abramović lookalike "Izabella Barta," and Abramović's own remake of the event in April 2022.[18] As we already know what awaits us, we have long seen the unwrapped gifts on the table; our genuinely touristy excitement that is growing by the minute is not directly tied to this prize. "The highest point, the term of the sightseer's satisfaction, is not the sovereign discovery of the thing before him; it is rather the measuring up of the thing to the criterion of the preformed symbolic complex."[19] We came all the way to visit the markers of the site, not primarily, or even necessarily, the site itself.[20] In the HBO documentary, Abramović describes what she wants this teleological, autobiographical history of the medium of performance to accomplish. She gestures with her hands while describing this concept of exhibiting the history of performance, "pure performance" she calls it, as she successively situates her imaginary works on the table in front of her, ordered, one after the other, in an imaginary line.[21] "That's why this show in MoMA is historical for me, important . . . to really put the kind of . . . things in the right place."[22]

To the right of her on the table is a pivotal piece of this line that appears on its own in a close-up just before this promise to properly sort things out: the catalogue for her 2005 show at the Guggenheim Museum, *Seven Easy Pieces*, primarily consisting of her own reenactments of "seminal" performances from the 1960s and 1970s.[23] It proposes a model for dealing with difficult medial families that leave their legacies open-ended. "We don't really know what happened in the 1970's. My proposal was to gather material from living artists and see if I could 're-feel' certain performances, repeating them. Furthermore, performances always took place in alternative spaces and it was always something confusing . . . . My idea was to establish certain moral rules. If someone wants to remake a performance, they must ask the artist for the rights and pay for it, just like it's done with music or literature."[24] Re-creating a performance-family lineage, which was never set in stone to begin with, was seen as a means "to keep the history straight."[25] Interestingly,

the impetus for both these reperformance projects at established New York art institutions was the doors to a certain, supposedly seminal slice of the 1960s/1970s, doors that were understood to be way too open for everyone and anyone. There have to be some conditions placed upon those who want to walk through them and buy a ticket from a woman sitting at a table behind glass.[26] Coming up with these terms of entry is the necessary work that is rarely made visible, something Abramović herself, in the documentary about the show, also laments: "One time in my life I would like to show everything. What it takes you to make art and to be an artist. How much correspondence, how much e-mails, how much faxes, how much letters, how much plane tickets, how much . . . all this structure is just enormous. What is actually physical work, which has nothing to do with creativity, but just administration." / [Telephone ringing] / Assistant: "Marina Abramović's office." Right before her assistant picks up, there is a one-second shot of an office door with a nameplate: "ABRAMOVIĆ LLC." The cut is so swift that we probably overlook it, if we see it at all. But when focusing on this usually invisible labor, it's a very brief moment in the documentary that stands out: an indicator of all of this work, these onerous, often physical processes that Abramović describes, with frustration and exhaustion, as remaining ever in the background of her many projects. Preservation, organization, and administration have long been central to her work, even if she doesn't associate these practices, here at least, with notions of artistry and creativity. "Her favorite store in Manhattan was and is The Container Store."[27] Perhaps some of these containers, part of this enormous structure, have already been shown.

If one of the consequences of these reperformance projects is the recognition that they ultimately "problematiz[e] the question of just when a piece of live art begins and ends," maybe these repeated pieces didn't originate in 2010 or 2005, but earlier even, and maybe they in fact showed some of these vast and crucial media operations and processes.[28] Maybe the homecoming and crowning of a performance art queen was itself a reenactment of a ritual procession: carrying the West German–born US artist Kiki Smith on a makeshift palanquin from MoMA over the waters of the East River and under the Queensboro Bridge to MoMA QNS in 2002 (figure 5). To commemorate the closing of MoMA's doors on 53rd Street in Manhattan and its new location in the "decidedly unglamorous environs of 33rd Street in Queens," Francis Alÿs lined up the world-famous usual suspects from MoMA's collection in a parade of sorts, marching them down the street from their old home all the way to their new one.[29] It was a performance of movement that accompanied a temporary institutional move to a new location whose visual brand would be closely aligned to the notion of movement:

> The experience of movement came to constitute MoMA QNS' identity. . . . In a traditional architectural or cultural practice, to represent an institution is to assert their

FIGURE 5. *Modern Procession* (2002), dir. Francis Alÿs in collaboration with Rafael Ortega. Photograph. Courtesy of the artist and Jan Mot, Brussels.

> permanence within society. This static public identity, typically fixed in the form of a grand public stair, gives way to MoMA QNS' more dynamic identity, created by an extended procession which begins even before visitors arrive and continues through each of the Museum's galleries. This sequence extends the moment of arrival, rendering MoMA QNS' entry threshold not simply as a line to cross over, but instead as an expanded space of experience occupied and defined through movement.[30]

Alÿs's take on the modern procession begins with the irony of the "first" readymade that can no longer be found: Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* (1951, "third version, after lost original of 1913").[31] Behind it is a recast sculpture, Alberto Giacometti's *Standing Woman* (1948, cast 1949), followed by Smith, offered up as a "living artist" and possible substitute for Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair* (1940), a reproduction of which wasn't permitted and therefore couldn't be included in the series.[32] The line of modern art concludes with a "monumental" painting "after months of revision"—namely, Pablo Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907).[33] The reproduction representatives showcase the work of transport, cataloging, modification, maintenance, glorification, and reverence that such a venerated collection repeatedly requires. It was a labor of logistics, rhetoric, and value assertions that made itself visible. "The fact that Francis Alÿs's *Modern Procession* took place at all is remarkable. This singular event, simple in conception yet posing myriad logistical challenges," involved over a year of negotiations with "an institution of almost religious significance" to even get off the ground.[34] This

procession then insisted that all the unexpected delays and detours it encountered on the ground, from the literal "Do Not Enter" and "Wrong Way" signs and street traffic to the various props, dollies, and authority figures needed to keep the line moving, become an integral part, if not the focal point, of the procession. Waiting and walking in line are part of the ironic, agnostic prayer. Of course, the originals, the bones of the saints, stayed at home. We're left to ponder "the curious inadequacies of the copy, and *what inadequacy gets right* about our faulty steps backward, and forward, and to the side."[35] The initiation of the new site is done by invoking the idols of the ancestors.

What is the last piece of the puzzle we seem to be endlessly searching for? The precious missing bone that will complete the pure, perfect reconstruction of the past? What did we do with it? Did the dog eat it?[36] This much is certain: It came in a box. The box seems to hold the promise of hidden, rare, precious, high-stakes treasure that is constantly delayed. The promise of closure and the libidinal investment of the pitch. "Katie [Hepburn] and Cary [Grant] had a scene [in *Bringing Up Baby*] in which he said, 'What happened to the bone?' And she said, 'It's in the box,' or something like that. Well, they started to laugh—it was ten o'clock in the morning—and at four o'clock in the afternoon we were still trying to make this scene and I didn't think we were ever going to get it. I tried changing the line. It didn't do any good—they'd still laugh at the thing."[37] It seems that in order to better understand this promised, celebrated (modern art) image of closure that can purportedly be found in a sacred box, black box, or, if you'd prefer, ultimate machine after a long march through history, we must first understand these frustrating, critical, and occasionally comical infrastructural media processes that come before the image, or at least the promise of it (figure 6).[38] We've waited long enough to see them.

Eight years after Francis Alÿs's single field day on the streets of New York in front of proliferating MoMA doors here and there, the new, three-month ultimate event, *The Artist Is Present*, offering visitors the opportunity to sit across from Abramović in her "presence," after standing for hours, and stare into her eyes "for as long as they wish," is held indoors.[39] The 1,545 visitors who made it once and for all to the hot seat in the MoMA atrium automatically become part of its multimedial history already in the making at the time of the event, from being featured in the titular HBO documentary and having their portraits documented in an official catalogue to having these same emotional photographs unofficially remediated on Tumblr and in *Animal Crossing*.[40] When it comes to media events in this city that must produce their own scarcity, we know the drill from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*: Waiting is essential, also for building the necessary level of suspense.[41] "Queues work within paradigms of scarcity, control and risk management. Their very existence invokes a shortage of resources, even if this scarcity is, for various reasons, . . . manufactured. . . . Queues are public infrastructures that are experienced privately."[42] Abramović understands this process in particular as a

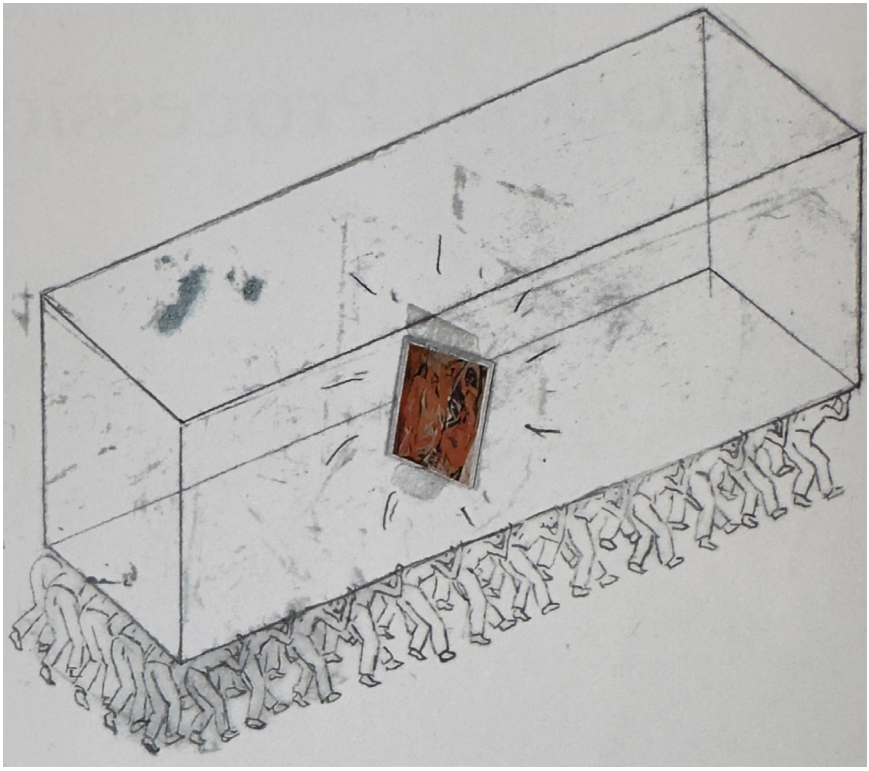


FIGURE 6. Francis Alÿs, sketch on the verso of table of contents. In *The Modern Procession* (2004), 4. Courtesy of the artist and Jan Mot, Brussels.

strategy for increasing the value of her work: "'I'm really good in waiting.'"[43] It's a process that is crucial for her new performance at MoMA. Some visitors sleep outside, others create complex raffles and numbering systems to manage the chaotic lines that must form around and demarcate the barriers to this promised, sacred, almost religious image.[44]

The point of integrating glimpses of these infrastructural challenges and the administrative attempts to manage them into the official histories is not to spend time reflecting on them as such, but to heighten the anticipation for the ultimate prize. *I'll be with you in a minute, Mr. Peabody!* Such moments are usually shown one after another, in a flash, accompanied by their diegetic noise and a dramatic soundtrack seeking to tame and channel the chaos they introduce. They might be briefly mentioned in an opening paragraph in order to underscore the importance of the treasure waiting at the end of a more or less neat and tidy narrative of development, progress, lineage, and tradition. The treasure affords this

historical documentation a purpose. But if we don't rush through these moments, instead choosing to linger on them for a while, on the circumstances of their emergence and continuity, we can sometimes encounter a very different picture of this pursuit.[45]

A WAITING GAME

What is noted in passing about Abramović's major 2010 exhibition at MoMA is shifted to the foreground in a re-creation of it in the form of a video game one year later.[46] A "new" media form that announces, via its main objective, that it might not be all that new: "*To make someone wait*: the constant prerogative of all power, 'age-old pastime of humanity.'"[47] In the level start screen of this browser-based Flash game, you, the player, encounter your first text box containing some necessary context, establishing a specific place and purpose for the virtual world you're about to explore: "Here you finally are at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, ready to experience the performance work 'The Artist Is Present' by artist Marina Abramovic [*sic*]."[48] But what you read and what you see don't really add up. In the game world you're playing online, it's 2010 in New York, and yet your avatar looks like it's out of a 1980s 8-bit game.[49] The next automated text box tells you how to play, which is also based on early game mechanics: Press "enter" to move through and bypass the pre-game and in-game text boxes and the arrow buttons to progress within the game world toward the ultimate goal, which is to make it to that long-awaited hot seat across from Abramović in MoMA. While free to play for anyone with a browser and adequate bandwidth, the location from which you are playing this game matters. If you're playing, for example, on a laptop in California in the late afternoon, your game screen will appear strangely dark, as if a subtle shadow has been cast over it. After you bypass the opening messages and press the arrow buttons to navigate your avatar toward the main doors of MoMA, you realize this is because it is nighttime in New York, reflected in the game's tinted display, as confirmed by the first in-game text box that appears, logging your arrival in the game world: "It's 8:21 p.m."[50] This setup action marks your earliest individual "choice" in the gameplay and acknowledges synchronized time and the logic of the institution as intrinsic to its modes of interactivity.[51] After pressing enter to bypass the timestamp text box and the arrow buttons to enter the museum, the doors remain closed to you, and a text box appears: "The Museum of Modern Art is closed. Our hours are: Wednesday—Monday 10:30AM to 5:30PM. Closed Christmas and Thanksgiving."[52] When you play this game, it's always on MoMA time. Getting in becomes your first challenge.

On an earlier version of its title screen, *The Artist Is Present* (2011) was credited to "Marina Abramović (and Pippin Barr)"—grandma is joined by her grandson—and with this, it's already on its way to reenvisioning the march toward the ultimate, precious image.[53] Barr, the designer of this two-dimensional, side-scrolling

online platform game, is not Abramović's familial relative but her artistic relative, appearing after her in this line of succession. Although the game designer is often treated as a kind of "author's name" in discourse on the video game medium, it's configured differently here when it appears in parentheses, signaling to us that we will be confronted with some modifications not only to what we thought of as the authentic *The Artist Is Present* experience, but also to conventional notions of the unique, exceptional, singular "artist."[54] The game is a remake of what we might have considered the "live" experience of Abramović or the "real-life" visit to MoMA to entail, which we can instead refer to, in this context, as the "away from keyboard" (AFK) experience of the exhibition.[55] It re-creates how visitors approach and navigate such strange collisions of past and present that were evident in different ways in the AFK version of *The Artist Is Present*.[56] The in-game mechanics and imperatives for successfully proceeding through the different flip screens of this digital environment are reminiscent of those found in early 8-bit games, which, now that gaming history is being institutionalized, also by MoMA, are often associated with a certain level of nostalgia.[57] In the gamic version of this performance, the player is tasked with making their way through various levels in order to reach the ultimate "designed goal."[58] The game draws some of the overlooked media processes and related complexities of the exhibition out of the relative clause and parentheses that try to bury it: "A new, original work performed by Abramović will mark the longest duration of time that she has performed a single solo piece. (Please note: Abramović will not perform during MoMA Nights.) All performances, one of which involves viewer participation, will take place throughout the entire duration of the exhibition, starting before the Museum opens each day and continuing until after it closes, to allow visitors to experience the timelessness of the works."[59]

The point of entry into this game world, MoMA's front door, is instructive, not only because waiting is made apparent as a constitutive process in the gameplay but also because it is, in some ways, the entire mode of gameplay. The game consists of six "levels" of sorts, during which you, the player, learn to optimize and synchronize your movements, behave appropriately, configure your space and find your proper place in it, and reach a predetermined location.[60] Once you have arrived at this virtual MoMA during its actual East Coast opening hours in level 1, you have to make your way into the building with the rest of the visitor-bots that continually stream in and populate the threshold. In the lobby advertising the 2010 blockbuster performance piece in level 2, you will queue to purchase a ticket from an employee in a box and also queue to present it to the guard watching and controlling the flow of movement over the threshold to the first gallery. Making a wrong move can freeze your progress and prompt a stern warning from other visitors and/or MoMA employees: "If you can't queue properly then get out of the queue!"[61] Once you figure out how to queue properly and proceed, your task is to locate the end of the line for *The Artist Is Present*, and you move through a series of

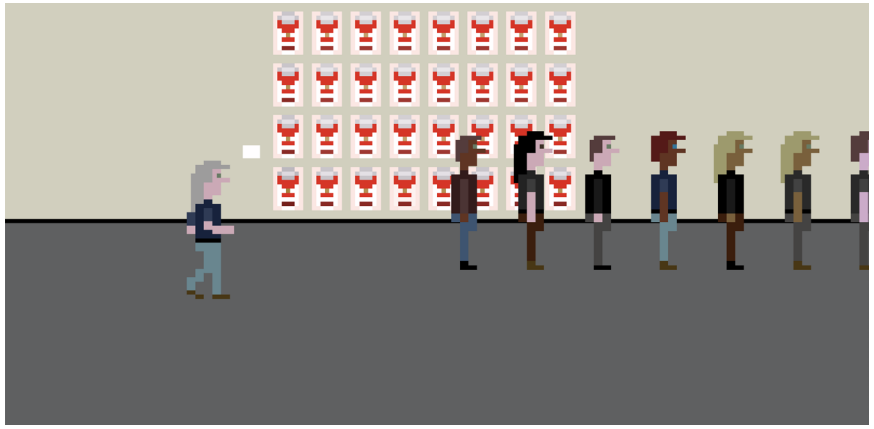


FIGURE 7. Pippin Barr, *The Artist Is Present* (2011). Screenshot. Courtesy of the artist.

galleries in levels 3, 4, and 5 to do so. Oftentimes the line is so long that you don't make it beyond the first gallery before running into it. At least there are some masters to look at while marching through the space, or waiting in it: Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* (1889) and *Olive Trees with Les Alpilles in the Background* (1889) in level 3, Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) in level 4 (figure 7), and Henry (*sic*) Matisse's *Dance I* (1909) in level 5.[62] In the undifferentiated environments of the muted-colored cubes in the game, the four artworks mark each level and help you identify which one you're playing.[63] As you march through the levels, you'll notice that the masters do not run along the screen with you. The flip-screen format anchors the works in the background within the center of the frame. Their positions are fixed, things have been put into the right place: Abramović's newest performance becomes the last in a series of canonical images selected from MoMA's greatest hits.

After this nonchronological modern art procession, you can finally fight the boss/rescue the princess: a pixelated Abramović-artist in the last level who is ready to receive you in her presence. It's the big, auratic image you've been waiting for this whole time, protected by a white box with a clearly delineated and restricted point of entry authorizing it as a sacred space (figure 8).[64] "'Am I in love?—Yes, since I'm waiting.'"[65] This last level is filled with roadblocks (figure 9). Not only in terms of the white security tape on the floor that you cannot cross and the long line in which you must position yourself and obediently wait in order to achieve the game's designed goal, leading you to the boxed image, but also the two museum security guards flanking and controlling the threshold to this box, the doors that will or will not allow you to pass over the line into this special space. "As long as doors play their role as operators of difference between inside and outside, they also create, with the help of the public-private distinction, an asymmetry in knowledge. Doors produce an information gap. . . . Doors serve the circulation of

FIGURE 8. *Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present* (2012), dir. Matthew Akers. Screenshot. © Courtesy of the Marina Abramović Archives / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York 2025.

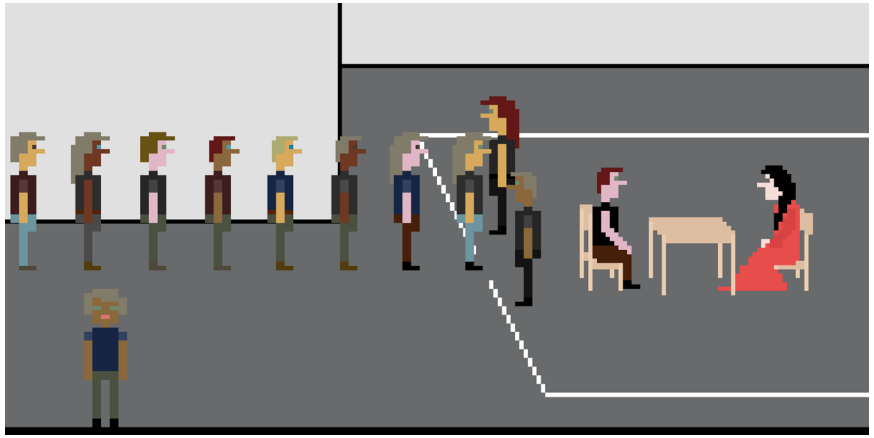


FIGURE 9. Pippin Barr, *The Artist Is Present* (2011). Screenshot. Courtesy of the artist.

knowledge and thereby become actors in the drama."[66] When you're the next in line to sit with this sacred image, the doors issue a set of precise instructions to you that reinforce this dramatic asymmetry: "Don't talk to her." "Maintain eye contact the entire time you are seated."[67] Rules for how you are to behave with this image when you finally arrive, take your place in front of it, and can stop moving.

Since visitors were allowed, AFK in 2010, to sit with the sacred image "for as long as they wish," this virtual line consequently follows suit, moving at indeterminable

increments.[68] Once it does, you must quickly hit the right-arrow button in order to move with it. The gameplay is based on an "intricate nexus of inactivity and activity" that delimits the state of waiting, "often evidenc[ing] a bodily tension that can stimulate as well as immobilize."[69] If you are too slow, linger, or get distracted, the other virtual visitor-bots will gladly take your place in the queue and, accordingly, the "queue responds, realigning itself so the aberrant kink is reincorporated and smoothed back into alignment. These [queued-up] bodies seem to be responding to unseen commands, initiated by the viscerally felt interactions of the bodies themselves. A form of collective proprioception occurs. Somehow although not unified, this tail registers displacements within itself self-referentially."[70] The self-correcting tail of this brontosaurus-length line will realign without you if you don't immediately move with it, and possibilities to mod or hack the rules of this tail are scarce.[71] Constantly holding down the arrow button so you don't lose your place in line or, if you do lose it, trying to push your way back in and jump the queue will result in a "death" of sorts: "Having been shoved by you far too many times, the museum patron alerts a security guard who politely escorts you off the premises."[72] You're returned to MoMA's front doors and must start all over again from level 1.

Just as in the AFK exhibition, this version of MoMA enforces certain rules and punishes behaviors that are perceived to be out of line with them, as it has always been done historically.[73] As a learned behavior, waiting is an action that is rehearsed and practiced. Some have described the process of waiting in seemingly endless lines as experiencing "the freedom of going nowhere, doing nothing, existing in some secret, timeless pocket of invisibility . . . [but] staying awake, alert, alive."[74] While "freedom" might not be exactly what you, the player, experience here, you might indeed feel a bit invisible in this game, since it can become difficult to remember which avatar you are after a while. You don't get to customize or select your character before you start the game, but are instead randomly assigned a person, possibly male, with a limited selection of skin, hair, and clothing colors, all randomly combined, and there are doppelgängers of these minimalist avatars as the line grows. After learning how to make it into the coveted line, playing this game consists of watching and waiting for it to budge. (And remembering which little mannequin you are in the process.) The mission is to maintain your place in the queue. "Move but keep your place, move but stay in line."[75] This means spending, on average, over five hours in line, which is, according to Barr, the time it took him to get to the end of the queue and sit with the artist-avatar.[76] Not a "jump 'n' run" game, but a walk 'n' wait game. Waiting in line here is easier said than done.

While the game is "definitely not a shooter, more a waiter," that's not to say that opposition to mainstream fast-paced action games is the most important or even the primary function of its slow-paced gameplay.[77] Advocates of "slow cinema," "slow games," or "slow comics" go to great lengths to insist that slowness does not inevitably entail an absence of plot or narrative.[78] It's a way of preempting a typical critique: "'Nothing actually happens in these films.'"[79] To counter this critique

of slowness in time-based and sequential media, as well as in cultural and lifestyle movements such as slow food, slow city, and slow fashion, slowness is often claimed to function as a form of resistance to the accelerated pace of contemporary culture fueled by capitalist ideologies and popular media forms that serve to entertain. In this respect, the oppositional relationship between slowness and speed can appeal to superficial associations about the pace of life in Europe versus the US, what is "valued" and "savored" over there versus here.[80] This transatlantic contrast informs several exhibitions conceived by Klaus Biesenbach, "MoMA's *Über*social, very German curator," the German Zeitgeist specialist from Berlin's KW Institute for Contemporary Art, the former GDR margarine factory turned gallery, who curated *The Artist Is Present*.[81] In this performance, Biesenbach says, "time is not an ephemeral just rushing by. Just imagine time as an unbearably large object you cannot move and you are caught in."[82] Although Abramović, after the mainstream sensation of this performance at MoMA, "is the artist with whom Biesenbach is the most closely associated," the mythical and vitalist concepts underlying this exhibition are prevalent in other shows he curated before and after this time.[83] Many of them feature, not by coincidence, European, if not Teutonic, artists in diverse combinations of the visceral, machinist, mythopoetic: from *Roth Time: A Dieter Roth Retrospective* (2004) and *Fassbinder: Berlin Alexanderplatz* (2007–8) to *Kraftwerk—Retrospective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8* (2012) and *Björk* (2015). With a curatorial approach like this, the fact that the Abramović exhibition would eclipse the success of all the other revisions and retrospectives in the Biesenbach series does not come as a surprise.[84] "Life is present" is itself the biggest pitch in this approach, the "triumph of life" in the lifeless institution. Will people buy it? They did.

Revitalizing New York's MoMA through post-Wall Berlin—itself now slowly losing its appeal—as the gateway to the East and the new playground for forgotten treasures triggers various revisions to and affirmations of transatlantic clichés (e.g., US speed vs. European slowness) and conjures up pop cultural collectives, thereby also not shying away from flirting with gestures of totalitarian, merciless rigidity and endurance toward one's own body and goals.[85] The back-and-forth between New York and Berlin has been a long time coming.[86] The same year that Biesenbach's import of Dieter Roth to New York "makes a large claim for Roth's part in this modern tradition"—a claim, in other words, that Roth deserves a proper place in the art historical line of "the Dadaists, the Fluxus artists, and all those joyful moderns who, detesting highfalutin airs, knocked down idols and brought the messy vitality of life into art"—*Texte zur Kunst*, the leading German journal for contemporary art and criticism, devotes an entire issue to the allure that New York continues to have for Europeans wanting to "make it" in the art world and/or experience its vibrancy.[87]

> Since the first issue [of *Texte zur Kunst*], it was not only a general, factual reference to art and theory from the U.S. that decisively characterized this journal. It

> was precisely a special fascination for everything that was associated with the art metropolis of New York . . . . New York has enriched us. . . . The visits to this "other city" . . . allow a brief immersion in the glamourous contexts of New York, which are not always profound, but they are more profound. Such "location factors," especially the latter, are not exactly easy to find in Berlin, for example, and they are also hard to construct. No one will seriously doubt, as much as Cologne and Berlin have their special charms as locations for art, that New York is in a different league! . . . The title of this issue, "Escape to New York," alludes to a formulaic way of thinking in the contemporary art world that is not foreign to us either—according to which New York is still the decisive yardstick . . . . On site, however, one is confronted with one's own wishful projections, one's own criteria, one's own weaknesses.[88]

Both Biesenbach and Abramović considered New York to serve as this yardstick for measuring success, and they did so by profiting from clichés about European art, particularly the promises of slowness: intensity and vitality.

When Abramović left Amsterdam for New York in 2002, after "she had [long] been frustrated by the lack of vitality in the city's art scene," her first solo exhibition included a new performance, *The House with the Ocean View*, a "piece about energy, generated by . . . her studied and slow movements."[89] It was not only her big splash in her new revered and adopted hometown, so much so that the television show about New York setting record ratings at the time, *Sex and the City*, parodied it in its final season. It was also a means to play the European art card and emphasize, once again, the aesthetic opportunities afforded by slowness. Biesenbach knows this card well and has learned how to play it.[90] His exhibitions similarly underscored the promises of long duration, intensity, and vitalism: from the five "largest and most complex works" by Roth at PS1 that were "each developed over a period of years, . . . reflect[ing] the continuous process of art making" and Fassbinder's fifteen-hour epic in which "even the extreme duration of the film seems more appropriate as a device for special artistic expression in our present age of short attention spans," to the "tangible," pure, and intense Kraftwerk show that occurred over eight consecutive days covering their eight albums in chronological order and the "immersive music and film experience" that was marketed as the Björk exhibition.[91]

These shows were not without controversy, and while the critical perspectives acknowledged the palpable anxiety about keeping MoMA's "doors open by any means necessary," they also referenced the drama of continuously waiting and queuing for these shows.[92] For the Kraftwerk concerts, 59,280 fans tried to get tickets the day the virtual queue opened, waiting for hours to get to the front of the line, as they were not aware that the tickets had already sold out "within minutes."[93] We know the drill. Some took this prolonged time in line as a point of departure for waiting re-creations and remixes, uploading them to YouTube. The backdrop for one of these remixes is a screenshot of the online interface for this queue for Kraftwerk at MoMA, displaying the standard corporate queue

management notice: "You are waiting in the Queue. ShowClix uses a queuing system to fairly manage and sell tickets with the large demand that this sale creates. You are currently in a virtual waiting line which will automatically let you through to make your purchase when it is your turn."[94] But it is overlaid with a parody of this notice in the form of electronic music with lyrics that sound like they're sung by the Nihilists in *The Big Lebowski*: "You are waiting in ze queue. Zere is no need to refresh. You are waiting in ze queue. Tickets will be fairly distributed. Your tickets are being purchased by robots. Zis show will be attended by robots. . . . It has been 51 minutes. You will continue to wait. In a type of Teutonic purgatory."[95] For most people, what was "tangible," pure, and intense about this Kraftwerk experience was the throbber, the animated spinning wheel icon we're so used to seeing on web pages, telling us that something is in progress in the background, and we must simply wait for it.[96]

Mapping any praise of the "intensity" and "vitality" afforded by slowness onto the gamic version of *The Artist Is Present* similarly doesn't make much sense, yielding results that are quite different when we try to do so. If this digital environment seeks "to preserve the integrity of each . . . frame," as slow cinema is purported to do, then it's limited to the frame of the pixel in this game, and we don't so much "savor the continuity of represented action" as withstand it.[97] The action performed and represented here, waiting, is instead one that "engenders wakefulness and vigilance."[98] While there are certainly "minute gestures and movements" to be observed in this space, they're not really the result of "behold[ing] things from a distance," as the means of exploring this environment is two-dimensional side-scrolling.[99] "Highly legible flows of images" occur only momentarily when the pixels of the visitor-bots turn on and off, usually in profile view.[100] This is most evident when Abramović's last sitter exits the space of her sacred square, initiating a domino effect down the line from right to left, a dynamic flow or wave of flickering pixels and shifting bodies across the screen as each queued-up bot bends one knee, puts one foot forward, and moves up one space in the line. The flow of images is a register of an immediate change in infrastructural organization taking place in incremental steps that swiftly self-organize a heterogeneous collective into a linear configuration.[101]

Although the pacing in this game is certainly stunted, its gameplay cannot be fleshed out by situating slowness as its underlying aesthetic principle, as there is hardly any new or additional information already contained within this environment that can be revealed upon closer examination or over an extended period of time. Taking your time in the game gallery to walk up to and closely inspect the details of *Starry Night* will not reveal "the texture of the canvas and the artist's brushstrokes from various angles" as it might in an AFK experience at MoMA or online via its 3D model.[102] Your close proximity to the work in the game gallery will instead activate a legible caption: "Starry Night / Vincent Van Gogh / 1889 / Oil on canvas."[103] The only additional information contained in these canonical

artworks in digital form is their attribution, which is, of course, not secret or spectacular but rather widely circulated. The wall label for *Starry Night*, although situated outside of the work, beyond the border of its physical frame, has long been part of its discursive formation as paratextual information that is broadly disseminated to help sustain its author function ("It's a Van Gogh"), status as a "work," and broad appeal.[104]

The slow-pacing progress of this game does not lead to aesthetic revelations within the digital environment, nor does it envision a means of evading the accelerated pace of contemporary culture and popular media forms that supposedly serve to entertain, since it actually forces players to confront the inaccuracies in this story about slowness—namely, that many people spend a good amount of time *not* speeding through life. Already in 1975, it was noted that

> the modern order, with its enlarged service sector and precariously complex organization, furnishes unlimited opportunities for what often seems to be unlimited periods of waiting. We queue up for unscheduled service at the supermarket, the post office, and the theater . . . . We also wait for supposedly scheduled trains, buses, and planes—after waiting to buy tickets and check our baggage. . . . And just as our calendars are thick with appointments with unpunctual people who will keep us waiting, so they contain the names of those whose fate is to be delayed by our own tardiness. As for the few who would rise up and protest their delay, they will find the lines to the complaint department busy and long.[105]

(We should know this story well, as waiting is also an indispensable, if underacknowledged, part of academic research.[106]) Moreover, as the AFK version of *The Artist Is Present* reminds us, not everyone is expected to wait for things.[107]

> So this line at MoMA to sit in front of Marina Abramović is really long, you know, FYI. You pretty much have to clear your schedule and be prepared to wait around for at least a few hours . . . unless, of course, you are famous. . . . The other day James Franco was first to sit in front of the performance artist, and we're pretty sure he—or Lou Reed, or Sharon Stone—didn't stand in line like regular museum patrons. . . . In fact, a source tells us the day Franco took a seat he was escorted into the museum a half hour early.[108]

Waiting is not just an everyday nuisance of modern life but a pivotal indicator of how power is allocated and how value is attributed, and the salience of structural and institutional relationships for both of these questions.[109] In the gamic version of this performance, everyone has to wait and is equally burdened with the pace of the line, with "everyone" meaning you, the player, and the bots streaming in. The wait is based on contingency, referencing the AFK experience of some visitors sitting for hours on end with Abramović and others for only a few minutes.[110] Its gameplay is defined by the overlooked media process of waiting,

manifested in the line as a structure of organization, distribution, and access. Waiting is not positioned as "dead time," as absence, but neither is it something that should or can be circumvented.[111]

While it might be tempting to initially ask whether the gameplay reaffirms or offers an escape from this logistical control, a binary model of interpretation would oversimplify the work of logistics itself, "since escape in such contexts will always be compromised, accounted for and integrated back into the [logistical] database."[112] The development and institutionalization of several new long-duration games by Barr not long after *The Artist Is Present* was released is an example of this. Barr initially summarizes the process of designing his version of *The Artist Is Present* strictly in terms of the operation of waiting, which was essential to the discourse on the show as well as to what he calls "the game" of the AFK show, and what expectations waiting might elicit in this different environment of the video game world: "On researching the show it was pretty obvious that the core mechanic of the game was about waiting . . .—either waiting to see Abramović or, in a sense, waiting with her. And that's immediately titillating because waiting is obviously the height of poor game design according to convention. . . . Part of my attitude to it, though, was to take it to some kind of 'end game'—just waiting, no real other entertainment or chance of interaction, possibly for hours, possibly never even achieving your aim. Brutal waiting."[113]

In contrast to "brutal" or "antagonistic" waiting in this specific medial institutional context, something else happens in the other waiting games that Barr was invited to produce a couple of years later, in 2013.[114] This collaboration resulted in browser-based "Abramović Method Games" centered on "long-duration" activities, such as separating piles of white rice and black sesame seeds on the screen, without any predetermined end to the task, and players gained access to them after contributing five dollars to the Kickstarter campaign for the establishment of the Marina Abramović Institute (MAI), which would be devoted to long-duration artwork in upstate New York. (The Digital MAI, a game world created by Barr several months later, became the only such institution to open its doors, as the AFK version of it was never physically built.[115] The virtual institution also had to close its doors after the browser plug-in needed to enter and explore the space was later discontinued.[116]) Instead of waiting with waiting, it has now been converted into guru-like prescriptions for self-care, meditation, and "productive" play, reentering, as such, back into the database.

THE PITCHING GAME

What if, instead of integrating the process of waiting back into a context in which it becomes standardized, optimized, and instrumentalized for a designed purpose (e.g., "long duration" or "presence"), we linger here for a while longer and examine its role in pitching the sacred, demarcated, promised image or work. This would position waiting not as a state to endure, escape, or romanticize but

as a process that co-constructs this work and that is experienced through and alongside a range of other "irksome" and "authentic" media operations in the game space: "Hand-in-hand with the waiting came all the other bits and pieces of making the [*Artist Is Present*] game 'authentic.' By 'authentic' I don't mean that it somehow is a tribute to Abramović's work or anything, just that I wanted to find elements of the real situation that would contribute to a particular feeling. Mostly that meant the kind of irksome realities that usually aren't supposed to impinge on games. In the game that meant having the museum have proper opening hours, and enforcing queue etiquette to the degree that people couldn't 'game' the game."[117] Looking at waiting this way means we don't try to game it. We stay with it, and with the pitch.

It's not slowness but pitching that is crucial to consider here: the rhetorical declarations, value claims, fabrication of scarcity, and stipulations for access that we think come before the work of art, before our experience of it, sometimes in inconvenient, or irksome, ways. "(The anxiety of waiting is not continuously violent; it has its matte moments.)"[118] The pitch doesn't only (if at all) preface these experiences but insists that the work in question remains abstract, unfinished, and ongoing and can be reworked by it. When Rebecca Schneider writes about approaches to the past that treat it as a time that lies behind us, that is a given, a time that unequivocally happened "just so" and that is perpetually threatened by irretrievability, and therefore must be judiciously preserved in ways that would allow for this "just so" to be linearly reconstructed in and at a future time that lies in front of us, she discusses the pitch that repositions these fixed states, drawing on the idea of a "scriptive thing" that cues and hails certain actions: "As scriptive things they [artworks] are pitched, already, for the jump of affect, for reperformance across bodies, as a call is pitched for response."[119] The pitch aims at and anticipates the future work that has yet to be fully constructed from the place of a past that is unsettled. When a ship pitches, the front (bow) of the boat rises and the rear (stern) of the boat falls, and vice versa, like a seesaw. It has long conveyed fluctuation.[120] The pitch is a transversal movement, not one that originates from somewhere that is definitive and ends somewhere that is already fully delineated.[121] It's a notion of something prior (a line, a regulation, a draft, a container, a proposal) that never remains prior. A field in which one plays, undoubtedly structuring play but not uniformly determining every move, implicating a series of rhetorical promises, expectations, and speculative thought that can't be completely ignored but that are not usually taken seriously, particularly when it comes to "works of art."

Focusing on the pitch can help us understand these irksome inconveniences as media processes commonly thought of as unglamorous, unavoidable, mundane prerequisites for highbrow art housed in venerated institutions, processes that constitute the idea of a coherent, creative, clearly demarcated work (of art or whatever) in the first place. We can then examine the possibility of the pitch for reordering and repositioning clear oppositions and binary conclusions—access/

prohibition, slowness/acceleration, escape/control, highbrow/lowbrow, canonical/amateur, archive/repertoire, popular/artistic—in this case, by waiting and resting in and on this nonphonetic mark, the slash, an unspoken but clearly visible line of division.[122] Let's stay for a while with this brutal waiting, delaying, hesitating, and prolonging the rare treasure in the box that we've been promised. What is the script of waiting in this case?[123] It's OK to be a little obsessed with it at this point.

> I spent about five hours playing the [*Artist Is Present*] game, during which time I managed to make dinner (omelet), watch TV (*The West Wing*) and browse the net a bit (vanity), but throughout which I was largely consumed with my obsession with the queue—I'd say I checked it, flicking my eyes and/or switching windows, about every 20 seconds. . . . Part of the problem is that we're so used to the traditional structures of games (run, shoot, live, die) that it's extremely hard to care. One thing that a game like *The Artist Is Present* can do, then, is provide a new structure within which to maybe, just possibly, give a shit.[124]

To start "giv[ing] a shit," to stay with this for a while, we can examine the different structure of this gamic redo of a show about redos via the process of waiting, which preoccupies most of its gameplay.[125] Although the first levels of the game—presuming players arrive at MoMA on the right day at the right time—require several movements up front, the majority of their time in this game world is spent waiting. Players enter the museum, get in line, buy an admission ticket, get in line again, give the ticket to the guard, enter the first gallery, find the end of the line, and get in line again. The rest of the game is all waiting, stalling, deferment. Even if movement is required from players in these initial levels, both the tempo and the mood of its institutional setting are drastically different from what would have been familiar to those who saw, for example, the making-of/making-with documentary of the show. In the gamic version, the HBO hype is absent: There is no dramatic music, no sound at all in fact, no live performers, since they were on the AFK MoMA's sixth floor and this verticality doesn't exist in the digital side-scrolling redo, no film team, no talking or gushing about the performance by those in line, no strikingly vertical camera pans across the entrance to the institution, and no panorama shots of the crowds because, in the game, they are all organized in one place, in linear fashion. For the most part, the game is imitating "ambience acts . . . [that] signal that the game is still under way but that no gameplay is actually happening at the moment. The game is still present, but the play is absent."[126] It's important to note that ambience acts are imitated in the process of waiting here, not performed as such. The game, not the player, performs ambience acts, and this often occurs, for example, when the player stops playing but doesn't shut down the game. Maybe when they go to watch TV, make food, or surf the net. Some games will then begin performing these ambience acts, allowing the environment or the background to slightly or gradually change, but this simulated passage of time doesn't end up having an effect on the player or the gameplay.

It's for this reason that ambience acts follow "the logic of traditionally expressive or representational forms of art such as painting or film [since] the world of the game exists as a purely aesthetic object in the ambience act. It can be looked at . . . . But there is always a kind of 'charged expectation' in the ambience act. It is about possibility, a subtle solicitation for the operator to return."[127] The game mobilizes this possibility as the only way to eventually achieve its designed goal, incorporating the imitation of ambience into the gameplay itself and insisting on it as a mode of tension. Players oscillate between interaction in the form of movement and interaction in the form of observation, and the game thereby problematizes concepts of and relations between action and interaction. By putting waiting as another form of action to the test, the game avoids the problem that has been noted about so-called artist-made game mods (modifications) or "avant-garde" games, which embody an "essential contradiction of their existence . . . : that they have sought largely to remove their own gameplay and lapse back to other media entirely (animation, video, painting)."[128] This is to say that many games, in the pursuit of becoming "artistic" or "avant-garde," remove the action that is said to define the medium.[129] They become objects to be looked at, rather than objects that come into existence when enacted. Interestingly, a similar critique of a lack of "action" has been leveled against the AFK version of *The Artist Is Present*—namely, that due to the length and repetitive nature of the central new performance, it seemed "posed," "not natural," and "static."[130] It lacked spontaneity and contingency. It was not "live" enough, but rather was something to be looked at. "Over the years, attempts to give kinesis or action to museum interiors have revealed some interesting moments, but the tendency of the object/viewer relationship continues to predominate through it all."[131]

In the browser-based version of *The Artist Is Present*, observing media use becomes part and parcel of playing the game. The gameplay suggests that for players, waiting and watching themselves are considered actions, and the deferment of the image, the process of waiting in lines in front of the framed image and forming other frames around the framed image, becomes an integral part of the image. By keeping the promised image at a distance, players are encouraged to question its centrality. They are not only forced to endure the delay, the five hours of standing in a virtual line, but maybe also to interact with this other, often overlooked state of action that seems so pointless but is so crucial: complaining about it, documenting it, experimenting with it, making satirical electronic music about it, laughing at and with the deferment of the journey itself, and maybe, even after so much prolonged waiting, finding oneself "hoping that the tickets would not go on sale, not just yet."[132] The delay of the image that is supposedly at the heart of this space is already indicated, in fact, on the earlier version of its title screen that credited *The Artist Is Present* to "Marina Abramović (and Pippin Barr)," in which a divagation occurs, a consequence of these parenthetical frames. The central image, the prize we paid to see at the entrance, doesn't come to completion

alone, or at all, and the "work" we do see raises doubts about the distinction between marginal and primary information.[133] The line becomes instructive in its very structure: how it delimits the center, how it purports to offer a straightforward and serial formulation of the task, and how it confirms or plays with the idea of a voyage of discovery and of a hidden treasure. It represents a temptation of the unveiled image and at the same time reinforces its invisibility. The search for what remains invisible is not really a secret that must be revealed but is more interesting in the sense of a relational element that should be investigated alongside its counterpart.

The result of not only showing this structure, this packaging of the performance, but also insisting that it must be looked at in order for the game to be enacted should not be underestimated. It is relevant not only to the history of performance—in this case, blockbuster performances at venerated institutions of art—but also to the history of video games, whose packaging has also been kept under wraps precisely at the moment when they first began to receive permission to pass through these big, looming doors to "art." Those very same MoMA doors we know from these first pages, to be precise. In 2012, one year after *The Artist Is Present* could be played online, MoMA acquired its first video games, fourteen in total, under the rubric of "interactive design."[134] While Barr participated in the MoMA symposium "Critical Play—The Game as an Art Form" that year, his own MoMA game wasn't among their first video game acquisitions.[135] Maybe it was not seen as an autonomous work, or not an example of "good" or "beautiful" interactive design. Who could blame them? Their definition of interactive design had to apply not only to video games but also to computer hardware and software design, analog navigational signage, environmentally responsive digital installations, and even the @ sign or the Google Maps pin, characterized as "interactive icons" and "living objects made of code."[136] By 2022, the number of games in MoMA's collection had grown to thirty-six.

As if trying to anticipate the naysayers and critics, the catalogue accompanying the latest exhibition of these works announces that they "encourage us to reconsider the imperatives of creativity in the world today. And to come to the conclusion that yes—video games belong in art museums."[137] (And art museums in video games.) After allowing these video games to pass through those MoMA doors, after the "anointment of video games in the MoMA collection," curator Paola Antonelli describes in her TED Talk "Why I brought Pac-Man to MoMA" the beginnings of the collection, and how soon "all hell broke loose. . . . There's still people who believe that there's a high and there's a low."[138] Her talk interweaves journalistic critiques of the collection, beginning with the headline in *The Guardian*, with her own retorts to them: "'Sorry MoMA, video games are not art'—*did I ever say they were art? I was talking about interaction design, excuse me*—'Exhibiting PacMan and Tetris alongside Picasso and Van Gogh . . .'—*they're two floors away, ahem* [audience laughs]—'will mean game over for any real understanding of art.'"[139]

Antonelli explains that these questions of "what is art" and "what is worth collecting" are as old as the hills, and something she and her colleagues drew inspiration from when they first started drafting the video game acquisition list in 2011, recounting a moment a hundred years ago when logistical complications raised these big, seemingly unanswerable questions about access and belonging that they've heard again and again: "One of Constantin Brâncuși's *Bird in Space* sculptures became the subject of a legal dispute when it was brought to New York in 1926 for an exhibition: was it an artwork, or was it a utilitarian object (and thus subject to import tax)?"[140] In other words, design is design. She goes on in her talk to note a moment when, in the 1930s, art was stopped on its logistical journey to MoMA at customs for not being art. This game of trying to get off the boat and through the doors is a long one.

Setting aside the debate as to whether "interaction" is a helpful term with which to describe the medial qualities of video games, if the objective of this collection is to allow visitors to experience and experiment with "good" interactive design in video games, Raiford Guins finds that an indispensable aspect of this objective is missing at MoMA: the framing part, the packaging, all the barriers, points of entry, material information, and marginalized media around the "works" they are collecting.[141] In describing his visit to the video game exhibition in 2014, which was located on the museum's third floor, he first notes how he gets in—the importance of which we know not to underestimate. "I enjoy the elevator ride. It 'elevates' me above the Contemporary Galleries located on the second floor to sandwich the game installations on the third floor . . . between the 'Contemporary' below and the Painting and Sculpture II exhibits upstairs on the fourth floor. I like to imagine Lichtenstein and Pollock banging on the floorboards at all that racket from their noisy new neighbors."[142] But here already the first medial difference is audibly marked. This is not an arcade transplanted into a museum. These are video games inserted into architecture and design galleries. MoMA has thus removed the noisy coin slots and flippers and equipped the space with ambient sound effects as the backdrop for interaction. "The new video game display presents plasma screens mounted flush to a vast, red-painted wall; the games' original housings are eschewed in favor of spare, shelf-like control units."[143] He laments that, in MoMA's institutional understanding of video games and video game history, the marginal information, the stuff on the outside of the "core work," is left out. The "core," in the case of video games collected at MoMA, means code: "What we want, what we aspire to, is the code. It's very hard to get, of course. But that's what would enable us to preserve the video games for a really long time, and that's what museums do."[144] Guins sees this differently: "[Antonelli's TED Talk] presents game packaging, game consoles, and a coin-op arcade cabinet as examples of 'paraphernalia' and 'nostalgia.' Moreover, she speaks of 'sticky carpets and cigarette butts' to further distance MoMA's exhibition from the ordinary spaces where one may have encountered video games."[145]

The point is not to criticize MoMA for not maintaining fidelity to some notion of the original, not to fetishize sticky carpets, but to consider, especially if the objective is to investigate interaction, the sticky carpets as part of an assemblage implicated in the "specific event-character of media *themselves*."[146] While one might think of media primarily in terms of communicating information and events, in doing so, they also communicate the various yet detailed conditions of their own media emergence, which can remain significant for the slick code now running in the background of these emulations emanating from the third floor of this revered institution. "Of course, the point here isn't the reality of lived experience, sociohistorical interactions with game artifacts, or even medium specificity, but MoMA's active separation of its objects from their diverse contexts. . . . We truly play the whole machine, not simply the computer program housed by the cabinet."[147] MoMA's video game exhibition catalogue notes that digital platforms, while often aiming to be streamlined, slick, and relatively seamless, "are not finite objects but complex entities."[148] Nevertheless, its presentation of these platforms eschews the complications that might arise from thinking about filthy cigarettes butts and dirty carpets next to a pristine, shiny, modified version of *Pac-Man* next to Van Gogh. It seems that certain objects belong to this notion of complexity (those determined to be relevant to "design") while others definitely do not (those associated with and relegated to mainstream culture).[149] In our case, this would not only refer to a PippinBarr-Man next to Van Gogh, but also the "ordinary spaces" in which decisive institutional, media processes occur, manifesting as a series of frames intended to promise, guarantee, and protect the center, the within: from the museum doors, navigational queues, and the single queue with its specific protocols to the guards outside the white frame and the white frame itself.

Since most visitors to this virtual museum spend the majority of their time not in the presence of the promised artist but in the presence of such marginal elements—queuing, purchasing tickets, navigating barriers, watching visitors stream in, staring at the works of art in the center of their screen, and watching the line incrementally inch forward—the game suggests that all these elements have already penetrated the center and its pure "presence." While institutionalizing and anchoring Abramović's performance within the art historical procession of great masters, the game also plays with and parodies this desire, pointing to what Amelia Jones insists is "the impossibility of presence" in this show.[150] Although this performance was advertised as facilitating unmediated presence, unique energy exchanges, and authentic expression, Jones argues that all of this is "belied by Abramović's very construction and promotion of [her work] through representation in the [catalogue] book, the [documentary] film, and so on."[151] This "and so on" is important. It alludes to the branding logic that has been central to Abramović's success, largely built around this performance.[152] Just to provide a quick sample of these "official" parenthetical elements growing on either side of *The Artist Is Present* as brand: James Westcott's *When Marina Abramović Dies: A Biography* (2010); Marco

Anelli's catalogue of photographs from the performance of *The Artist Is Present*, called *In Your Eyes* (2010); the opera *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović* (2011), staged by Bob Wilson; Matthew Akers's 2012 HBO documentary about her MoMA performance; and the documentary film about the opera, directed by Giada Colagrande, *Bob Wilson's Life & Death of Marina Abramović* (2012), to name a few. This pattern of blockbuster Abramović "live" event followed by parenthetical medial iterations thereof has continued, most recently with "A Different Way of Hearing—The Abramović-Method for Music," a "community event" at the Alte Oper (Old Opera) in Frankfurt, followed by a documentary about the event, her life, and "the art of listening," *Marina Abramović und die Kunst des Hörens* (2019), directed by Andreas Gräfenstein, followed by . . . You get the picture.[153] It wouldn't be surprising if what came next was a documentary film about the writing of the biography of the photographer present during the performance who was also captured on film and remediated in the opera.

If one of the ways to avoid such a "full-blown spectacle, which reifies the live as 'artwork,'" would be to find a way and to make space for the work to offer a "self-reflexive acknowledgment of the art world as a marketplace," then one can see how the game might demonstrate this best in its initial title screen: *The Artist Is Present*: Marina Abramović (and Pippin Barr).[154] It proposes that a single parenthetical thought can throw the relationship between elements on the same line out of balance. An artist cannot be "present," precisely because the other one is there, in parentheses. By turning the effort to reify the image into a game, it raises a fundamental question: How can "presence" and its corresponding notions of the "promised," "secret," "vital," and "sacred" be isolated auratically if it relies constantly on its status as image—its literary, photographic, cinematic, operatic, digital presence? Is it really Abramović who is offered via a redo here in pixels, or rather a restaging of a situation that occurred long ago? The game instead suggests that there is still a lot to discuss in terms of the tactic of deferment, the shifting of the center, and the search for the pure image that supposedly needs no words.

To be more specific in this case, also now that we're getting closer to the end of the line, we could understand this highly modified "image" that we've long been waiting for in terms of "face," especially considering what Walter Benjamin calls an "experience of the aura": "[It] arises from the fact that a response characteristic of human relationships is transposed to the relationship between humans and inanimate or natural objects. The person we look at, or who feels he is being looked at, looks at us in turn. To experience the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look back at us."[155] In the AFK MoMA exhibition, we could infer that Abramović takes advantage of expectations of this auratic experience and intersubjectivity and at the same time acts out an edifying dictum. Since she is the person in the performance who can be looked at and return the look, she claims the aura for herself. In interviews, Abramović repeatedly refers to the crucial "energy" or "energy dialogue" that can be created with the audience around

her and the viewer sitting before her, which means that the viewing subject is just as much part of the "success" of the performance as the artist.[156] The way these encounters are initiated and structured greatly affects how they unfold: After each visitor is finished with their experience of staring into Abramović's eyes "for as long as they wish," she bows her head and places her hands over her eyes. The next visitor in line, who has already been prepped for this experience by the security guards controlling the threshold, is guided over the white tape and takes a seat in front of her. When Abramović is ready, she lowers her hands, lifts her head, and opens her eyes. Meaning that every single encounter with a visitor is initiated by the opening of her eyes, whose point in time is controlled by her. One could note critically here that this lies precisely on the tipping point between pompous artist image and kitsch.

Extending the task, reconfiguring the center, and preserving the possibility of an enduring secret ("the image," "the face") is clearly a theme, if not the principal theme, of this game, which is itself a description of the search for presence. The game does not rely on visual verisimilitude in doing so but on logistical verisimilitude, asking the player to reimagine the supposedly uninteresting aspects of institutional location and protocols as well as their understanding of "action." The long wait to stare into Abramović's pixelated eyes demands that the player engage with the media processes and spaces normally overlooked by the task. But when the very patient and attentive player finally reaches the moment of that treasured encounter and confrontation, the game offers a playful approach to her "intense," "serious," and "rigid" gaze that is eagerly marketed in the rhetoric of this exhibition. It directly addresses the question of aura. At the end of this game, there is no uninterrupted surveillance, no absolute eye. The animated, moving image of Abramović is indeed realized here but only minimally. After waiting anxiously for the person sitting with her to decide they are finished, get up, and leave the demarcated, sacred square, we receive the series of prompts and instructions from the guards on how to behave with her, clicking enter to acknowledge and bypass them, and then, with great focus and purpose, we take those last incremental steps in her direction, not wanting to swerve off course and inadvertently mess up this chance in any way. Then the side-scrolling game converts into something new. We no longer peer into the white cube from a distanced profile perspective but are transported into it, beyond the tape, and into the hot seat. Instead of seeing our avatar, the line, the guards, the avatar visitors, the great masters, and the sacred square, we see Abramović in a close-up, a direct address from the face we've been waiting for. It is reminiscent of a cutscene, that component of narrative progression in a video game commonly referred to as "cinematic" since it takes players out of the game space in order to play a scripted minifilm, and thus it is often criticized for excising the player from the gameplay, for its lack of "interactivity."[157] As players in this new game space, it brings us into contact with the direct address and focus we've been promised. We know we are allowed to

FIGURE 10. Pippin Barr, *The Artist Is Present* (2011). Screenshot. Courtesy of the artist.

gaze into her abstract face as long as we wish (until the museum closes), but this face doesn't only stare back at us.

In an *Augenblick*, an instant, we see it: She blinks (figure 10). Closes her eyes. Lives. It is a minimal gesture, but one made in the face of modern Art. It sets in motion a kind of seeing that takes into account the moment of inevitable inattention, distraction, and temporality, and appreciates it. This is a mode of seeing that opens up the "sudden glances, surprising angles, occasional interruptions in the form of squints, winks, and blinks, odd choices of focus, that reverse our sense of what is important and what is not, sentencing what we consider important to the background and the margins of visibility."[158] This movement, one of the least striking gestures, also points to the effort to continue seeing, to the impulse to see, even if it is only imperfect, and precisely because it is incomplete and imperfect. The promised bone is delivered, but in the end it's not what we thought it was, and is not that important. The song that is rehearsed again and again by David Huxley and Swingin' Door Susie throughout *Bringing Up Baby* tells us as much: "I Can't Give You Anything but Love, Baby." It's a series of redos that are based "on such an old tune" by Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh about not being able to get inside a venerated house of treasures in New York City.[159] "'One evening, while walking down Fifth Avenue, they [Fields and McHugh] noticed a young couple window-shopping in front of Tiffany's. It was obvious they didn't belong to the carriage trade . . . They heard the young man say, "Gee, honey, I'd like to get you a sparkler like that, but right now, I can't give you nothin' but love!" Then and there the team of Fields and McHugh broke all speed in getting to a Steinway, and inside of an hour, they completed the smash song for which they had been searching.'"[160] What we find in the end, after this anti-speed-run through the game, is something we couldn't imagine searching for in the beginning. It's a process that ends

up confusing the guaranteed positions between the categories of the artist genius and the emulation. We are asked to consider, and maybe play with, the ways in which the trademark experience of the artist-genius-grandmother could, in fact, against all odds and all the rules, be "broken down into distinct elements," bits that can be reshuffled, reinstated, and replayed, which would include, of course, all those winks, odd choices of focus, and long waits.[161]

Unsurprisingly, throughout the history of modern art and film, this kind of interpretation has caused problems for perceptions of the integrity of the artist and their work—and also legal problems. It was Charlie Chaplin's legendary copyright lawyer who said in 1928 that the artist could not, in fact, be "broken down into distinct elements," bits that can be reshuffled, reinstated, and replayed. This was because he insisted that "Chaplin was a unique genius, endowed with an ineffable quality that people could see for themselves."[162] Anything else was an unauthorized redo. It was a calculated response to all of his emulators and imitators, such as Billy West—both *The Hero* (1917) and *The Villain* (1917) after *His Waiting Career* (1916)—aiming to shut them down by authorizing Chaplin as an artist-name. The plan worked and entailed serious consequences for notions of creativity and what qualified as derivative. A complicated media process of authorizing that is the topic of our next chapter. As for us, within or outside of the institution, we are at least now a bit more prepared for the waiting career.

2

Taking Down Pictures

In March 2024, a settlement was finally reached between the parties involved in a copyright case that, as the headlines say, "May Force Us to Rethink 500 Years of Art."[1] In *Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. v. Goldsmith*, the US Supreme Court, which had recently decided on when creation begins, had to consider questions such as how the creator or author of a photographic series is defined, what qualifies as a "transformation" of an "original" creative work, and how the exhibition of the photographs in a different context decades after they were taken plays a role in these debates. While Lynn Goldsmith licensed one 1981 photograph she took of Prince for $400 to *Vanity Fair* for its article on the musician in 1984, which allowed Warhol, as requested by *Vanity Fair*, to use the photograph as "a reference point" for a silk screen, her legal team argued that she did not agree to this photograph's serving as the basis of reference for the *Prince Series*, another fifteen silk screens he would go on to create.[2] Warhol's *Orange Prince*, which appeared on the cover of a 2016 commemorative magazine published by Condé Nast shortly after the musician's death, which the Andy Warhol Foundation (AWF) commercially licensed to Condé Nast for $10,250, and for which Goldsmith didn't receive any compensation, prompted the lawsuit. While Goldsmith's team argued that it, along with the other fifteen silk screens, was a violation of her rights as the owner, author, and creator of this "original" work, the AWF claimed that Warhol's silk screens were the result of a "transformation" of an original work, of cropping, resizing, recoloring, and layering Goldsmith's photograph with graphic lines and shading, and therefore it fell under fair use. As with many copyright cases, the concern was more about the future than the present.

The case has been discussed in journalistic discourse as "the atomic bomb" that was unleashed on the art world last year:

> You've got the Met, you've got MoMA, you've got the Art Institute of Chicago, you've got the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation saying, "If this is really infringement, . . . then we are terrified, absolutely terrified that we are gonna get slapped with suit after suit based on what is hanging on our walls." . . . And they're like "We think we are gonna have to shut our doors or make our walls bare because we are gonna be terrified of Lynn Goldsmiths of the world all crawling out of the woodwork and forcing us to either pay a huge amount of money or take down the paintings that we thought we owned all the rights to."[3]

In a 7–2 vote, the court ultimately sided with Goldsmith, but in doing so, it succeeded in sidestepping many of these looming concerns by narrowing the focus of its ruling. Instead of making determinations on the claim of fair use via the "transformation" of Goldsmith's photograph in the *Prince Series*, what the court took issue with was the AWF's 2016 licensing of Warhol's image to Condé Nast and this specific use of the image.[4] Nevertheless, some commentators still saw this limited focus on authorization to be quite consequential: "The Supreme Court's Warhol Decision Just Changed the Future of Art."[5]

Despite these alarming headlines, it was not the first time that a legal case about authorization threatened photography as an art and a profession on the one side and major museums with closed doors and bare walls on the other. While a similarly decisive copyright case was dropped on the German art world over a decade ago, centering on early photographs of a now famous author/artist, debates about medium specificity and ontology, the question of the "original" versus the "transformation," and the role that the exhibition context plays in all this, it would be helpful to not treat this case as completely closed. Legally it is, conceptually it's not. Especially at a moment when Germany has recently implemented what it hopes will be the regulation that can solve the major problems of artistic works in digital, trans-European contexts, the EU Digital Single Market Copyright Directive, which includes a highly debated article making platform providers such as YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram legally liable for prohibited content on their sites, resulting in the use of "upload filters" to prevent the circulation of unauthorized content. This directive, intended to balance the privileges, freedom, and responsibilities of rights holders, content creators, and platform providers, was enforced in Germany in 2021, to the dismay of over one hundred thousand protesters, many of whom claim it merely offloads the complex and still unclear questions (especially in the so-called digital era) of what qualifies as an "author" and a "transformed" work to automatic upload filters, and to the detriment of the advancement of creativity and the future of freedom of speech.[6] It is clear that authorizing, like other overlooked media processes, shifts to the foreground of our

attention only when it goes wrong and impedes the circulation and distribution of desired goods.

The 1960s and 1970s are often historicized as an era of "alternative" media. Emerging film and video technologies made moving image production more affordable and efficient, broadening its accessibly to those outside the studio system.[7] The institutionalization of older technologies, such as photography, destabilized conventional understandings of artistic creativity and technological reproduction.[8] Performance art and strategies of dematerialization challenged the notion and commodification of the art object as well as the authority and legitimacy of venerated institutions of art.[9] The remediation of "artistic" media in "entertainment" media forms, such as network television converging with modern art and California university students making the first video game based on a film or television series, interrogated the practices of cultural legitimation and value hierarchies based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and class that sustain distinctive categories of highbrow and lowbrow, amateur and professional, intellectual art forms and popular entertainment, and fine arts and crafts.[10] While such media developments can perhaps be discussed most expediently as "new" alternatives to earlier modes of media production, distribution, and storage, this description often problematically separates these "new" media developments from the "old" media processes they take with them that allow them to circulate and be preserved and institutionalized. Tung-Hui Hu frames this as a process of "grafting" new networks onto older, often "more established" processes and networks, the forgotten composite of which is often simply categorized and classified as "new" media.[11] He notes that this is not only a media historical fallacy—in that it disregards all the older, constitutive processes, infrastructures, and networks implicated in so-called "new" media technologies, resulting in myths about the origins of media forms, such as the Internet as a kind of a dispersed but intricately connected cloud—but also notes that it's worth considering why such myths continue to circulate within the existing scholarship: "I'm interested less in debunking the myth than in the reason that it persists in digital culture, reanimated in the popular imagination of a digital cloud . . . . There is, in short, a collective desire to keep the myth alive despite evidence to the contrary. This desire, after all, is symptomatic not only of how media historians explain the Internet's origins, but is, more generally, symptomatic of our method. . . . Because, in fact, not everything is connected, the network exists primarily as a state of *desire*."[12] In the German copyright case from a decade ago, myths about the "wholeness" of artworks—ironically, even those that were made of mixed media—and the "unity" of the figure of the author have continued to circulate, also in the scholarship, only really coming to the fore when the media process of authorizing was interrupted, highly contested, and made essentially problematic.

In May 2013, the Bundesgerichtshof (Federal Court of Justice), the highest German civil court, decided that silence didn't have to be silenced anymore.[13]

FIGURE 11. Joseph Beuys, *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird überbewertet*, September 13, 2011 [1964/1965]. Brown oil (Braunkreuz) paint, shoe sole marks on paper, bars and pieces of chocolate painted over with oil paint, folded cardboard, felt squares, five sheets of writing paper written on in blue ink, black-and-white photograph partly painted over with Braunkreuz. 61¾ × 70⅛ × ¾ in. (157 × 178 × 2 cm). On exhibition at the Museum Schloss Moyland, with Bettina Paust in the foreground. MSM 01610. © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph by Victoria Bonn Meuser, courtesy of Picture Alliance / DPA via Getty Images.

The performance of silence that had been under debate for over four years in official courts and the court of public opinion had first taken place on West German television over forty years prior. Even then, it wasn't alone, and it wasn't that silent. In 1964, Joseph Beuys performs *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird überbewertet* (The silence of Marcel Duchamp is overrated) alongside two other simultaneous performances, Bazon Brock's *Agit Pop* and Wolf Vostell's *Dé-coll/age Happening*. The event takes place in an unconventional location: the regional studio of the Zweiten Deutschen Fernsehens (ZDF, Second German Television) station in Düsseldorf.[14] Beuys's part of the collective action is usually summarized in terms of the "painting" he makes during the event, which spells out the infamous title of the work: "DAS SCHWEIGEN VON MARCEL DUCHAMP WIRD ÜBERBEWERTET." This sentence, which has come to stand in for the performance itself, has often been interpreted as Beuys's critique of the art historical father figure for supposedly abandoning his art and staying silent about it, for Duchamp's reluctance to publicly comment on key social, aesthetic, and political issues of the time in order to concentrate his efforts on playing competitive chess.[15] In addition to the three performers in front of the television cameras, Beuys's assistant at the time, Norbert Tadeusz, participates in the event, as does another figure circulating around the set and within the studio, but who remains behind the camera, specifically a still

camera: Beuys commissions Manfred Tischer to take photographs of the live event in Düsseldorf, images that are not immediately exhibited or made public.

This collectively staged performance is broadcast live on public television, premiering on the show *Die Drehscheibe* (The potter's wheel). It's a program scheduled for the end of the workday and intended for families, offering them "a colorful variety of content, including current events, music, tips, advice, and entertainment."[16] The performance is the first collaboration between artists in West Germany that incorporates the televisual medium and apparatus as a form of artistic production and, through the choice of site, as a platform for dissemination. "All three artists carried out actions simultaneously in the studio; Brock read out an action text, Vostell staged a 'Dé-coll/age Happening' in which a TV set was used, and Beuys carried out his action . . . . Even if the TV crew was in full control of the way the programme was directed, it was a first step in transferring the new art-forms to TV."[17] The producers of *Die Drehscheibe* envisioned it as a show that would help "encourage the family to engage in 'after-work conversations' at a time when the viewer 'certainly doesn't want to be bothered with heavy and substantial topics,'" and on this evening the family might have talked about fat and chocolate (in Beuys's action), bicycles and fish (in Vostell's), and beds and television (props on the stage).[18] Since a copy of the broadcast was not saved and since Tischer's photographs of the event were banned, twice, from being exhibited, what everyone talked about until a while ago was silence.

In the previous two decisions from lower German courts in 2009 and 2011, it was determined that the first exhibition of Tischer's photographs on May 9, 2009, at the Museum Schloss Moyland, home to the Joseph Beuys Archive, was in violation of copyright laws.[19] Thus, until the unexpected ruling made by the Bundesgerichtshof in May 2013 that overturned the two previous verdicts, only one image related to this performance had been on display, and it was this prop, a remainder of the performance from 1964, that had sustained the history of the event for more than forty years (figure 11). Among other elements and materials visible in this painting are the words prominently scrawled across it on five lines, which spell out the revised title of Beuys's contribution.[20] The previous title for this piece was listed on the ZDF invitation card as *Fluxus Demonstrationen* (Fluxus Demonstrations), referring to the group instead of Duchamp, its supposed father figure.[21] The sentence spelling out the new title is written in a mixture of *Braunkreuz* ("brown cross"), a reddish-brown signature paint color and "autographic medium" for Beuys with a range of cryptic associations, and chocolate.[22] *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird überbewertet* (hereafter referred to as *Das Schweigen*) could be considered one of the last performances by Beuys that the Fluxus community would want to claim. "Beuys' name ceased appearing on 'official' [George] Maciunas-authored programs soon after . . . [his] performance [*Siberian Symphony*, 1963]," and it's clear that the director of the ZDF studio, Ferdinand Ranft, intended for this group performance to be about Fluxus, as he mentions this specific interest in his invitation to Beuys.[23]

The painting left over from the event exemplifies the reality of temporary working groups—namely, how they inevitably form and shift over time, and how this should be taken into account in the historiography of collective art movements when scholars determine who and what within these groups should become "well known" and "successful," and which group members and practices are forgotten over time and left out of the historical record.

> At some point these internal networks of communication fall apart—whether through success or through continual failure. When that happens, criticism is no longer in the hands of the producers. Or one is imitated so effectively that the standards (and anti-standards) of one's own production no longer belong to oneself, can no longer be controlled. . . . Some people may end up sidelined as casualties of this development—returning to bourgeois life and leaving no trace . . . , or leaving the scene for personal or artistic reasons. . . . The survivors, the successful ones, are then left alone in the studio again and must cope with what they have learned from the situation.[24]

Das Schweigen survived, sitting alone in its atelier until 2006, when it became clear that there was more to silence than we first realized. At the same time, the paining left over from the event exemplifies the reality of television: how its images form and inevitably disappear on the screen, which now appears as a painting framed and hung on the wall of a gallery with a bench in front of it, inviting viewers to sit down and watch it for a while (see figure 11).

That year, in 2006, Schloss Moyland purchased the photographic series taken by Tischer in the ZDF studio in 1964 as part of its new acquisition policy that concentrated on collecting pieces that were scarce or that contributed to the totality of works already in their possession. The objective was to increase public interest in Beuys through unique exhibitions at Schloss Moyland and to encourage more archival and scholarly research on Beuys, one of Germany's most well-known artists of the postwar period.[25] Photographs were an important part of this new acquisition strategy. "Today, the Joseph Beuys Archive contains approximately 5,800 predominantly black-and-white photographs . . . . In addition to gradually indexing and digitizing . . . , the Joseph Beuys Archive has been concentrating for several years on expanding this portion of the archive by acquiring largely unknown photographic series that are of immense importance, especially for scholarly research."[26] Tischer's photographs of *Das Schweigen* were a key acquisition, as they formed a complete series and had never before been exhibited. In these twenty-two black-and-white photographs, one can find some first impressions of the spatial relations and working conditions in the television studio that evening: how the group members seek out separate areas within a shared space, how they disperse and perform different functions, where they ended up in relation to one another over the duration of the show, and the objects they used in their performances. Beuys is seen creating a corner for himself out of wood with

FIGURE 12. Manfred Tischer, photograph of collective performance (Fluxus Gruppe) with Joseph Beuys, Bazon Brock, Norbert Tadeusz, and Wolf Vostell, 1964. Black-and-white Baryte prints, dimensions variable, each ca. 5½ × 8⅜ in. (14 × 21 cm). Joseph Beuys Archiv / Stiftung Schloss Moyland, JBA F–92838. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the Estate of Manfred Tischer.

light from a television set emanating from behind him, while actors from the neighboring performance piece ride bikes around the set with fish hanging out of their mouths. The studio is demarcated by Beuys's corner and two other sections: One contains a large bed with a television set on top of it, and the other is marked by a white line and what look like pieces of ripped paper placed behind it. During the show, which lasted between twenty and thirty minutes, Beuys can be seen in the photographs constructing a *Fettecke* (corner of fat) out of margarine, crawling around on his stomach, extending the length of a wooden staff with fat via a felt blanket, integrating sound components ("ein Geräuschstück mit Glocken," a sound piece with bells), and spelling out "silence" in a slogan about silence.[27]

Nineteen of these photographs of the group performance were exhibited to the public for the first time on May 9, 2009, over a year after Tischer's death (figure 12).[28] Less than three weeks later, they were taken down.[29] Schloss Moyland received a takedown notice from the German artists' rights society, the Verwertungsgesellschaft Bild-Kunst (VG Bild-Kunst), of which Beuys was not a member during his lifetime, but which has, since his death in 1986, represented his widow, Eva Beuys.[30] In the legal case *VG Bild-Kunst v. Museum Schloss Moyland*, the Düsseldorf Regional Court (Landgericht Düsseldorf) held that the

exhibition violated copyright law. Although Beuys had originally authorized Tischer to take the photographs, the courts later argued that there was no explicit permission granted by Beuys to exhibit them. As in *Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. v. Goldsmith*, the conflict was prompted by the circulation of photographic works involving other media forms featuring an artist who might not have been extremely well known at the time that the photographs were taken but who had, by the time these images were circulated, become canonical and, in Beuys's case, institutionalized. In *VG Bild-Kunst v. Museum Schloss Moyland*, the lower courts maintained, across two rounds of proceedings, that the characteristics of the photographic medium and its presentation as a series were crucial to their determination that the exhibition violated copyright protections.[31] In response, *Das Schweigen* was taken down, indefinitely silenced. The TV was turned off.

The discourse on copyright regulation at present typically revolves around the question of how to maintain a rich public culture while protecting the circulation of intellectual property. During these rulings in Germany, copyright was starting to become such a controversial topic affecting various media industries and parties that the online edition of a leading newspaper, *Die Zeit*, developed its own section devoted to the topic. In May 2012, it published an *Aufruf*, an appeal, to copyright laws on behalf of a major group of rights holders under the heading "Wir sind die Urheber" (We are the creators/copyright holders), eventually including over six thousand artists' signatures.[32] Amid growing public concern about the digital circulation of intellectual property, German political parties have also had to take a stance on the future of copyright regulation. While the success of the Piratenpartei (Pirate Party) after 2011 saw the revision of intellectual property laws become one of the party's key policy platforms, other parties had milder responses. The Greens announced a possible *Kulturflatrate* (a flat-rate fee for accessing "cultural" content) in order to spread additional costs among all internet users regardless of their file-sharing habits, the Social Democratic Party proposed a *Warnhinweismodell* (a warning model) for internet users engaging in illegal downloading practices, and the Christian Democratic Union put forth a *Leistungsschutzrecht* (an ancillary copyright) that, in its original form, would have extended the copyrights of publishers to control even the circulation of news snippets in search engines, imposing a so-called "Google tax," which was later revised.[33] More generally, appeals were still being made up until 2016 by the Gesellschaft für musikalische Aufführungs- und mechanische Vervielfältigungsrechte (GEMA, Society for Musical Performing and Mechanical Reproduction Rights) against YouTube for not properly monitoring its users and preventing infringements, ultimately resulting in a settlement agreement.[34] The implementation of EU reforms and upload filters are now the big hope for settling many of these controversial questions about access and control by allocating the responsibility of identifying protected, "original," "creative" content to automatic processes that will immediately block its circulation unless content

creators can demonstrate acquired authorization in advance for the material they wish to share.

As we will see, copyright law, particularly in French and German contexts, is historically rooted in the concept of "authors' rights," and thus it can, paradoxically, lead to doubts about the unity and integrity of "the author," precisely by insisting on the category as something that needs constant protection and enforceable punishments for violation. If authorizing is defined as an act of permission granted by someone with authority, then in the context of copyright, this authority must first be claimed, established, and upheld. The author in copyright law is anything but a natural, a priori entity but is, like a signature, both a producer and a guarantor of its own authority. "The signature invents the signer. This signer can only authorize him- or herself to sign once he or she has come to the end [*parvenu au vout*], if one can say this, of his or her own signature, in a sort of fabulous retroactivity."[35] The unity of the author is simultaneously enacted and upheld in the complex media process of authorizing. In the exhibition of photographs from 1964 under consideration here, this process concerns the rights to a legally protected, "creative" work, complicated by Beuys's institutionalization and canonicity as well as the collective nature of the works involved in the dispute and beliefs about medium specificity and ontology, which can threaten to undermine the unity of the author.

This legal case centers on a photographic series featuring a live television broadcast at a time when television was first emerging as a competitive medium for artists and filmmakers, providing them more affordable access to the means of moving image production and, for the general public, when it was becoming a means of more broadly accessing art and culture through network distribution.[36] The collective performance was also broadcast around the same time that photography began to enter the museum, which challenged the supposed indexicality and authenticity of more traditional museum media such as painting and sculpture, as it was initially criticized as a media technology primarily capable of reproduction rather than "original" creation.[37] The performance it documents (if one assumes that this was, in fact, a "documentation") involved an artist who is now well-known in performance studies and German studies and whose estate is embroiled in several other copyright battles over his work.[38] Beuys's body of work, moreover, includes multiples and the medium of performance, which could be interpreted as essentially ephemeral and therefore cannot, by definition, materialize in the same way as a form of visual reproduction.[39] One should be cautious when focusing too narrowly on the particular characteristics of Beuys's works in order to contextualize this case, however, as this is, indeed, a performance that goes beyond Beuys. The photographs, although taken by one artist, feature the performances of three other artists in the studio: Tadeusz, Brock, and Vostell. "In some of the photographs . . . one cannot see much of Beuys's action, as the actions of Bazon Brock and Wolf Vostell occupy the foreground."[40] The collective content depicted in the photographs raises problems about which participant, if any,

"owns" the images in question, thereby assuming the right to authorize them to be exhibited or to allege that the display of the photographic series is an unauthorized exhibition of a work of reproduction. Claiming ownership of "creative" property and pursuing copyright protections for it are almost always a requirement, at some point or another, along the path toward institutionalization, and thus these authorizing processes can provide insights into how this path is crafted and how it has been traveled.[41] Authorizing usage rights and circulation stipulations, from complex institutional agreements and legal contracts to submitting official filings (takedown notices, lawsuits) to protect intellectual property, can indicate specific values and priorities concerning notions of originality, creativity, and artistic spirit. Yet, as important as such authorizing processes are to creating the necessary conditions for the regulated circulation of work by canonical artists we encounter in major museums every day, they are usually relegated to the footnotes of historical, often monographic studies.[42]

In media studies, such questions about copyright law are often considered, on the one hand, too empirical to be theoretically interesting and, on the other, too implicated in a binary system of thought about open-access activism to receive nuanced treatment by a broader spectrum of the field. However, the questions of whether certain cultural or artistic works should be considered fair use and whether they have fulfilled the requirements that would allow them to qualify as "transformations" of the "original" work are not the only questions, or even the primary questions, that such copyright cases raise.[43] If one of the current challenges in media studies is to balance analyses of media objects and apparatuses with a consideration of media processes, therein not just focusing "on devices or apparatuses as such . . . [but] more on the physical systems of power they mobilize," and not just talking about "objects and operations . . . [but also] practices and effects," then authorizing copyrighted property, as a fundamental yet often overlooked media process outside of legal scholarship, can help shed light on such medial effects.[44] Although the immediate purpose of copyright regulation is to determine which creative works are allowed to be shown, to what extent, and in what way, taking seriously the ramifications of intellectual property legislation is a means of historicizing the effects it records and initiates, as well as the presumed possibilities of the media forms involved in copyright cases. "The possibility of a medium stands in intimate relation to what a medium is, that is to say, the definition of whatever medium is in question."[45] These possibilities include the dreams and anxieties projected into cultural and artistic objects at the moment of their emergence, convergence, and questionable distribution and exhibition. Trying to theorize what a series of rare photographs, which depict a deceased famous artist, "does" would seem, from this perspective, insufficient. A question with broader implications, and that can be asked with less bias, would address what photography, in the context of a series featuring other media forms, including performance and television, and involving a number of participants—those who are performing

in the studio, working in the studio, watching at home, and viewing the series in the museum and the courtroom—is *believed* to do. This would mean exploring not only the ways in which the photographic series is simultaneously articulated as a future medium within these discourses on authorization, which are worthy of and in need of our attention beyond the perspective of legal history. Along the lines of Hu's argument, this would entail a consideration of the dominant discourse and popular imagination surrounding the diversity of media forms involved in this case, attending not only to their historical complexity but also to the ways in which they are *desired* to behave and function, especially with respect to other media forms, multiple participants and spectators across different periods of time and space, and in specific contexts of exhibition.

Paying attention to the dreams, beliefs, and anxieties about "the original" in the "digital world" rather than just its alleged indexical trace opens up the possibility of teasing out how it has been reconfigured in this different environment, a process that often gets obscured in the rhetoric on "newness." Several have pointed this out with respect to machine-learning technologies and, in academia specifically, the latest bomb to drop that might be forcing us to rethink knowledge evaluation, ChatGPT, a chatbot assisted by artificial intelligence technology. While Hito Steyerl, in a recent article on statistical renderings assisted by machine learning, emphasizes that what such composite technologies rely on is an unacknowledged "onboarding [of] tools into specific technological environments," tools that include invisible, underpaid human labor, preexisting biases, and "latent social patterns" to produce texts and images that "no longer refer to facticity, let alone truth, but to probability," Axel Volmar considers what these discursive patterns will mean for expectations and systems of knowledge going forward.[46] If ChatGPT is capable of producing and creating "believable" knowledge rather than collating it from a preexisting source somewhere online, no longer relying on "a database logic (e.g. of search engines), but . . . on the identification of discursive patterns and thus on a *'post-factual epistemology,'*" then "what happens now, when post-factual text production (or also image production) is increasingly used in a world, which . . . generally expects factuality or 'circulating reference' (Latour)?"[47] A circulating reference is some kind of material object implying indexical proof, such as a photograph, which, through the process of knowledge construction (it doesn't preexist as such), eventually wields such signifying power, power gained by the way it is repeatedly pointed at and repeatedly points to evidence, facts, and the real, that this visual image can come to stand in for knowledge, appearing, for example, in a scientific journal with perhaps only one deictic remark necessary, in between things, almost like an aside: "(See figure X)." "Truth-value circulates here like electricity through a wire, so long as this circuit is not interrupted."[48] What can interrupt circulating references are all the processes of messy mediation that occurred along the way in order for this truth-value to be acquired. If such processes are dismissed as unnecessary,

as intermediary steps that merely obscure our vision of this knowledge that preexists, is already "out there" just waiting to be revealed, both knowledge and the material objects called upon as circulating references then come to be treated like intact but undiscovered fossils of the past.

Treating *Das Schweigen* in this contemporary copyright discussion as if were a fossil from the 1960s, keeping it there alone by itself, not only would do a disservice to its complexity but also would not allow us to consider its implications for the present and future use and understanding of composite media technologies implicating notions of the original, the new, the real, and the indexical, as well as authorship in participatory practices and collective work. The beliefs and desires about media in the critical and popular discourse surrounding this legal case, while focused on specific media and events in the 1960s and a singular, allegedly unauthorized exhibition of analog photographs in 2009, cannot be entirely isolated from ideologies emerging in the contemporary moment of widespread digitization. After all, much of the rhetoric around digitization depends on an analog-digital binary, even though new technologies consist of tools, objects, and discursive patterns of the past onboarded into specific technological environments of the present. Underlying these legal debates and rulings is the looming question of how the process of authorizing can persist and continue to protect "creative" property in times of digital media production, distribution, and preservation. This complex copyright case can elucidate how we value objects from the 1960s at present, how these values are affected by conditions of today, and what effect copyright historiography has on our understanding and definition of digital objects and technologies. This isn't a case that is just concerned with whether or not to take down some photographs; it is embroiled, through both the complex media processes embedded in the works themselves and the discourse on the case, with crucial questions about how media objects can be accessed, and by whom, going forward. It's not just another minor legal dispute but one that sets a precedent for the circulation, exhibition, and conceptual understanding of inter/multimedial artworks. And it's a case that is not just exemplary of the curatorial and scholarly difficulties of dealing with Beuys's archive but is also an indication of a range of dilemmas and consequences in authorizing work that thematizes the relationship between ephemerality, "liveness," and archival storage today.

AUTHORIZING

A primary question about the unpublished photographs suspended between the two names in the 2009 exhibition's title, *Joseph Beuys—Unveröffentlichte Fotografien von Manfred Tischer* (Joseph Beuys—Unpublished photographs by Manfred Tischer), was what status these photographs had with respect to the "original work." Were they an authorized adaptation of the work, "eine freie Benutzung," or a transformation of it, "eine Umgestaltung"? (What exactly "it" is, how the

"original work" is defined here, remains problematic, and we'll get into this later.) These are terms that are cited in cases in which rights holders' claims are challenged, as there is no strict equivalent to the US "fair use" measure in Germany. Attitudes toward authors' rights and, consequently, toward the protection of access to public goods have always differed in both countries, evident in the failed bilateral copyright agreement that underwent fifteen rounds of negotiations beginning in 2013 until the European Council formally closed all negotiations on the matter, considering it "obsolete and no longer relevant" in 2019.[49] A snapshot of transatlantic developments in authors' rights at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century can provide some historical context: At a time when the US was limiting copyright protection to its own citizens and later refusing to join multilateral treaties regarding copyright standards, being considered a "pirate nation" and "a copyright rogue" by essentially deeming the replication and distribution of foreign intellectual property fair game and making significant economic and cultural gains as a result, Germany was embracing, following France, the concept of authors' rights.[50] Signing the Berne Convention treaty of 1886, as other western European countries did, would have entailed significant changes to the standing US copyright law: "In limiting the 1790 Copyright Act's benefits to US citizens, Congress consciously chose the advantages of counterfeiting and piracy for the fledgling nation. Reprinting foreign works was not only permitted but encouraged. . . . With the spread of cheap print, mass education and universal literacy, America developed the world's largest reading audience. . . . 'It seems to be their opinion,' complained Arthur Sullivan (the composer of Gilbert-and-Sullivan fame), 'that a free and independent American citizen ought not to be robbed of his right of robbing somebody else.'"[51]

If copyright law in the US was historically fueled by a desire to incentivize productivity and market growth, only indirectly offering the public inexpensive cultural products in the process, authors' rights as implemented in France and Germany stemmed from the belief in moral rights: "Moral rights are based on a simple idea. The author of a work develops a special bond with his creation. The relationship between them is permanent. An author is, and always will be, the author of his own work. Writers describe this relationship in a number of ways. Words such as 'intellectual,' 'personal,' and 'spiritual' often appear."[52] These different priorities for protecting intellectual property versus an artist's personality can even be seen in the distinct meanings of the two legal terms: the English "copyright" regulation, "the right 'to own and control a work of authorship' and the right 'to copy it,'" as compared to the German *Urheberrecht*, the right of the "original creator," *Urheber* (which has religious connotations of the "primary creator"), to control the publication, attribution, and integrity of the work.[53] The owner of the work is excluded in the English term, while in the German definition, the owner is specifically referenced as "the original creator," reinforcing the inherent connection between a work and its author and, by extension, the personality and "spirit" of the author.[54]

These romantic notions of the importance of maintaining the author's personal mark on "the work," and their integrity through it, are to a certain extent upheld in the German copyright law in force at the time of this case, which relegates the two provisions governing derivative uses to the very bottom of the section that lists exploitation rights (*Verwertungsrechte*). Below the right of reproduction, distribution, exhibition, and modes of public communication through various media forms (e.g., performance, video, and broadcast), one finds section 23, *Bearbeitungen und Umgestaltungen*, adaptations and transformations, and section 24, *Freie Benutzung*, free use, which, again, should not be confused with the US fair use measure.[55] While section 24 is rather vague, noting that the free use stipulation can be applied only in situations when it gives rise to a wholly "independent work" (*ein selbstständiges Werk*), section 23 is much more detailed: Adaptations/transformations of a work can be made public only with the consent of the original creator, including film adaptations and sketches of an artwork, as well as models of and plans for a work.[56] This structure can treat marginalia, documentation, and paratexts as adaptations or transformations of another work, and thus as works that are not, in and of themselves, autonomous.

In deciding on the status of these photographs, in determining whether they give rise to an independent work, thus qualifying as a "free use" of *Das Schweigen*, or whether they are rather an unauthorized transformation of it, the courts also claim a certain knowledge about what an image actually is and how it functions. "Don't the legal disputes about the 'protection of the image' presuppose an implicit knowledge of what images are and how to deal with them? And is this knowledge so self-evident and at least possibly so variable that it does not need to be reflected upon before a judgment is made?"[57] Given the complex intermedial nature of the work that was supposedly violated by the photographic exhibition, and given the problematic question of what qualifies as an "original" image or artwork in an era of digitization, the court is shouldering quite a burden in having to rule on what this image series ultimately is and how it functions vis-à-vis the "original."[58] Its decision does more than just decide which work is primary, the collaborative performance broadcast on television or the photographic series. It also ascribes, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, important aesthetic values to the photos that were taken in 1964: How much of Beuys's artistic, "individual spirit" is left in this photographic series? "The law recognizes not only the original, but also adaptations and transformations. These, unlike works created by free use, continue to carry the individual spirit of the author. Therefore, copyright law includes the right to adapt and the right to authorize or prohibit the publication or exploitation of adaptations of the work."[59] So how much of Beuys's dynamic nature is *übersetzt*, carried over, from the television broadcast/live performance into the static images? And if Beuys's hand does "mark" the photographic series in some way, how come these images, in turn, are not granted the status of an independent work? Moreover, what constitutes "a work"? "If we wish to publish the complete

works of Nietzsche, for example, where do we draw the line? Certainly, everything must be published, but can we agree on what 'everything' means? We will, of course, include everything that Nietzsche himself published, along with the drafts of his works, his plans for aphorisms, his marginal notations and corrections. But what if, in a notebook filled with aphorisms, we find a reference, a reminder of an appointment, an address, or a laundry bill, should this be included in his works? Why not?"[60] The question of whether Nietzsche's or Beuys's laundry bill qualifies as "a work," as absurd as it might seem, is in nature the kind of question for which the German courts were trying to find an answer by testing the applicability of its strict legal categorization between an "adaptation or transformation" and a work of "free use" to the photographic exhibition.

In the image or painting that Beuys produced during *Das Schweigen* that, as a visible remainder from the event that was televised, became the primary basis for its contextualization until the photographs appeared, we can trace the trajectory of medial instantiations that have made this work, or whatever it may be, so challenging for legal and scholarly analyses and for discussions about how it should be properly preserved and made accessible for posterity. In this leftover from the scene of writing, Duchamp's name usually gets all the attention, but silence was just as important. During the performance in 1964, Beuys uses painted text to communicate something about silence, a mode of aurality that is never fully achievable: "There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make silence, we cannot."[61] Silence never performs, in utterance, what it promises, and it is always a relative state. If you are reading this text in front of you "in silence," it would probably only take some closer listening practices for you to hear some noises from outside the room you're in or the sounds you make while thumbing through these pages or scrolling down the screen. But you would probably still consider those sounds to be part of the silence you are experiencing.[62] Silence requires context.

Beuys's slogan on silence, however, is usually taken out of its intricate context. To take the most well-known example: "When Beuys made his notorious (and obscure) 1964 statement that 'the silence of Marcel Duchamp has been overrated,' he publicly confessed not to have the slightest clue of the scope of Duchamp's theoretical positions and the lasting significance of his work."[63] Benjamin Buchloh then refers to a statement Beuys once made about the *Schweigen* statement: "The sentence about Duchamp is very intriguing and ambivalent. It contains a criticism of Duchamp's anti-art concept and also of his later attitude and the way it was cultivated when he gave up art and pursued only the game of chess and his writing."[64] But it's a "statement" that cannot be traced back to an actual source. "This pointed statement was reported to be a verbatim statement by Joseph Beuys by the authors [of *Joseph Beuys: Leben und Werk*: Götz Adriani, Winfried Konnertz, and Karin Thomas] until the 1994 edition . . . . As a source, they cited an interview that took place in 1964: *Krawall in Aachen—Interview mit Joseph Beuys*, in: *Kunst*

4, October/November 1964, p. 96. In fact, this statement is not to be found in this interview, a fact that only came to the attention of the authors twenty years after its first edition."[65] One could even add to this that it has been debated as to whether Beuys actually wrote the titular sentence of the work himself or whether his assistant, Norbert Tadeusz, was responsible for painting the now-infamous slogan. This is the position assumed in the first court proceeding in 2009, for instance: "The mere fact that Mr. Tadeusz independently undertook the inscription . . . does not indicate his own creative contribution."[66] Bettina Paust, former director of the Museum Schloss Moyland, has stated that during the court proceedings, it was more or less accepted that Tadeusz wrote the sentence himself, as evidenced in the writing style.[67] Given that Tadeusz's work focuses on figurative painting and the only slogan he might use, the one at the top of his website and that he rehearses in interviews, is "Ich bin kein Künstler, ich bin Maler" (I'm not an artist, I'm a painter), it could be that he did not come up with it but wrote/painted it for Beuys, making this outsourcing and fragmentation of authorship part of the conceptual framework of the piece.[68] After all, an artist does not have to paint their own paintings in order to author them. This verbal author's "statement," like the painted statement in *Das Schweigen*, has lost its context. It continues to circulate without a referent in various publications, its origin story remaining unclear.

Beyond the ambivalence and unreliability of Beuys's statements on this specific statement on silence, commentators have nevertheless "tended to confine themselves to descriptions of his work, venturing by way of explanation little more than paraphrases of Beuys's own statements. But . . . Beuys's interviews and lectures do not constitute interpretations but exist at the same level as, even as part of (verbal extensions of), the art."[69] Understanding *Das Schweigen* as a "statement" once made by Beuys completely elides the medial complexity of the act: It is a sentence and a painting and has since become a slogan—a readymade of sorts—constructed during a performance, transmitted on live television, accompanied by functioning and prop television sets and sound components, and featured in a series of photographs that have since been banned, twice, from being displayed.[70] Silence, in this case, is not just about not being able to *hear* anything. According to the secondary literature, the danger of silence lies at the heart of *Das Schweigen*, itself a representation of the misguided "lengths to which Beuys was prepared to go in order to shout out his silence" since he, "unlike [John] Cage or Duchamp, . . . felt it impossible, unconscionable, to stay silent."[71] In the debates leading up to and surrounding the Museum Schloss Moyland court case, silence again becomes the crux of the problem. Here, concerns about silence abound: the way in which some media forms simply cannot remain silent, how their supposedly mimetic nature too perfectly colonizes the stories that originate in other media. Or the fear of silencing the dialogue between the object and the onlooker, for which Beuys so strongly advocated during his lifetime, if his works are not exhibited properly. Or how the copyright case could detrimentally silence *Das Schweigen* by preventing the

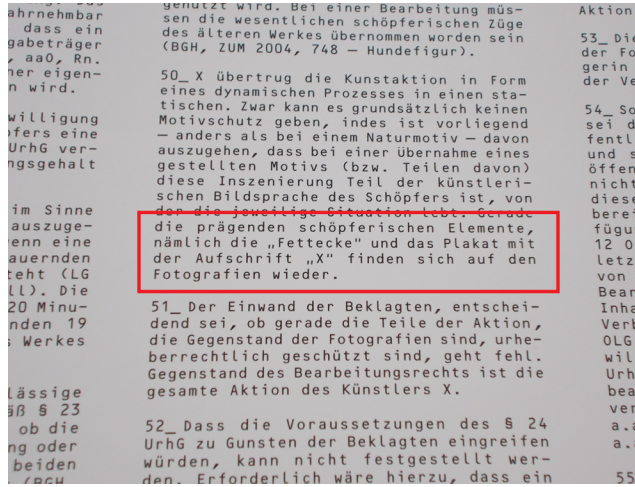
exhibition of photographs, leading scholars to conflate the complex medial event with the one "painting" that has been left behind and the few contradictory oral tales about its original execution.[72] Silence takes place across media.

If silence is indeed not the opposite of sound, not, as Cage would argue, truly synonymous with an empty space or time, but rather a marker of a certain discursive turning point, a threshold indicating what is at stake—whether it be an apparent turning away from one art and toward another, or a reappropriation and recasting of this silence and its reception, or an accusation of muting the artist's voice and his celebration of dialogue—then tracing the enunciations of silence, of *Das Schweigen*, could lead to a better understanding of the implications of the copyright case in which this event and related media have since been embroiled. Working through these iterations of silence requires a rethinking and a repositioning of Beuys's "original" project, something that the court case, with its new evidence and old arguments, clearly demands. What is the significance of Beuys staging *Das Schweigen* on live television, a medium whose ontological properties, at the time, were derived from its ability to document liveness, which was understood to be the exact opposite of silence? "Silence is associated in western culture with death—the end of time. . . . To secure the illusion of liveness over death, commercial television cultivated ways of filling silence with the sounds of life."[73] If revisionary histories of television now tell us that live TV broadcasts before the mid-1950s had their origins in radio shows of the previous decades, and thus "the history of television ought to be more readily depicted as sound first, images second—as an initial 'blindness' before the attainment of vision—than imagined in terms of an antediluvian phase of silence," then *Das Schweigen* seems to deliberately undermine this expectation of sound that is grounded in the medium's history.[74] How did West German television audiences in the mid-1960s understand this broadcast in aesthetic terms if it featured, according to the accounts, sparse dialogue, if any, for a total of up to thirty minutes, making it a nearly silent, "live" program? How is the photographic series, in turn, understood to be reproducing this silence for museumgoers over forty years later?

Before such debates about medium specificity and hierarchies could take place in the courtroom, *VG Bild-Kunst* had to establish that *Das Schweigen*, "the work" at the core of the suit, was in fact independent intellectual property protected under copyright law, a determination that was complicated by the participatory nature of the event. The court had to rule on whether the other participants, Brock, Vostell, and Tadeusz, could claim partial ownership of the images. Brock, for one, was very outspoken during the court case about his frustration with the lawsuit, as both his and Vostell's performances were partially featured in several of Tischer's photographs on display in Moyland.[75] Copyright experts also debated the status of this "work" as copyright protected given the fact that there is no longer any real-time account of it, contributing to its uncertain medial status. "Since no film or television recording exists of the Fluxus action from 1964, it can no

longer be determined with sufficient certainty today whether this performance was a copyrightable work at all. The mere fact that the action was carried out by Joseph Beuys is not sufficient for the recognition of its eligibility for copyright protection."[76] There was not a solid basis upon which to assess the relationship that the photographs constructed vis-à-vis the "original" performance on television, as the depictions in other media forms of this approximately thirty-minute event were very limited: there was the "painting" as a kind of visual remainder of the performance and the memories and testimonies of those who were present at the ZDF studio that day, some of which have been documented in a catalogue raisonné that includes *Das Schweigen*.[77] Scholarship on this work has had to rely on visual analyses of the painting and the few oral histories of the collective performance. This information complicates the question of what exactly these photographs were alleged to have copied: A telecast that no longer exists? An action that was primarily staged for an audience not on location at the studio but at home in front of their televisions?[78] Concepts that remain highly contested in media studies were thrown into the debate in service of classification. Is photography a static or a dynamic process? To what extent does photography, as a medium, embody the ability to reconstitute a sequence of events? Moreover, in the words of Paust, the trial didn't even make clear what actually qualifies as a series: "Does this only apply to all 18 pictures[?] Or also to ten photos[?] Or . . . does [the museum] have the right to show a single photo every day?"[79] How can one begin to define an image series, and at what point can a series of still images be classified as a moving image?

From an initial aesthetic standpoint, the photographs at the center of the case did not encompass any apparent sound elements and thus were, in this specific sense, silent. But they were also determined in court to be unlawfully conveying something that was exclusive and essential to the original event. "Those who wish to hide pictures assume they wield a kind of power. Even a ban on images rests on an 'insight into the peculiar nature of the image. First it is recognized as having an enormous power. And only as a result does it become necessary to counteract its effects with an interdiction.'"[80] In this case, one begins to wonder what exactly these photographs were able to document in the exhibition that made them so suspect. What does this photographic series from the 1960s "say" about the original silence that should have been kept silent? In the first two proceedings, the courts determined that the photographic series was at once reproducing essential components of the copyrighted action and, by temporally and spatially abbreviating the action, transforming elements of the work without authorization.[81] It is precisely "the formative creative features . . . that are re-presented in the photographs" (figure 13).[82] The medial properties of the photographic series, per the determination, were able to reflect neither the temporality of "the action," its unfolding over the course of twenty minutes or so, nor its spatial arrangement in the ZDF studio: "The whole action lasted at least 20 minutes, thus the 19 photographs presented here only reflect a snapshot of the work."[83] For this reason, the court determined


genutzt wird. Bei einer Bearbeitung müssen die wesentlichen schöpferischen Züge des älteren Werkes übernommen worden sein (BGH, ZUM 2004, 748 – Hundefigur).

50_ X übertrug die Kunstaktion in Form eines dynamischen Prozesses in einen statischen. Zwar kann es grundsätzlich keinen Motivschutz geben, indes ist vorliegend – anders als bei einem Naturmotiv – davon auszugehen, dass bei einer Übernahme eines gestellten Motivs (bzw. Teilen davon) diese Inszenierung Teil der künstlerischen Bildsprache des Schöpfers ist, von der die jeweilige Situation lebt. Grade die prägenden schöpferischen Elemente, nämlich die „Fettecke" und das Plakat mit der Aufschrift „X" finden sich auf den Fotografien wieder.

51_ Der Einwand der Beklagten, entscheidend sei, ob gerade die Teile der Aktion, die Gegenstand der Fotografien sind, urheberrechtlich geschützt sind, geht fehl. Gegenstand des Bearbeitungsrechts ist die gesamte Aktion des Künstlers X.

52_ Dass die Voraussetzungen des § 24 UrhG zu Gunsten der Beklagten eingreifen würden, kann nicht festgestellt werden. Erforderlich wäre hierzu, dass ein

FIGURE 13. Caroline Bachmann and Stefan Banz, *Ein Eklat (Kampf und Urteil)*, 2010–11. *Urteil*: Letraset on wall, dimensions variable. Exhibition of *Das Schweigen der Junggesellen* at the Museum Schloss Moyland, February 16–April 27, 2014. © Caroline Bachmann and Stefan Banz. Graphic added. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the artists.

that this was not a mere reproduction of a protected work, but rather that it "constitutes an unauthorized transformation [of a work]."[84] It was concluded that the photographs do not alter Beuys's performance enough, however, to constitute a complete transformation in the eyes of the law and thereby give rise to a new work in its own right, as they are too reliant on "the formative creative features" of Beuys's work.[85]

The judicial determinations, in focusing on photography as a medium of reproduction, clearly reinforce the historical cliché of photography as an art of taking, not making, of documentation and not creation, and of selection rather than synthesis.[86] Photography is presumed in this case to wield the power to document, and thereby reveal, aspects of the performance that give away some of its mystery. If one understands the medium specificity of photography as bound up in "the representation of history" and the performance/art object it documents as signifying "a kind of perpetual immediacy and immanence solely granted to the work of art," then the jump to perceiving photography as endangering this immediacy, immanence, and aura is easier to understand:

> For if the documentary photograph is necessary to confirm the origin and status of the art object, it might also itself come to occupy a destabilizing relationship to the object. . . . The photograph, while being in a strict sense outside the auratic dyad of

> performance and art object—being only a record of the moment of production and therefore marginal to it—also seems continually to threaten to pervade the supposed autonomy of the work itself and to strip it of its auratic presence by returning one to the moment of its making.[87]

The documentary photograph is understood to inherently threaten the work of art it depicts, although the work of art is the very reason for its existence.

It won't come as a surprise that many artists, journalists, art critics, and legal experts in Germany were not only extremely critical of these rulings, which tend at certain moments to contradict themselves, but also urgently concerned about the precedent this sets for the future of photography, specifically "documentary" photography. And rightly so. Such determinations about the photographic medium carry serious consequences for any supposedly documentary practice that seeks to intervene into and make public a wide range of artistic events, essentially subordinating the artistic rights of the photographer to the rights of the performing artist. Photojournalists in particular were rattled. What do these determinations mean for news, free speech, and reporting on artistic events? Would all of the people featured in a photograph need to be consulted before it is circulated, and would multiple parties participating, say, in a theater piece, need to authorize the release of the photograph, and how would photographers manage all of these logistical prerequisites, all the rights requests, paperwork, and contractual and legal negotiations, while trying to get the photo out there in circulation as soon as possible? Taking a step back, what does this say about the value of "documentary" photography vis-à-vis an "original" action? "Does this not mean that documentary photography is also a high art in which strong subjective evaluations made by the photographer's eye can establish new artistic statements of their own? . . . If Tischer documented the performance at the time with Beuys' knowledge and consent, did Beuys not thereby consciously accept that these photos also interpreted his action?"[88]

These are all questions to be taken quite seriously, and they are especially urgent given the fact that the rulings disadvantaged an already precarious profession. But part of the problem here is the discourse on "documentary" photography, as if it were a secondary medium that comes after the more "creative" medium it is primarily tasked with recording, as if it were more immediate, less prone to polluting the "creative" work with its own medial properties and interpretations. "One could object that such negative definitions are characteristic for the early stages of any medium, when the goal is to determine how it is new and different from former practices. In the case of photography, however, the comparisons with drawing, graphic arts, and painting have never ceased. They have been taken up by nearly all the theorists of the trace mentioned here [e.g., Susan Sontag, Charles Sanders Peirce, André Bazin, Roland Barthes, Rosalind Krauss, and Philippe Dubois]."[89] In the history of photography, such assumptions are not uncommon. Photography

has long been theorized according to the paradigm of the indexical trace. A common methodological approach consists of singling out a photograph in order to understand how it was "touched by" or "imprinted from" the object from the past it serves to document.[90] Such approaches are often predicated on an underlying assumption about an "active" photographer positioned behind the lens and a "passive subject" in front of it. It's a very binary interpretation of the photographic process focused on the apparatus, the camera lens and shutter, potentially framing the act of photography itself as an inherently violent means of inscribing subjectivity. It can also suggest a universal sense of immediacy to the individuals and objects portrayed in the photograph, resulting in the reductive and vague rhetoric of photography as a medium that "documents" reality. As Melody Jue writes, this results not only in an unacknowledged disciplinary tendency to rely on gendered language to describe the medium, but also in a gendered blind spot in the history of photography. A focus on the primacy of the apparatus to inscribe the subject into the photograph can inadvertently write out those practices in which the "photographer does not so much 'stalk' their object of interest and 'shoot' it as carefully . . . compose the position and orientation of the object(s) that they wish to print," practices that depend more on choreography and arrangement than one-way inscription, and that could be discussed along the lines of dissemination rather than insemination.[91] Perhaps, in some photographic practices, it's not the object of inscription that matters as much as the (re)orientation that this media process demands, reframing the supposed violent act of inscription as an embodied, disseminated, and multidirectional practice. Such an approach, rather than concluding the line of questioning with the argument that these photographs also form an interpretation of the action, might begin with it.

In order to understand how these diverse media forms interpret and engage with one another in both the event in Düsseldorf in 1964 and the court cases from 2009 to 2013 in their consequences for today, we need to disrupt this demarcation between then and now, which allocates performance and television to the ephemeral then and photography to the documented now. How "lost/absent" is the performance when the photograph we view of it "affords a means to lift a moment into a frame, to afford a flash out of the stream of things, to hold a 'beat'—and intake of breath in a still—before moving on, past one shot, one photo, to another and another, like turning pages in a book, or walking through a gallery"?[92] Photography, in this way of thinking, can be an embodied, dynamic medium entangled in different moments in time when it is encountered and reenacted, instead of simply a medium that documents the past as if it were a fossil, offering up a frozen, still moment in time. If one wanted to go down the road of authorial intention and biography, one could also argue that this kind of tension between stasis and movement was more in line with how Beuys thought of and with the medium, as we can observe in his major undertaking with the medium, *Arena—Dove sarei*

arrivato se fossi stato intelligente! (Arena—Where would I have got if I had been intelligent, 1970–72).[93] By the time he stages this installation in Naples in 1972, Beuys is well known in the German art scene, strategizing on how he would showcase himself, his biography and career trajectory, on an international scale.[94] The installation is considered a follow-up and continuation to his *Lebenslauf/Werklauf* (Life course/work course), a semibiographical curriculum vitae he wrote the same year as *Das Schweigen*, introducing himself to the German art scene, in which his birth year, 1921, is listed as his first *Ausstellung*, his first exhibition.[95] Instead of speculatively staging the course of his career in text, in *Arena* he does so with 264 photographs from 1947 to 1972 placed in 100 massive aluminum frames. There in Naples, some are hung up, others propped up against the wall in stacked piles, their content unable to be viewed.[96] A kind of speculative journey that questions ideas of advancement, success, and canonization at a time when Beuys has already "made it" and has already "gotten there" is raised in the subtitle as well as in the particular engagement with photography. After pulling them from the archive, he intervenes into the selection of photographs. They are treated "with sulfur, acid, wax, and paint . . . . They advance a vocabulary of shapes that refuses to be fixed, alternating between blurred and sharp representations, arrested and melting forms, and detailed and abstract compositions."[97] Some of them look like spirit photographs with streaks and contrasts that don't match up to any referent that could be found beneath it or in the background, some are left unidentified without a source, and others are shown in their early stages of development, an intermediary stage before it could become a work, with sprocket holes on the margins of television (figure 14).

Iterations of *Arena* continue, as in Rome that same year. There, the dense aluminum frames are hung on the walls in full, but in no particular order. "Low lights hung so closely over the photographs that they permitted only intimate viewing, image by image."[98] Like lifting moments in the frame and turning pages in the book of Beuys's self-presentation of his life and work. Without a chronology or instructions for orientation, the viewing situation requires one to walk around a gallery tightly filled with large frames that are themselves not always full, inspecting the gaps in time and representation. Both within the photographs themselves that had been worked upon after or plucked from a before time, it is a presentation of photography that challenges notions of the still and stasis. The title *Arena* recalls circular architectural structures built for public displays of greatness and triumph, but this arena is a circle that does not close.[99] The number of photographs is not set in stone, and it could expand and be shuffled around each time it is displayed anew. When the Dia Art Foundation purchases it in 1976, it thus has to classify it as a work "'still in progress.'"[100]

In the photographic series of *Das Schweigen* taken by Tischer, which I can't show you for logistical (yes, copyright) reasons, this kind of working over of images

FIGURE 14. Joseph Beuys, *Arena—dove sarei arrivato se fossi stato intelligente!* (Arena—where would I have got if I had been intelligent!), 1970–72 (detail). © Joseph Beuys/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio, New York, courtesy of Dia Art Foundation, New York.

didn't take place before or after their production by Tischer, as far as we know, but perhaps during the moments of creation. Flipping through the series, what stands out is that the clarity and centrality of Beuys, although he commissioned Tischer to be on set to take the photographs, was not a main priority. Barriers to vision are often left in the photographs, as if Tischer allows the demarcation of the television studio set into corners and specific working areas to subsequently demarcate the frames of the images. Sometimes the perspective is with Beuys, down low on the floor while he works in the wooden corner on the *Fettecke*, with much of the broader space then blocked from view by the horizontal wooden barrier in front

of us. The women riding bikes around the set and some men in the background (making the bed?) tower over us while we sit in the corner. Fragmentation continues when other people and things repeatedly creep in from the side, as when Tadeusz talks with Beuys in a profile shot. (Are they planning their next moves? Did the show start already?) Shadows and contrasts appear over Beuys's corner (maybe from the studio equipment off to the side, the lighting overhead, or the glow emanating from the television set on the bed), and we see lots of tools, instruments, and supplies that contribute to the stops and detours, the intermediary constructions along the way to a (provisional) end process. Sometimes Beuys is forgotten completely. There are photographs of the actors in Vostell's performance pushing bikes across the frame, leaving blurred streaks behind them, or a close-up shot of one of them with a fish hanging out of her mouth, a classic, playful over-the-shoulder pose, the only person who looks back at and directly into the camera. In several bird's-eye views (was there a catwalk above the studio floor?), the set seems nearly empty (Did everyone take a break? Is the show over?), allowing the demarcations within the space to come into the foreground as the only real objects to be seen.

It makes sense that this photographic series, rather than seeking to "document" Beuys's part of the performance, emphasizes partiality, fragmentation, activity, process, and participation. Photography does, and historically has done, much more than "document." Early medical and scientific photographs, for example, sought not to document what was already there but to produce visual effects that could not—and should not—be planned in advance. Contingency was fundamental, not the trace. Chance is a feature of photography that is called up, tested, and exploited in both *Arena* and the photographs of *Das Schweigen*. Interestingly, this aspect of contingency in the photographic series by Tischer wasn't entirely overlooked in these court proceedings but was assigned a fundamental negative value. It couldn't be decided whether the photographs conform to the concept of realism, whether they strictly serve as a documentary index of "the real," or whether there is some aspect of them that brings this event to life in an unauthorized way, exemplifying the tendency toward the contingent, uncontrolled exposure that is part of the history of the medium. Even as the series is proclaimed to convey the primary elements of the work and establish its authenticity, in an uncanny fashion, the photographic series is determined to also deviate from it without authorization, problematically distancing the "original" work from its presumed relation to time, space, vision, and sound.

Both the ideas of "without authorization" and the "original" work, more than just being problematic legalese, could exemplify some latent beliefs about certain media forms in the 1960s, specifically those in which an institutionalized art figure regularly worked and that are presumed to be no longer "present" and available to us today, like they were then. Returning to the belief in the performance

of *Das Schweigen* as belonging to the ephemeral then, assumed to have been fleetingly experienced "live" in 1964 for twenty or thirty minutes beginning at 7:00 p.m. by an audience at home in front of their televisions in West Germany, we could ponder for a second: What if didn't end promptly at 7:30 p.m.? What do we make of how it reappears and is reenacted with oral testimonies in catalogues raisonnés, or in statements on *Das Schweigen* that continue to circulate without a source, or in a German court and on an international stage long after Beuys left the television studio? While encountering photographs of Ann Hamilton's installation *privation and excesses* (1989), which incorporates honey, a felt hat, copper pennies, and grazing sheep, Rebecca Schneider reflects on its relationship with another performance by Beuys presented shortly after *Das Schweigen*, titled *wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt* (how to explain pictures to a dead hare, 1965). In this performance, Beuys speaks to the dead animal with his head covered in the "undoubtedly . . . living substance" of honey and gold leaf.[101] Attending to the photographs of Hamilton's performance, Schneider writes:

> I did not attend that performance, but I experience it now in my mind's eye. Something of viscosity *sticks* to the photographs I attend, live. Something of Beuys is in attendance to *privation and excesses* too—the felt, the honey, the sheep, the coins—the entire event is as if covered in Beuys' gold leaf, even now, in memory of an event I cannot remember *live* having only attended the aftermath. What part of citation, reiteration, even across difference, play in the long life of duration? And what, anyway, is the period of duration of *How to Explain*? Who legislates that the performance ended when Beuys walked away?[102]

In our case, we may know who is literally legislating, but precisely this act of needing to legislate the authorizing of *Das Schweigen* tells us that it hasn't ended and is likely far from being over. The performance is still in progress. Not as a past relic in need of preservation with attention to fidelity, but as a current, medially and durationally messy process still underway.

The referent in the court case for the "original" work of *Das Schweigen* adds to this messiness, as it remains vague and a bit slippery in the rulings. Although it is not explicitly stated, it seems as if the elusive medial object to which the photographs are being compared is the nonexistent recording of the television broadcast, or the "film" as it is sometimes called here. We could infer this from the claim in the determination that the photographs "transmitted the artistic action in the form of a dynamic process into a static one."[103] This dichotomy between "dynamic" and "static" is then rehearsed throughout the verdict. While participating in all the cliché assumptions about photography as static, what seems to be acknowledged here is the fact that the event was grounded in television, not only in terms of transmission but also at the level of conception. When Ranft, director of the ZDF studio at the time, wrote to Beuys to invite him to participate in a group Fluxus

event, he did so by first specifically mentioning the television show on which he hoped the Fluxus group would appear: "We are interested in possibly filming a feature about this group in our program 'Die Drehscheibe'"[104] This was not a performance in front of an audience present at the studio that was then also captured by a television crew and simultaneously transmitted for an at-home audience. It was initiated for television, and although the existing literature only mentions this medium in passing rather than seriously considering its implications, it would be misguided to consider it as a mere expedient medium of delivery for this collective work.

When the artists gathered in the ZDF studio in 1964, it was, as previously mentioned, a first of sorts. Instead of TV magazines that reported on emerging artistic trends and events, this collectively staged action was performed at the site of televisual production and dissemination.[105] Instead of acting upon the television as an apparatus or object, Beuys, Tadeusz, Brock, and Vostell experimented with what happened when one acted within the technology of distribution and reflected, via the television set on the bed that functions as a prop in the performances, that small screen back to viewers at home. The objective of this could have been to disrupt the tendency, or the discourse on the tendency, to consider television in terms of a one-way model of communication involving a passive audience at home in front of an active, manipulative television set distracting them from key political and cultural realities.[106] While we don't know who watched at home or how large the audience was, by 1964 television had become established as a mass medium, reaching "practically the entire West German population over 10 million TV sets, every one of which served, in statistical terms, 2.5 viewers each."[107] With such widespread distribution and, particularly around this time, an increasing array of programs, spectatorial attention started to become something with which the medium had to grapple. Not only how to maintain it, but also in terms of how it should be historicized and theorized.[108]

Concepts of "liveness" and "flow" became inseparable from how television was understood to inherently function, with the program formatting of the small screen taking on a zombielike power to suck viewers into states of mindless reception and absorption, and such presumed medium-specific qualities of television continue to accompany discussions of the medium up to the present day.[109] Something that Markus Stauff notes is particularly interesting, given current concerns about the dangers of the "second-screen experience" most evident in the proliferation of mobile screens and leading to what is presumed to be a continuously distracted and dispersed state of attention.[110] (This is the reason for the policies in syllabi on/against media devices in the classroom, as it's presumed that the presence of the second screen leads to temptation and mischief and is thus adversarial by nature.) So, the medium of specificity of television both sucks you in and absorbs your attention and permanently distracts you and

disperses your attention. Stauff argues that this is the problem of trying to define a medium ontologically. Along the way, one will undoubtedly encounter industrial strategies, adaptations of use, discursive tendencies, and the carrying over of a medium's features into other media, making the identification of what this "one" medium inherently does nearly impossible. He notes that in the case of the history of television, "what appears to be a specific quality of the medium [scheduling, liveness, flow] got continually redefined in the assemblage of many different media. The consequences of video technology, first in production and later in reception, with the emergence of 'live on tape' or 'tape delayed'-events are proof of that."[111] The carrying over or grafting of different medial features into "new" media technology is accomplished via a reshuffling of said features within an assemblage, a common occurrence that is even more obvious, he notes, when televisual features are transported into the discourse on cases involving the second-screen experience in which no television set is actually present. "Television" can persist even when the apparatus is absent.

When we see arguments referring to the "dynamic" and durational nature of the copyrighted work in question in this court case, terms that are raised without a referent, maybe it's not that uncommon for medial features to travel this way, and maybe it's an opportunity, as Stauff suggests, to consider "debates and strategies (instead of a given medium)" that can allow "us to see the extent to which television shares dynamics with other media practices."[112] Probing how television in the 1960s is debated from the perspective of today, when second-screen experiences are the norm rather than the exception, can provide some insights into the ideas, beliefs, and suspicions about our economy of attention over time. When *Das Schweigen* premiered, concerns about attention were already being raised, and television events, especially "live" ones, were seen as a way to draw viewers into a program at a specific time for a special occasion instead of letting the television run in the background, an ambient viewing practice that was becoming common.[113] In such media events, television doesn't "document" something already happening but co-constructs it.[114] We can think about the three performances and how they were not just transmitted by television but engaged with its medial features, such as the three-camera setup in the studio.[115] We are likely familiar with this perspective, having often seen it in network-era sitcoms shot in front of a studio audience. It assumes a proscenium-like environment in which editing is done at the time of production by switching from one camera to the next while taping the program.[116] Television could shift the perspective on the performance by switching from one camera to another, but it didn't have much flexibility in regard to what type of shots these were: usually frontal, relying on relatively immobile cameras, and seemingly independent of one another. For the participants on the television studio stage, this means they might not have known when they were being featured, except perhaps when a camera would move in closer to their corner of the

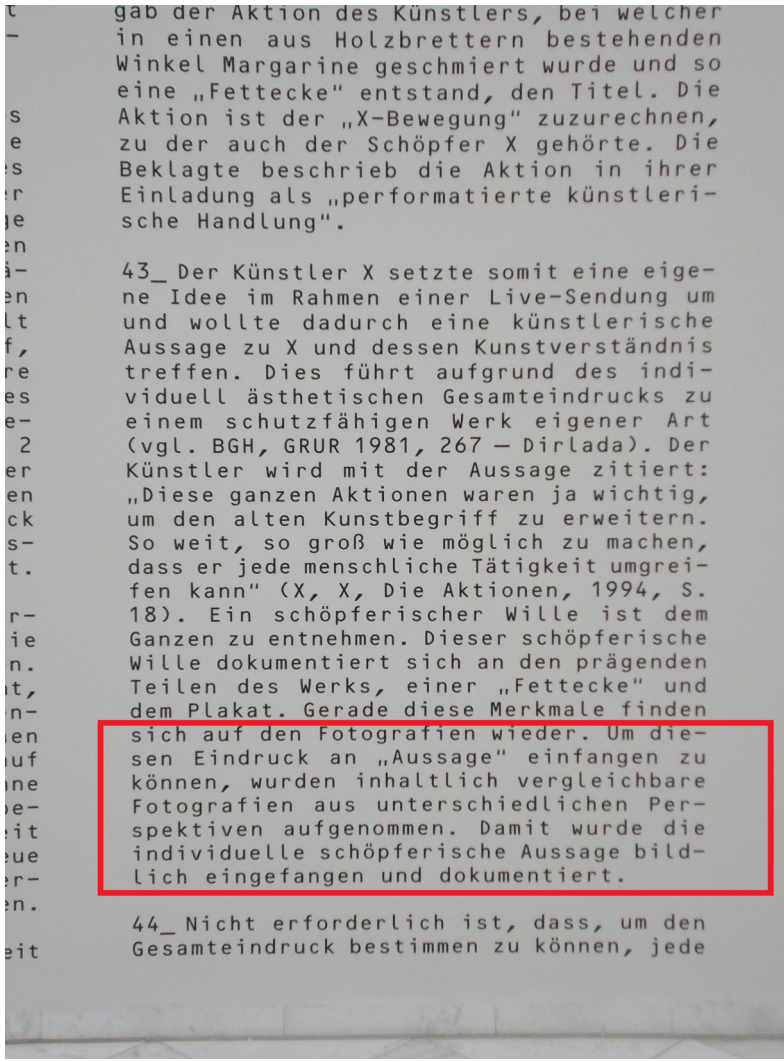
stage or pan across it. Editing in such circumstances "appears as a reframing of a single, continuous image from a fixed point of view, rather than a suturing of image to image or a shift in point of view."[117] This single point of view was one of the defining characteristics of early live broadcasts that made them seem so optically natural and immediate, possibly reinforcing the idea of this performance as a "dynamic" unfolding of events.[118]

One also might wonder, however, how dynamic and immediate this performance felt to viewers at home, watching it in black-and-white in nearly complete silence, a lack of audio that was not customary at the time, as there was still the typical struggle to maintain viewers' attention through elements like a soundtrack that had "adapted to the need to 'call the intermittent spectator back to the set.'"[119] But Robert Briggs suggests that a television event based on silence during this broadcasting era could suggest a demand to adjust one's spectatorial attention, drawing a parallel to the coming of sound film: "The effect of silent television's lack of dialogue—the event of 'silence' in broadcast television—can be understood in terms similar to those accounting for the arrival of sound in film, as demanding of its audiences, that is, a kind of attention that is otherwise practiced as inessential to the TV 'viewing' experience. Even as it breaks the perceived natural bond between sound and image, therefore, silent television demands of its viewers that they grant the televisual text an aesthetic completeness that it is otherwise rarely given."[120] In our case, we could imagine how the conventional understanding of the one-way communication model in which television and its audience participates becomes more intricate and less linear throughout the event. Maybe audiences at home take this replacement of meaningful dialogue with the proposal of silence as a moment to talk about it. Maybe they sit and just listen/watch it. Maybe they change the channel or turn it off. Maybe they leave it on and do or think about something else. If they are the ones to add a meaningful soundtrack to the program, were there just three to four participants in *Das Schweigen* on-site, or others at home as well? What about those in a gallery or in a courtroom decades later, performing the work of filtering all this information into a delimited art object that can then be authorized and thus taken down, putting a little (felt) lid over the shutter and blocking our ability to see into it, and its circumstances of production and circulation? How natural and immediate does all this actually seem? Can this enterprise of television really be neatly packaged up into some kind of box in which it can be transported here and there without any ramifications (figure 15)? Where else, to what other times and places, might such a complicated, risky project take us, and whom might it bring along with it?

In 1973, Beuys makes twenty-four original boxes (as if it were a pun on frames per second in film), a multiple, on how to do things with images in a group (a project) and calls it *Enterprise*.[121] What it provides is a binary model of communication that gets messy. On the left side of the box, which is divided in half,

FIGURE 15. Joseph Beuys, *Enterprise 18.11.72, 18:5:16 Uhr* (Enterprise 11/18/72, 18:5:16 hours) (1973). Zinc, black-and-white photograph, camera, felt. 11⅞ × 15⅞ × 6 in. (30.2 × 40.3 × 15.2 cm) box base; 12 × 16⅜ × 2 in. (30.5 × 41.6 × 5.1 cm) box lid. © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Alfred and Marie Greisinger Collection, Walker Art Center, T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1992. Copyright Estate of Joseph Beuys / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

there is the transmitter, the physical apparatus: a physical photo camera pointing at us, its shutter covered with a little lid made of felt, a constructed, nonwoven, chance-based composite material and, for Beuys, a source of insulation for energy, sound, and knowledge that changes its shape over time, sagging and leaving small holes and gaps in the fabric, which may or may not be visible.[122] On the right side, there is the physical system of power, the receiver: a group in a living room / art school studio—it could be students in his class (he still has his hat on) but is actually his family at home—watching television in front of a set hung up high in the air. The shot is a still. The screen shows one moment in an episode of the US television show *Star Trek*, displaying its iconic captain, who runs the ship and the show. Captain Kirk is seen by Beuys and Co. in one frozen moment in time, which is nevertheless precisely indicated in the title as a time that is unfolding, part of an emerging project. *Enterprise* also points to the fact that this model is about the relationship and rivalries between various authorities and agencies with respect to whatever notion of the "original" is claimed, and it also suggests a major undertaking entailing a number of potentially complicated and messy organizational and intermediary processes. The message here is not just recorded and transmitted from the left to the right. With this message in an open box, we can wave goodbye to a one-way model of communication. As the lens of the camera points to us, we are also already a part of this constellation whenever we open the box.


gab der Aktion des Künstlers, bei welcher
in einen aus Holzbrettern bestehenden
Winkel Margarine geschmiert wurde und so
eine „Fettecke" entstand, den Titel. Die
Aktion ist der „X-Bewegung" zuzurechnen,
zu der auch der Schöpfer X gehörte. Die
Beklagte beschrieb die Aktion in ihrer
Einladung als „performatierte künstleri-
sche Handlung".

43_ Der Künstler X setzte somit eine eige-
ne Idee im Rahmen einer Live-Sendung um
und wollte dadurch eine künstlerische
Aussage zu X und dessen Kunstverständnis
treffen. Dies führt aufgrund des indi-
viduell ästhetischen Gesamteindrucks zu
einem schutzfähigen Werk eigener Art
(vgl. BGH, GRUR 1981, 267 — Dirlada). Der
Künstler wird mit der Aussage zitiert:
„Diese ganzen Aktionen waren ja wichtig,
um den alten Kunstbegriff zu erweitern.
So weit, so groß wie möglich zu machen,
dass er jede menschliche Tätigkeit umgrei-
fen kann" (X, X, Die Aktionen, 1994, S.
18). Ein schöpferischer Wille ist dem
Ganzen zu entnehmen. Dieser schöpferische
Wille dokumentiert sich an den prägenden
Teilen des Werks, einer „Fettecke" und
dem Plakat. Gerade diese Merkmale finden
sich auf den Fotografien wieder. Um die-
sen Eindruck an „Aussage" einfangen zu
können, wurden inhaltlich vergleichbare
Fotografien aus unterschiedlichen Per-
spektiven aufgenommen. Damit wurde die
individuelle schöpferische Aussage bild-
lich eingefangen und dokumentiert.

44_ Nicht erforderlich ist, dass, um den
Gesamteindruck bestimmen zu können, jede

FIGURE 16. Caroline Bachmann and Stefan Banz, *Ein Eklat (Kampf und Urteil)*, 2010–11. Exhibition of *Das Schweigen der Junggesellen* at the Museum Schloss Moyland, February 16–April 27, 2014. © Caroline Bachmann and Stefan Banz. Graphic added. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the artists.

All this medial, temporal, and participatory messiness obviously didn't make its way into the court case, since the fact that the medium of television considerably altered the "live" perception of the work—some might say even more than the photographs did—was never mentioned.[123] Instead, it was simply concluded that the exhibited photographic series disrupted both the "dynamic" nature and

the immediacy of the action by turning it into a "static" aesthetic object, resulting in an unauthorized transformation of the work. In terms of the history of photography in judicial contexts, this reductive interpretation isn't that surprising. Cornelia Vismann illustrates the way in which the function of photography in judicial discourse has developed since the nineteenth century, shifting from a medium that assists in expressing the essence of an act to a medium that perfectly, and sometimes too perfectly, itself conveys this essence through its objectivity. Whereas photographs would initially be shown in court alongside oral descriptions of their content since "the pictures are not meant to speak for themselves," photography later became a medium that does the speaking all on its own.[124] "Pictures can fully and completely replace the witnesses . . . . The perceptions [in the photograph] can be formed in the same way . . . by all who are present."[125] In the case of *VG Bild-Kunst v. Museum Schloss Moyland*, photography was deemed to speak too perfectly, or too perfectly to reproduce the speech act, *die Aussage*, that Beuys, according to the verdict, made in 1964 (figure 16). For this, the pictures had to be taken down, (re)silenced.

The court case ultimately kept returning to the question of what the photographs capture and how they capture it. "In this way, the individual creative statement was pictorially captured and documented."[126] Photography speaks, but it can speak only what another medium—an action, a performance, a telecast stored in collective memory—has already spoken.

A COMPLICATED SIGNATURE

Such assumptions in this contemporary copyright case, which centered on media events from the past and their consequences for the present, raised serious concerns from the public, both in Germany and the US. Photography was determined to be a second-class art, television was understood as not having any effect on "live" events, and copyright protection needed to be extended and expanded at the expense of other art forms rather than reassessed at present to account for widespread digitization and emerging media practices. For contemporary artists in Germany, especially photographers, the writing was on the wall. Two decided to take this idiom seriously (figure 17).

The excerpts from the court decisions that have been included here (figures 13 and 16) are close-ups of photographs that I took of part of the installation by Caroline Bachmann and Stefan Banz, which they began after learning about the disturbing precedents these decisions were setting. I was excited to be there, making a first archival trip with an older camera, and you can probably notice that the images are a bit blurry, crooked, and marked by things other than the writing on the wall, which I realize now, after lots of filtering and being closer to one (provisional) end of the process, I could have photographed more closely and carefully. I added a graphic, a red text box, to direct attention to certain parts of the

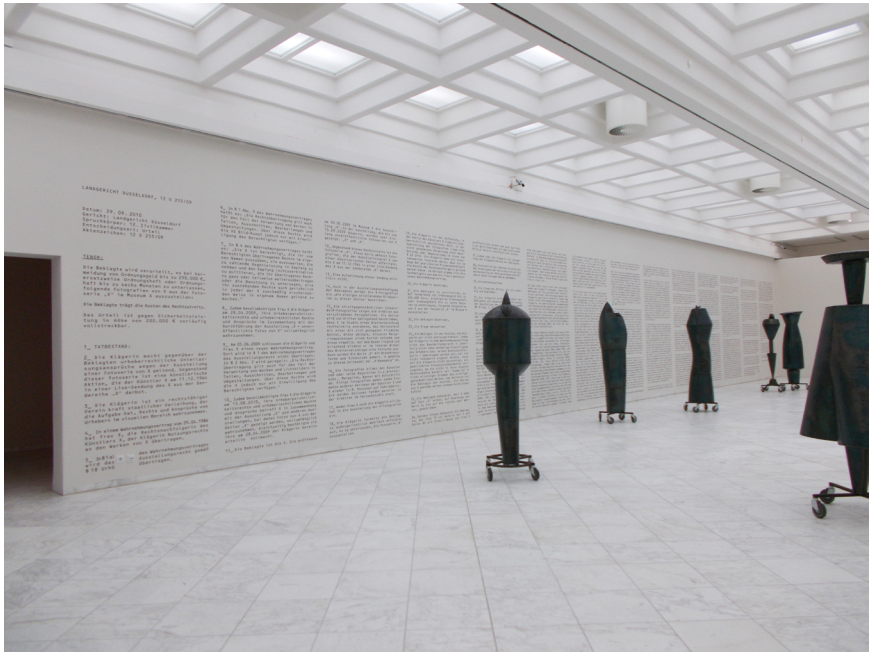


FIGURE 17. Caroline Bachmann and Stefan Banz, *Ein Eklat (Kampf und Urteil)*, 2010–11. *Kampf*: Installation of nine sculptures: metal, iron, wheels, between 74¾ × 19⅝ × 19⅝ in. (190 × 50 × 50 cm) and 86⅝ × 39⅜ × 19⅝ in. (220 × 100 × 50 cm). Exhibition of *Das Schweigen der Junggesellen* at the Museum Schloss Moyland, February 16–April 27, 2014. © Caroline Bachmann and Stefan Banz. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the artists.

photographs, which doesn't seem like a violation of the integrity of a work that is itself about the problems of authorizing. Bachmann and Banz's installation, *Ein Eklat (Kampf und Urteil)* (A Commotion [Fight and verdict]), pastes the 2010 verdict by the Landgericht Düsseldorf word-for-word and spatially amplifies it along a gallery wall in Schloss Moyland in front of metallic realizations of Duchamp's *Neuf Moules Mâlic* (Nine Mâlic molds, from *Le Grand Verre* [The large glass, 1915–23]).[127] Walking into the exhibition, we are likely first overwhelmed by the towering presence of typed legal text on a bright white wall that seems to go on forever, without any indication as to what we're supposed to do with it. It's unclear if we're meant to stand back and read it all, paragraph for paragraph (would we understand much of it?), or walk up close to it (to inspect what?), or roll one of Duchamp's life-size molds around in front of it. "The legal language, which is very difficult to understand and is actually quite violent, is juxtaposed with slightly larger-than-life, bluish shimmering metal figures on casters. Visitors are invited to push them around the room. The installation provokes questions about artistic authorship, copyright, and the power of appropriation. It addresses

FIGURE 18. Manfred Tischer, *Joseph Beuys—Unveröffentlichte Fotografien von Manfred Tischer*. Installation of twenty-two framed photographs of Fluxus Gruppe (1964) at the Museum Schloss Moyland, February 16–April 27, 2014. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the Estate of Manfred Tischer.

extreme positions regarding the approach to works of art. Regulations and lack of freedom."[128]

This installation was planned before the surprising ruling made by the Bundesgerichtshof in May 2013 to overturn the two previous verdicts about the photographs in question, allowing the photographic series taken by Tischer to be put back up simultaneously.[129] After being inundated in Bachmann and Banz's installation by the language of legal authority pasted up on a white wall, we can venture through the opening on its left-hand side. There, on the other side of the same wall, is a contrast and an afterimage we likely didn't expect: The photographic series we just read about on the other side, no longer banned, but presented in single row against a bright red background (figure 18). The writing was on the wall, but so were the images that it originally banned from being shown.

With a hybrid view like this, maybe it's possible to reposition authorizing processes as the unseen maintenance work on the flip side of the canon and the author's name. Instead of establishing a hierarchy between the performer and the photographer in *Joseph Beuys—Unpublished Photographs by Manfred Tischer*, we can leave them suspended between the dash in the title, on either side. It would

be a hyphenated way of authorizing a work, a process with which Beuys was not unfamiliar. We can also see it at work in the one picture of *Das Schweigen* that wasn't taken down, the first one we saw in this chapter (figure 11). Usually described as consisting of a mixture of *Braunkreuz* paint and chocolate, this picture contains at least one other: the photograph pasted in the bottom right-hand corner, which was part of Tischer's photographic series taken in the ZDF television studio in 1964.[130] The photograph is inserted underneath the letters "WERT" in the word "ÜBERBEWERTET," which means "overrated." But *Wert*, on its own, means "value." What literally upholds value in this case is something that is either completely overlooked or underrated in the existing scholarship, despite the photograph's placement in the very spot where we are meant to locate the conventional marker of value: the bottom right-hand corner where the artist's signature is supposed to be or, in its place, the stamp of ownership: ©.[131]

The photograph was embedded in the painting without its frame, which bears a second signature and offers contextual details that situate the photograph affixed to the "painting" of *Das Schweigen* as part of a larger series taken by Tischer (see figure 12). Having a closer look at the image sheds light on this understanding of value. Beuys isn't alone in the image; his performance takes up just a corner of the photograph. Instead, one of Tischer's photographs (providing a bird's-eye view of three performances, the four performers, the extras on set, and the television setup) is used to sign an object Beuys co-creates during the televised event.[132] So, if this photograph occupies the place of the signature, essentially taking its place, who in fact authorized and continues to authorize this work? "Can a signature be cited, and if so, what are the consequences?"[133] More specifically, what are the consequences of signing this work with a group photograph? If the photograph "were to signal not only the multiplication of the signature, which takes place at the end of the text, but also that, situated *within* the text as its 'object,' the signature no longer simply signs, even though it does still sign, being neither entirely in the text nor entirely outside, but rather *on the edge*? Who shall decide?"[134] Here we have a photograph taken by an artist who signs it on the frame, on the edge, which features several participants and has been reworked or preworked into a painting with a sentence, drawn/written by one of the participants, naming another who wasn't even there, "live," but for which there were countless other "live" spectators, dispersed and anonymous, in addition to later iterations of viewers like us who keep returning to it.[135] If we want to consider *Das Schweigen* as authorized by Beuys, then it's a Beuys "who is divided, multiplied, conjugated, shared. What a complicated signature!"[136]

If there is a signature in this work, then it's one that takes place through many hands, media, and moments in time, and the ink has yet to dry. In a letter to Beuys dated December 21, 1964, Tischer writes that he is including twenty photographs of "the action" that took place on December 11, 1964, in the ZDF studio and notes that enlargements of these could be developed at an additional cost.[137] Beuys publishes,

FIGURE 19. Manfred Tischer, photograph of collective performance (Fluxus Gruppe) with Joseph Beuys, Bazon Brock, Norbert Tadeusz, and Wolf Vostell, 1964. Black-and-white Baryte prints, dimensions variable, each ca. 5½ × 8⅜ in. (14 × 21 cm). Joseph Beuys Archiv / Stiftung Schloss Moyland, JBA-F 92841. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the Estate of Manfred Tischer.

in one form or another, at least two of these photographs.[138] One is pasted into the bottom corner of the painting of *Das Schweigen*. The other, which has circulated in exhibition catalogues and in news articles about the copyright case, features Beuys looking like the author-artist we expect, kneeling and working on the upper corner of the painting of *Das Schweigen*. The photograph in the bottom corner has not yet been included (figure 19).[139]

So, for around two additional weeks after the collective television performance took place, Beuys leaves *Das Schweigen* behind, thinks about the stakes of this enterprise, and then continues working on it at a later moment, and more than once. Several photographs of *Das Schweigen* reappear as part of his and photographer Lothar Wolleh's *3-Tonnen-Edition* (3-ton-edition, 1973–85), conceived as an artist's book and eventually sold as a multiple (figure 20).[140] Authorship always wears more than one hat.

As with the previous iterations of *Das Schweigen*, the work doesn't stay fossilized and silent in this version either. The ink is still wet, and the signatures on the edge and placed over other images remain sketch-like, complicated, and playful. It keeps the ink flowing, a way of delaying the finalized product, which is a media

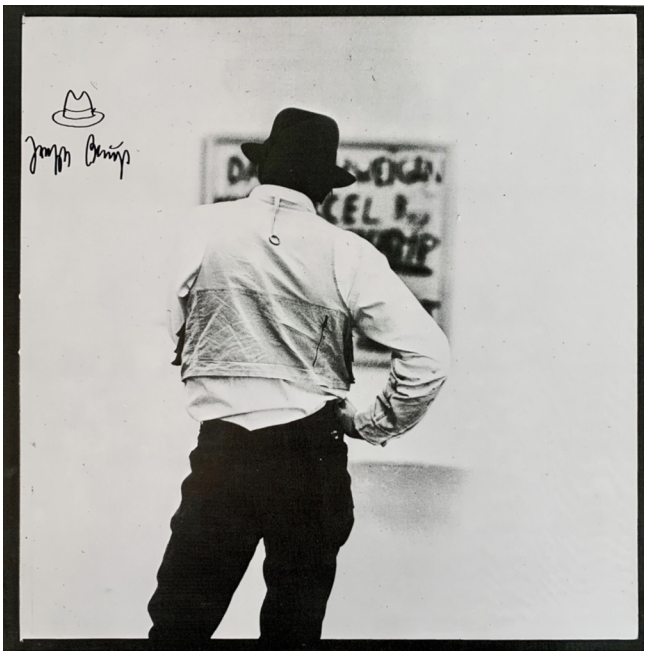


FIGURE 20. Joseph Beuys, selection from *3-Tonnen-Edition*, 1973–85. Silk screen, both sides on PVC film, 44 motifs in all, mostly reworked, each 18⅛ × 17⅞ in. (46 × 45.5 cm). 4,800 copies planned, max. 1,150 completed, published by Edition Staeck, Heidelberg, Städtische Museen Heilbronn, depositum of the Ernst Franz Vogelmann-Stiftung. In the background: Joseph Beuys, *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird überbewertet*, no date [1964/1965]. © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph by Lothar Wolleh. Courtesy of Coppejans Gallery, Antwerp.

process we'll focus on in the next chapter. It reminds us that *Das Schweigen*, rather than an ephemeral "live" event with clearly demarcated boundaries, might be an ongoing enterprise, one (provisional) end of the authorizing process.[141]

3

Three (-Plus) Ways of Spilling Ink

In 2006, what was left over in the courtyard in Brussels in 1969 is reassembled and offered up as a redo in Seoul (figure 21). The leftovers from long ago were examined accordingly: It had rained that day, so the letters the Belgian artist had written were not evenly distributed across the space of the page. Water had fallen upon the writing surface and mixed with the ink. Contours had disappeared, lines had broken off, little puddles had formed. In the courtyard in Brussels behind the museum, this scene of writing had been filmed in black-and-white without sound. In the courtyard in Seoul in an anonymous inn, the re-collected writing is recorded as a series of framed panels composed of texts and photographs.[1] Thirty-seven years of a rain. (Plus another twenty for us, the viewers today.) The act of spilling ink, its unpredictable behavior when it teams up with water in redoing what we do, ends up delaying what we are used to expecting and that which we have been promised: the finished work, closure. Has the principle of chance ever dried up? What we are left with looks like an incomplete sketch, something that was attempted but has yet to take a final, legible, visibly identifiable form. Was it a letter? A poem? A drawing? A plane? Superman? Potentiality and chance are activated and investigated here as modes of production as well as reception: What could this project for a text offer that a finished poem or drawing might not? Such questions converge in the Belgian courtyard but also have different lead times from elsewhere and, like the fluid ink on paper, take on new, unexpected forms with and over time.

For over fifty years, all kinds of attempts have been made to get the rain raining, the ink flowing, and the mix mixing again that was spilled in *La Pluie (projet pour un texte)* (The Rain [project for a text]), Marcel Broodthaers's film of just over two minutes recorded outdoors in the 1960s. People refuse to take the wishy-washy

FIGURE 21. Haegue Yang, *Quasi MB—In the Middle of Its Story* (2006–7). Detail view. Eighteen panels: handwriting on paper, photographs, text, framed. Each panel 14⅝ × 20½ in. (37 × 52 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Dohmen Collection, Aachen.

status of the 1969 "original" as fact by letting it have the last word. In the 16 mm film, Broodthaers, playing the protagonist, embarks on the task of writing. Or at least what looks like writing. What we see are mostly lines of something that remain unclear, not yet fully illegible. He sits down at a makeshift desk in his courtyard with an inkwell, dip pen, and sheets of paper in front of him, but doesn't get much down on paper before water starts pouring over him and his project for a text. The rain doesn't come as a shock or surprise to the writer. He had been expecting it, maybe waiting for it. The majority of the film follows his determined attempts at inscription despite and in the midst of *la pluie*, an experiment with writing as a chance operation that has yet to end. *Quasi MB—In the Middle of Its Story*, the raining and inking done in Seoul in 2006, is just one of them. The installation displays strokes of ink materialized in various states: from fluid phases that resemble abstract visual forms to printed text in a more solidified state. If *La Pluie* from 1969 is a project about not finishing, and instead embracing the media process of delaying the delivery of the final product and relishing the intermediary steps and spaces, it only makes sense to treat it as not finished. To do so, we can look at its reiteration in other medial forms, which will provide context for this fascination with *La Pluie* and add contours to the project. Most strategies for redoing the illegible words, random images, and performative dimension of this film

from yesterday, which has, for most of this time, remained rather inaccessible, also remain rather inaccessible themselves. It almost seems to be an unwritten rule.

La Pluie (projet pour un texte), this time a video by Amy Jones that appropriates Broodthaers's title in 2006, relocates the setting of this earlier scene of writing, indicating that it is concerned less with the physical site of production than with the platform from which this scene can be viewed and experienced (figure 22). As Broodthaers's film was still difficult to track down at that time, redoing its frames gives a more precise initial idea of what we have already read so much about.[2] The ink strokes in a cinematic representation on 16 mm film are pieced together here on video using found photographic documentation of the event and uploaded to YouTube. *Bureau Belge* (Belgian office), Masahide Otani's video projected in a former bank in Hiroshima in 2008, at first looks like a clear departure from Eurocentric canons with its rapidly written Japanese characters but turns out to be translations of quotations from films and novels by Alain Resnais and Georges Perec in kanji and hiragana (figure 23).[3]

This spectrum of redos has continued to expand beyond the scope of how much ink we can spill here, with *La Pluie* repeatedly showing up as an impetus for other projects, particularly when it comes to probing how figures and ideas are carried over and through different exhibitionary networks.[4] Yang, Jones, Otani, et al.: three-plus ways of spilling ink, intentionally, again. Ways of getting this ink flowing anew, but always unfinished. Despite their varied approaches, these contemporary projects all exhibit an interest in gathering around and drawing inspiration from the version of *La Pluie* that took place in the Belgian courtyard in the late 1960s. What is it about that moment, what does it presumably contain, that these other ink spillers find so stimulating for their own work half a century later? Because the project "made it" and was ultimately successful?[5] What is it about this particular film, which has not always been in circulation, that is impossible to just forget? Why are these redo artists eager, in the so-called "digital" era, to stand together in the rain with this project for a text that relies on such dated analog scribal media, an inkwell and paper, and that also, simultaneously, violates the expectations of durable inscription conventionally accompanying such classical scenes of writing in deep contemplation and romantic solitude? While "in a print medium, the durable inscription of ink marks on paper normally requires that only one word be written in one place," at the center of abnormal *La Pluie* lies the challenge of keeping ink virtually unpreserved on paper and with it multiple words, images, or strokes written together on top of each other each time anew in one place.[6] It forces the constant repositioning of lined text with tools of handwriting that are nowadays obsolete, and in a very different way than how we learned it at school. (The only thing that we might be reminded of in both these situations is the need for persistence, not giving up when we fail.) Wasn't handwriting, as a form of inscription, usually thought of as more vital and dynamic, embodying movement, spontaneity, and authenticity, than printed or typewritten text, for instance?[7] *La Pluie* explicitly thematizes these relationships between inscription

FIGURE 22. Amy Jones, *La Pluie (Projet pour un texte)* (2006). Screenshot from black-and-white video, 2:50, uploaded to YouTube. Courtesy of the artist, University College Falmouth, and Dartington College of Arts.

FIGURE 23. Masahide Otani, *Bureau Belge* (2008). Still from DVD, 3:28, color, PAL. Courtesy of Art & Communication / Pascal Bouchaille, Galerie Cortex Athletico, Bordeaux, and the artist.

and erasure, the mark and the trace, and fixity and fluidity at the core of debates about not only the history of writing but also media technology, as in debates about the "self-evidence" of nature (authorial spirit) versus culture (writing technology) that, at present, seem outdated. Can't he just position himself under a roof before he continues writing? Can't someone please let this man in so

that he can finish his work? Why does he remain so unfazed? What is so important about writing itself?

The numerous redos of Broodthaers's performance-film seek out not his left-over pages, which just pile up as a pile of endings, but the media process by which they came to be—namely, the delay or prolonging of finality that allows for an oscillation between durability and effacement. They indulge in the stopovers, as well as the gestures and possibilities of the *Wunderblock*, the mystic writing pad, since, as Sigmund Freud writes, "the advantage of this procedure [of choosing a writing surface that will preserve intact any note made upon it], the fact that it provides a 'permanent trace,' may lose its value for me if after a time the note ceases to interest me and I no longer want to 'retain it in my memory.'"[8] Eager to study a text before it freezes, a text in the form of the drafts, redos, sketches, and provisionary notes that led to it, the redoers are interested not in the alleged fluidity of the process of writing and its fantasy of agency (which *La Pluie* ironizes by performing it literally) but in the multitude of microdecisions with and without human agency at each stop that allow for all kinds of changes in direction, new moves, and detours. They pick up on, instead of eliding, a standard media process of delay in order to reconceptualize its function. "The disruptions inherent in any logistical relay system (noise, rerouting) can become a mechanism for imagination; the potentials of fantasy substitute for the delivery of information."[9] With this, the promise of the (wasted) page and the chance of the breaks to redirect the seemingly predrawn linear logistics of filling a page elsewhere, the energy at contingent points can be retrieved. Just think of streaming delays: It is exactly what we perceive as the fluidity of media that interrupts the text and chops it up. It is these pauses that are also a chance not just for mediality and self-observation of media use but also to switch (platforms, browsers, films) and try something new.[10] If you are too quickly satisfied with a result, boredom easily sets in.

While writing usually steals the spotlight in cultural memory, processes of erasure, crossing out, or "canceling" (from the Latin *cancelli*, grating, lattice, or bars) in historical scribal media have been essential, precisely for the function of establishing a belief in the power of the original: "Just as consigning a manuscript to oblivion serves to validate the final version of a book, the law is authenticated by the latticed prescript. . . . Crossing out, it seems, is more elementary than the more productive act of writing down. Deleting rather than writing establishes the symbolic order of the law. . . . The phantasm of the *ur*-writing, then, has its medial reality in the shape of canceled writing."[11] How do the proliferating redos of this effacement position themselves relative to some notion of an *ur*-writing, an *ur*-Broodthaers, or *ur*-1960s/1970s? But there is no source text in remaking a situation. You can start anew and relate to endless points in the process and its numerous contexts. How can the belief in the notion of "the original" seriously manage to navigate a film recording of a performance relentlessly refusing to produce a finalized work, thematizing effacement and ephemerality?

These questions become more complicated in light of the reception history of *La Pluie*, a filmic object that has itself moved between these states, between inscription and erasure, or visibility and obscurity. While its inaccessibility has been noted as an impetus for some of these redos, its status as a rare object has changed significantly in recent years, especially after the large-scale Broodthaers retrospective at MoMA in 2016.[12] The film has shifted from the realm of the invisible/inaccessible to the differently visible/accessible in the "digital" age due to "new" media platforms and recording technologies, changes in the digital presence and marketing strategies of art institutions (such as the more frequent use of stills and the inclusion of short clips on museum websites), and Broodthaers's broader popularity and reception.[13] While only one version of *La Pluie* could be found online in 2010 when I first started working on my project for a text about this project for a text, the film is now more widely accessible across a range of sites in a number of different versions and qualities. The different takes on the short film, however, do not promise to re-create the components of the "original" or fulfill its author's supposed intentions (whatever they happened to be, if they are, were, or will ever be truly knowable). Neither do these redos claim to offer a more intimate proximity to the earlier work (whatever this happens to be, if it is, was, or will ever be truly knowable, and if it were something we really cared about). Yet, with their very specific and differentiated attempts to get that spilled ink flowing again, they ultimately draw out aspects of this experimental project for a text that we, the viewers, can now perceive as crucial to all iterations of this project.

The redos not only aim to further probe the indeterminacy and contingency fundamental to the project of *La Pluie* but also highlight the overlooked tools of this act of spilling and scene of writing: from the labor of the body and specific geographical contexts to recording and distribution technologies and the realia that usually remain behind the scenes of writing, canonization, and institutionalization. In the process, these redos, in diverse ways, reconfigure notions of presence/durability and absence/loss, with the oscillation between these states serving as one of the main themes of the project they have set out to redo. "Writing was perhaps the primal form of disembodied communication among people. How to simulate the feeling of presence . . . has been of interest for digital designers for at least two decades, but scramblings of body and text have been part of our logistical complexities for millennia."[14] The body and text show up as key instruments in a system of communication based on the media processes of message preparation, transmission, and storage that are plagued by delay, by spilling ink in the rain and attempting to create, deliver, and preserve something that never seems to settle. In these attempts to write and rewrite, one finds that the tools and objects involved in the process of inscription are repeatedly working with and against each other to simultaneously keep the ink flowing and question how it can possibly be settled, deciphered, and preserved in this state.[15]

In calling these three-plus acts of spilling ink "redos" rather than "remakes" or "reperformances," we can call attention to a process, a doing, instead of focusing first and foremost on a supposed end product, what is made or performed as a result of these reiterations, since the latter would likely lead to the typical binary questions about what is "saved" or "lost" in the Belgian backyard of 1969. The redo can, instead, allow us to linger on the doing of spilling instead of immediately jumping to its outcome, similarly to the way in which "'delay' refers to a temporary condition in the present tense indicating ongoing travel, rather than the present perfect 'failure' or 'loss' of the message."[16] The uncertainty and prolonged outcome of spilling ink is not easy to linger in, also because it's an act often associated with serious consequences, one whose "long use by the market, the palace, and the temple has given it enormous, sometimes violent power."[17] One might argue that spilling ink is not to be taken lightly, as it contaminates the document. It can signify an intent to commit, to enact, and to institutionalize, and a range of connotations can be applied to all of these acts, from progressive and hopeful to violent and destructive. And yet spilling ink might also be something, in other contexts, to be taken quite lightly. Think of early slapstick: Laurel and Hardy spilling ink all over the hotel register in *Double Whoopee* (1929), marking their difference from the German prince, a parody of Erich von Stroheim, for whom they are initially mistaken. "Writing is portable, addictive, expensive, labor-intensive, never mastered, shunned, marvelous, and treacherous. . . . Almost all humans speak, many write, but all live in a world governed by writing."[18] The redo can redirect our attention to this specific *act* of spilling and respilling ink that, in all of these versions, is done in a purposely errant way, ensuring at all costs that it does not immediately solidify on the page in the form of something wholly legible or decipherable, an end product that would offer itself up for interpretation and evaluation. It holds us off from reading into these traces of ink and making certain determinations about them, asking instead that we remain in the realm of the doing a bit longer. These three-plus ways of spilling ink cannot be boiled down to remakes of writing a poem or drawing an image by a now canonical artist. But they are also not *not* remakes of these. What these redos emphasize is the contingency that is at the core of all the iterations of spilling ink across a range of temporalities, how this act is sought out as a form of suspension, interruption, or tension between a definitive medium finalized in one state (e.g., the medium of writing finalized in the form of a text, such as literature or poetry) and another definitive medium, also recognizable as such due to its finalized form (e.g., the medium of drawing in the form of a painting or visual representation).

At first, it might seem that what all of these projects are interested in is sketching something out on paper regardless of the external circumstances, drafting a kind of blueprint, screenplay, or initial outline of a work intended to be realized later on in a more formal, definitive, and finalized way. The blueprint is usually admired based on these terms, as an artifact of some original realization of an inspiration

or an intuition, as if a first sketch of a grandiose idea were manifested within it. It's presumed that this idea was already located in the mind and thoughts of the artist alone, and it simply needs a first point of contact or exit route in the form of a physical inscriptive medium or inscription technology.[19] The eureka moment must be quickly put down on paper (or the cliché we're used to, a cocktail napkin) in any simple form, so that it can be fully completed later on (then we can save the cocktail napkin and frame it). Thus, the sketch is, according to this logic, purer, more immediate, and more instantaneous, having its sole origin in a ("great") artistic mind, a form of an idea that is not yet as polluted by culture, influence, and the material demands and constrictions of medial properties. Such conclusions would have to rely on a value system that is informed by logocentric bias, a linear mapping of thought, speech, and writing, privileged in that order based on their proximity to what is allegedly interior to the mind and consequently more true and real, perceived as being closer to notions of presence, essence, and origins, and therefore presumed to be less "tainted," less mediated. Writing and other purportedly derivative products are always several steps removed from the point of origin in such logic, offering up only a material representation of distance, loss, and absence.[20] According to this formula, the sketch that is drafted in *La Pluie* is preparatory, documentary, and functional. Its value is drawn from its proximity to the actual artistic inspiration. Therefore, the ink that is spilled seems to be rehearsed over again and over again because it is perceived as more auratic, opaque, and aesthetically precious than the finished product. In other words, it's presumed that these spillers want to get closer to the hand of influence, greatness, genius.

But that's not what happens when we're all still standing out here in the rain getting wet. Beyond the various problems of the media-as-loss formula, that kind of thinking would overlook the role of contingency that is the very basis for this act. If these are redos of a chance operation, what is the precise artistic product that they purport to offer back up again? The sketch operation and the finished product become uncertain categories when ink is spilled on purpose in this way. To understand this, we first have to situate this project, *La Pluie*, as something more complex than a performance of the inability to produce the written text as a finished product. Although it might seem paradoxical to spend too much time on biography when looking at a series of redos, reviewing what has circulated about Broodthaers and his project for a text can help foster this complexity. The story usually goes that Broodthaers was first a writer, then a visual artist: "Born in 1924 in Brussels, Broodthaers worked primarily as a poet until the age of 40. In 1964, he announced his entry into the visual arts by transforming the unsold copies of his last volume of poetry, *Pense-Bête* (Memory aid) (1964), into a sculpture for his first solo exhibition."[21] Symbolically ending his career as a poet just saves him time:

> On the occasion of his first exhibition, at the Galerie Saint-Laurent in Brussels in 1964, Broodthaers published a by-now notorious and frequently quoted statement

> in which he draws a facetious connection between the commodity and the commonly held suspicion that all art is inherently fraudulent. This is contained in the statement's hint that it took only three months to produce the work for his first exhibition as an artist, and that he did not even suspect himself of having produced art until his future dealer told him so: "I, too, wondered if I couldn't sell something and succeed in life. I had for quite a little while been good for nothing. I am forty years old . . . . The idea of inventing something insincere finally crossed my mind and I set to work at once. At the end of three months I showed what I'd done to Ph. Edouard Toussaint, the owner of the Galerie Saint-Laurent. 'But this is art,' he said, 'and I will gladly show it all.' If I sell something he'll take thirty percent. These, it seems, are normal conditions; some galleries take seventy-five percent. What is it? In fact, only some objects!"[22]

In a footnote, a source is provided for this supposed statement: "See exhibition announcement *Marcel Broodthaers*, Brussels, Galerie Saint-Laurent, 1964. The exhibition announcement was printed over reproductions of fashion advertisement pages."[23] Things get interesting when one considers what this "statement" actually looks like.

What is supposedly *said* by Broodthaers was quoted from text imprinted over pages of what looks like a magazine, which were presented and delivered as an "invitation" to his first exhibition opening in 1964. Broodthaers's "statement" is not just printed over these pages but reorients them entirely, turning them on their sides so that the magazine text appears vertically, now less legible, and his "statement" appears horizontally, legible and much more prominent. The magazine pages seem to have a fold in them, as if they were formatted along a horizontal axis of important "above-the-fold" and marginal "below-the-fold" information. In Broodthaers's invitation, the page is turned into a kind of book that contains one verso and recto above the fold and another verso and recto below the fold, which is still clearly visible, now running vertically down the page instead of across it, horizontally. It creates the conditions of possibility for Broodthaers's "statement" to be appear over the space of the verso-recto combinations, unfolding in four parts in an overwhelmingly large, modern, sans serif font (figure 24). The "statement" itself is offered up not only as unique but as a duplicate as well: Broodthaers makes twenty-two versions of this invitation on recycled magazine pages.[24] Not a book, but pages bound by a fold or codex that are usually meant to be thrown away, not preserved, maybe because they're perceived as lowbrow, serial things with multiple authors, text genres, and advertisements to be read quickly, discarded, and ultimately replaced. In the version of the invitation included above, the headline, which is just cut off at its head in the verso of figure 24a, gives some clues as to its context: "LE TEST DE LA JALOUSIE," partially citing the title of Alain Robbe-Grillet's 1957 *nouveau roman*, whose "obsessive detailing of the visual realm" becomes a means of disrupting "'*the appearance of incontestable objectivity*.'"[25] The jealousy test is an assessment of something that is always circling around suspicions of

A

B

FIGURE 24. Sides A and B of invitation to *Moi aussi, je me suis demandé si je ne pouvais pas vendre quelque chose et réussir dans la vie . . . .* Galerie Saint Laurent, April 10–25, 1964. Letterpress on magazine page. Dimensions: page (each approx.): 9⅞ × 6⅝ in. (25.1 × 16.9 cm); sheet (unfolded): 9^{15}⁄$_{16}$ × 13¼ in. (25.2 × 33.6 cm). Designer: Marcel Broodthaers, with Corneille Hannoset. Publisher: Marcel Broodthaers, Galerie Saint-Laurent. Printer: Henri Kumps, Brussels. Edition: unknown. Committee on Prints and Illustrated Books Fund.

privilege, rivalries, and self-evidence. We have to choose what we want to read here: either Broodthaers's statement, the foreground, or the print media that serves as its base, the background. Reading one means flipping the other around and making it run vertically. So, in order to read the magazine pages about this conflict in the background, we flip them ninety degrees so that their text, the background text, appears horizontally. Then we can decipher that we are looking at page 185 of a magazine, a verso, and page 186, its recto, consisting of a text attributed to actress and author "Françoise PRÉVOST" that references replacements, remakes, and originality in theater ("*Bonheur, impair et passe* . . . which was, according to many, original neither in its authorship nor in its directing") and painting (Agnès Sorel depicted "after Jean Fouquet" by an anonymous fifteenth-century artist at the École française).[26]

This is informative, also when we return these figures back to their previous vertical positions so that Broodthaers's infamous "statement" about wanting to sell something and succeed in life is once again upright, horizontal and legible. We might notice then that Broodthaers's "statement" appears quite differently here, when embedded in a visual print medium with complex text-image relationships, than the way we have usually seen it before, when it is quoted as if it were a text, a "statement," with its medial messiness only being hinted at in a footnote, to which it gets relegated. The secondary literature cites Broodthaers's "statement" as beginning with "I, too, wondered if I couldn't sell something and succeed in life" and ending with "some galleries take 75%. What is it? In fact, only some objects!"[27] In French: "Moi aussi, je me suis demandé si je ne pouvais pas vendre quelque chose et réussir dans la vie. . . . certaines galeries prenant 75%. Ce que c'est? En fait, des objets!"[28] The "statement" cited here is likely pieced together based on figure 24 being folded into one another in such a way that the verso in figure 24a came last, appearing on the back side of Broodthaers's 1964 "invitation." But if one is interested in some idea of source and process, then what we would see in the visual magazine layout would look quite different. This multimedial context reverses the order of these statements within the "statement." Let's read it as if it were a magazine (after all, it is one, among other things), following Broodthaers's "statement" from left to right, starting with the verso in figure 24a, in French on the left and with an English translation on the right.[29] Instead of separating it from its medial context, we'd take each line seriously, as we would in poetry:

certaines galeries	some galleries
prenant 75%.	take 75%.
Ce que c'est ?	What is it?
En fait, des objets.	In fact, objects.
Marcel	Marcel
Broodthaers	Broodthaers
Galerie St Laurent	Galerie St Laurent
rue Duquesnoy	rue Duquesnoy

Du 10 au 25 avril	From April 10 to 25
Vernissage	Vernissage
vendredi 10	Friday the 10th
de 6 à 8 heures	from 6 to 8

In this reading, we find that the first line is not about an author lamenting his lack of success but is instead a sharp critique of those things one is not supposed to talk about: "some galleries / take 75%." An unapologetic accounting of the real restrictions on the production of art and a very public critique of the hypocritical institutional standards before one can even get one's foot in the door, when one is still waiting outside the doors of the institution, hoping to get in. This version of Broodthaers's "statement" dismisses the drama of the exclamation (mark), or perhaps imagined apostrophe, that continues to circulate in the scholarship about "en fait, des objets," only some objects.[30] Period.

Just to the right of the last line in the verso of figure 24a, next to "heures," indicating the time of the vernissage, another name is announced in addition to Broodthaers's, printed vertically, as if it belonged to the background text of the magazine: "Hannoset." Not only does this addition disrupt the single-artist expectation and purpose of the invitation card (who did we come here to see?), but it provides a very clear signal about what this medium of the invitation card sets out to do—namely, to get people from A to B, from their homes to the gallery. It's a logistical text that Broodthaers first distributes here with the help of Corneille Hannoset, the graphic designer with whom he worked on these "invitations" and who is rarely, if ever, discussed as a co-creator of this famous early "statement" solely attributed to Broodthaers in the scholarship.[31] As is typical of logistical media that "are prior to and form the grid in which messages are sent," when this "invitation" gets consigned to the form of a "statement," its medial implications remain completely overlooked.[32] Having "Hannoset" at the end of the text both as a signal and as if it were a signature could also be seen avant la (*Pluie*) lettre, as a pun on "Letraset"—a wet process of letter transferring in the late 1950s, with the dry-transfer version later taken up in DIY design contexts—a way to get around the problems of hand-painted letters.[33] With Broodthaers, Hannoset helped design a guide for his first public viewing—not only in terms of when and how to get there, but how to get *in* there, how to take one's first steps into this work. The Hannoset technique optimized and standardized this format, ensuring that these lines appear exactly the same in all twenty-two versions of the invitation, meaning they are printed in precisely the same font size and order, with all the same punctuation and line breaks, as if this text were indifferent to its variety of backgrounds, its media of inscription. Together, they form the basis for this 1960s MB press kit, a key tool of distribution providing journalists and critics some first ideas as to what to write about this work and regulating the space for advertisements in newspapers and magazines. Press kits offer clues as to how things used to circulate, especially those classified in the emerging discourse as "art."[34] As such, this box of prepackaged

ideas circulated about Marcel Broodthaers launched expectations for the imagined, varying audiences by producing similar messages about this work across a diversity of sites and platforms. The first step into Broodthaers's work is a logistical operation itself, one that was recognized as such. It critically examines what gets circulated (as "art," as "waste"), to whom, at what costs, and in what format.

Closely following the order of verso and recto in this visual format of the allegedly inaugural "statement" by Broodthaers-Hannoset means acknowledging that the textual form of this "statement," which is repeatedly rehearsed and recycled as the eureka moment of artistic invention and innovation in the existing literature, is always out of order. The lines of information that follow "some galleries tak[ing] 75%"—information about profit margins, expectations and disappointments, conditions of sale, opening hours and locations, and private invitations for viewings that are never private—was apparently presumed, in all the recycled forms of this "statement," to come last, to be least important.[35] In fact, when this "statement" is cited in the secondary literature, this part of the "invitation" is regularly cut off from the rest of the quote, presumed to be entirely insignificant to the understanding of the artistic motivation behind the entry card to this inaugural vernissage.[36] Broodthaers invites spectators to approach his first vernissage through a reassembled collection of old and new artist names, works that are more well-known and those that have been forgotten, and a hodgepodge of recycled media that can be folded and refolded in ways that confuse what comes first and what comes last. In this way, the "invitation" to enter Broodthaers's works resists the foundational temporal logic associated with the vernissage, typically thought of in terms of offering a first, exclusive look at the finished goods, even though "vernissage" etymologically stems from "varnish," referring to "the varnishing day" that was traditionally allotted to artists before an official opening, allowing them to touch up and rework what would soon be put on display.[37] The ironic adaptation of the strategy of planned obsolescence not only made clear that there are different ways to announce newness in art but also that the finished goods are never that finished.[38] Broodthaers reworks the standard expectations of the vernissage as a process, suggesting that a range of refurbishments and afterthoughts regularly come before "the work" as we come to know it, and that they are instrumental in the creation of this category to begin with.

So, when we read over and over again that *La Pluie* can be contextualized as a remake itself, a work that "recalls" *Pense-Bête*, the claim is that this film serves as further proof of this medial move in Broodthaers's career trajectory: his supposedly failed attempts at writing with texts that ultimately flow into his success with visual imagery, signaling the triumph of the image over text.[39] It presumes a kind of one-after-another linear temporal logic. First this (poetry), then that (visual art). But let's suspend this false belief, at least for a while, as it's precisely this kind of logic that is undermined in *La Pluie* et al., since they are more interested in the logic of hyphenated authorship (in other words, the logic of the Hanno-Letraset).

While it might seem that all of the *La Pluie* redo projects are sketching something out on paper, drafting a kind of initial outline or storyboard of a work intended to be realized later on in a more formal, definitive, and finalized way, this is not always, or ever, how the blueprint or sketch or screenplay has functioned. "The blueprint becomes a needlessly restricted and prescriptive analogy . . . . To insist on a radical separation of conception and execution of the precise kind implied in the blueprint metaphor also entails positing a particular kind of film, one that is largely hostile to improvisation."[40] The sketch is not a mere preparatory or service medium designed to make other projects more stable, secure, or efficient. This would demand a linear procession from it to the finished product and clear demarcations between these two stages, positioning them as occurring at two completely distinct moments in time: the sketch in the generative phase of creation and the drawing or painting in the executive phase. Preparatory media, however, from the storyboard to the blueprint and the sketch, have always been able to interact with the "finished" product, whose constitution is affected precisely by the possibility of the other. From this perspective, we can imagine how this can, in fact, unsettle "the formulation of sketch and finish, *generative* and *executive* phases," in the sense that the operations of the generative phase can manifest themselves in the executive phase.[41]

This is why the "doing" in "redo" is helpful in this case, since it might release us somewhat from the conventional thinking about "remakes" in terms of a strict point of origin and a subsequent, strict point of remaking. There is a key cross-temporal dimension to the thought, the sketch, and the finished product, never to be thought of as occurring in just that way, from one to the next, in just that order, but rather as mutually influencing one another across time and across different media: "When an artist creates a sketch of a work she intends to implement more fully in another medium . . . , the sketch does much more than function as external memory to remind the artist what she intended. Rather, the sketch enters actively into the cognitive process of artistic creation. As the artist works with the sketch, erasing lines, drawing arrows, rearranging objects and so forth, the external object becomes part of her extended mind, not just recording but *transforming* her thoughts."[42] What is of interest in all these projects for a text is not only the contingency of form, suspending finality to leave one always in the position of starting, drafting, and marking anew, but also the consequence of this sketch logic within the context of a redo—namely, the critical acknowledgement that there is no source text as such. What the redos retrieve and reassemble from the courtyard in Brussels in 1969 is not any one material thing from that time, but a situation. This is how Constantine Verevis, following Rick Altman, in writing about film "remakes," which we could think of as redos here, makes the decisive turn away from the tendency to constantly compare the "remake" with/against the "original," defining them in opposition to one another through processes of naming and labeling, in order to take the broader participatory and institutional context

surrounding these terms into consideration: "It is necessary to acknowledge the *multi-dimensional* nature of remaking, not only textual structures but contextual determinants . . . . The understanding that remaking needs to be treated not simply as a quality of film texts, but as a 'complex *situation*' requires that attention be directed toward those 'factors that impinge on audience expectations, the construction of . . . corpuses, [and] processes of labelling and naming.'"[43] These three redos pick up the complex *situation*, not the supposedly auratic leftover papers. They unpack the box of well-known frames from the film and put supplementary images into circulation with them, make a sketch map of its trajectory, and cut up its history into real and speculative impasses and detours. Three takes on *La Pluie*, on spilling ink three more times, and thereby intervening into it in the critical moment of process: when it has not yet solidified or stabilized, when it has yet to arrive in the form of a finalized, deliverable product.

DELAYING, THREE TIMES

One

Broodthaers's filmic version of *La Pluie* never arrived for Amy Jones. She had not seen the film herself. Rather than lament this "loss," she uses it as a point of departure for her 2006 video redo of it. But a redo of what, exactly? When asked by a YouTube viewer how she was able to get a hold of "the original," Jones explains her production process: "I have spent months trying to get a hold of the original of this film, but to no success. I made it from accounts of people who have seen it and documentation."[44] The background against which she is framed in this video version of *La Pluie* provides some contextual clues about how she goes about putting the pieces together. On the white wall behind her, one can see a label, stenciled in black: "Department of Refiguration." It's a take on another label, "Département des Aigles," stenciled on the wall of the courtyard behind Broodthaers in his version of *La Pluie*, contextualizing this film within the context of his fictive Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section XIXème Siècle (Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles, 19th-Century Section), which he opened at his home one year earlier, "a kind of proxy museum that would function in place of an actual museum, combining bureaucracy, exhibition, exhibition space, and museum conventions."[45] A number of other similarities between Jones's work and the circulating images of Broodthaers's *La Pluie* catch one's eye: Both the 16 mm film and the YouTube video are black-and-white without sound, are under three minutes, and show someone trying to write out some lines in the rain while sitting at a makeshift desk—a crate—in front of a whitewashed wall. The crate is more than a prop here. It's the foundation upon which attempts at inscription take place, signaling that an overarching theme in these works will be the logistics of "art," how it gets packaged, delivered, and circulated.

FIGURE 25. Marcel Broodthaers, Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section XIXe siècle (Bruxelles, rue de la Pépinière, 27 septembre 1968–27 septembre 1969). Photo © Maria Gilissen. Copyright Estate Marcel Broodthaers.

Familiar images from long ago that have circulated about Broodthaers's museum, a speculative institution trying to grapple with the immediate post-'68 moment, give us an idea of what it looked like, a first glimpse into this space, a "Blick in den Raum."[46] The way into this makeshift museum, the first steps, we can imagine, were anything but easy (figure 25). Before we get to "art," we have to deal with the box. The box initiates a rethinking about the role of "the original." It is, in fact, what sets Broodthaers's proxy museum into motion:

> In 1968, after this wave of protests we experienced, a few friends—artists, collectors, gallery people—and myself got together to try to analyze what was going on wrong in the Belgian art world, to analyze the relationships Art-Society. We chatted then we eventually decided to hold a meeting in my studio. We told everybody about it and I was expecting at least sixty or seventy people. Now, my studio is quite bare, there are only two or three chairs . . . where were these people going to sit? So I got the idea to telephone a transport company, Menkès—quite well known in Brussels—and to hire a few crates so the visitors could sit down. It seemed perfectly logical to me to seat them on these "signs" that make reference to the fact of packing art, crates in which paintings and sculptures are transported. I received the crates and installed them here in actually quite a special way, in fact as if they themselves were works of art. And then I said to myself: but actually that's it, that's the museum.[47]

This isn't envisioned as an idea for the opening night of a temporary, alternative exhibition space for art. It's long-term project, indicated by the fact that the

dozens of crates from the Continental Menkès shipping company, which were "stenciled with such typical warning signs as 'keep dry,' 'handle with care,' and 'fragile'" and stuffed into Broodthaers's living room, remain there for an entire year.[48] Not pushed to the side after the first night in order to make room for everyday activities (living), but remain in this awkward and provisional arrangement, along with the postcards of nineteenth-century paintings he taped up onto his walls in preparation for the inauguration. This home is turned into an institution that is part storyboard (postcards of masterpieces tacked onto the wall), part typical pre-vernissage construction site (crates all over the place).

Throughout its first year, the hype of this irreverent space predictably wears off, and Broodthaers, the director of the Musée, is often the only one visiting the exhibition. He sends out a series of open letters, which some would say are a form of writing that "cannot anticipate a response, a cry into the void" about the state of things.[49] "Dear friends, / My crates are empty. We are on the brink of the abyss. The proof: When I'm not here, there's nobody."[50] Same letter, next paragraph: "Dear friends, my crates are superb; here a famous painter, there a well-known sculptor." At first, it maybe seems like a mere parody of the cliché exclamations from curators about failure and success and the arbitrary determinants of these states. But this isn't about the box being empty or full, not about lamenting that some galleries take 75 percent and others take less. Rather, it draws our attention to the fundamental role that the box, from the brown crate to the white cube, plays in creating these possibilities in the first place.[51] By exhibiting things we know and recognize, such as those canonical images of nineteenth-century western European art, the Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles suggests that it is reiterating what other museums do, those institutions we continue to visit after the opening night because their crates are superb and full of famous painters. The Musée survives its first year and continues on for another three, during which time it exhibits twelve different "sections" of modern art, including sections devoted to "literature," "cinema," and "folklore" as well as "finance," "publicity," and "documentary," expanding beyond Broodthaers's home and into multiple cities and galleries in Germany and the Netherlands.[52] Throughout these different sections, the box keeps resurfacing as a kind of guide and as a reminder/remainder. It serves to package, circulate, and radically reorganize copies of things and ideas we thought we knew in nonchronological, nonlinear ways. It's a way of leaving the past open for the taking, for inspection, and for reconfiguration(s), inviting a future response we can't anticipate at present about a past, or a part of the past, that has yet to be unboxed.[53]

After the crates have been delivered to the proxy museum on that opening night in 1968, Broodthaers has what he needs to inscribe the windows of his home, the views to the outside, with "MUSÉE" and the wall of his courtyard with "DÉPARTEMENT DES AIGLES."[54] Eagles here replace the categories of museum departments, such as departments of painting and sculpture, which are designed to establish artistic styles, movements, and a logic of periodization and create distinctions and

hierarchies between different media. His show of eagles a few years later expands on what a Department of Eagles could do that other departments could not. The show *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute* (The eagle from the Oligocene to the present, 1972) at the Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf exhibited hundreds of versions of eagles, from representations on the edges of paintings and sculptures to its circulation via flea market trinkets, taxidermy, coats of arms, belt buckles, liquor labels, and brooches. The plaques in front of them stated: "This is not a work of art" in English, French, and German, a play on Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917) and René Magritte's *La Trahison des Images* (The treachery of images, 1929), both of which are reproduced in the catalogue in a section on "method."[55] While the show explores how "the eagle" circulates throughout all sorts of periods, national and cultural traditions, artistic genres, and media, the purpose of the hundreds of different redos of the eagle is not to try to get closer to its supposed essence, but to experiment with the reiterative power of the series. "Caught within the net of cross-references evoked by the sequence of the arrangement, the bird loses the mythical aura of its traditional plumage. . . . A second effect . . . consists of the suspension of the hierarchy, in effect, among the objects themselves. Every exhibited eagle becomes as important as any other, at least during the moment of observation. The running caption, 'This is not a work of art,' is almost, therefore, superfluous."[56] The eagle is a figure, Broodthaers writes, that connotes "greatness, authority, power. Divine spirit. Spirit of conquest. Imperialism."[57] Features that can also be applied to other figures, something that even the Museum of Modern Art in New York can't completely ignore: "I think he [Broodthaers] might say that some of these qualities apply to museums as well."[58] By bringing this Museum of Modern Art in line with a Department of Eagles, by stenciling this particular label onto the courtyard through which all these boxes of art will pass by, this makeshift institution can put these shared qualities to the test and experiment with how they might persist and fluctuate under circumstances in which the series that orders and organizes the object is to be observed before or at least alongside the object itself. The stenciled label on the wall behind him becomes a temporary, makeshift marking, like a temporary, makeshift desk in *La Pluie*, that serves as a background element inviting additions and rearrangements, also of its own past, in the future.

From this perspective, it wouldn't make any sense to situate Jones's version of *La Pluie* as an attempt to retrieve the lost papers of a famous artist, 68er myths of origin, discarded crates from a mythical, ephemeral museum, or auratic eagles.[59] These are not the kind of strategies aimed at reactivating an operation of chance. Jones's video is marked by a subtle difference that aims to reopen and reconfigure the stuffed box of *La Pluie* from the past. What stands out from the get-go is the white wall behind her that is stamped not with eagles but with figures: "Department of Refiguration." While the rest of the video seems to proceed by piecing together the open rear courtyard of Broodthaers's *Musée*, how and to what end remains unclear. The setting and props look similar to what has been circulating

FIGURE 26. Amy Jones, *La Pluie (Projet pour un texte)* (2006). Screenshot from black-and-white video, 2:50, uploaded to YouTube. Courtesy of the artist, University College Falmouth, and Dartington College of Arts.

about this earlier version, a kind of writing in the rain that reminds us of what we've seen before. But the final shot, in which Jones acknowledges the static camera with a frontal view, deviates from that interpretation and leads instead to a new puzzle. Very much in keeping with the renaming of a museum branch, her *Department of Refiguration* seems to be asserting that in *La Pluie*, a film is constituted by its screening.

In the video, relationships between text and image are not only tried out on paper, as in the simultaneity of texts and images in the earlier version of *La Pluie* with which we're more familiar, but also appear as picture puzzles in the title of this fictive institution. Jones's head covers the crucial middle part of the word and produces a gap in the stencil on the wall: *RE . . . ATION*, with her figure, fully drenched in the postproduction process, replacing *FIGUR* (figure 26). In this rebus, Jones turns to the viewers for the first time with a probing gaze that transforms what might be assumed to be a remake of Broodthaers's work into a deflection of the artist's and the audience's expectations. Rather than fulfilling our expectation of finding a reconfigured Broodthaers here, Jones tests the process of presenting it on a massive video-sharing platform of a constantly growing media archive. The compression of files in moving images is a necessary condition for offering

something up on YouTube and "results in a qualitative reduction of movement, where only parts and sections of the image are updated at a time. . . . On the basis of key frames, P (for predictive) pictures are established in-between to predict the location of each block of pixels. . . . Movement only takes place through updates of certain sections of the image, while the rest of the frame is relayed as is."[60] Jones appears to adopt this logic of coding an image signal in her redo. At the same time, she works with the "key frames" of the '60s take on *La Pluie*, the well-known scenes from the archive, but rather than taking all of the information from the film, she imagines the supplementary images, inserting them arbitrarily here and there to get the work moving and the ink flowing again.

The substitution of the literary figure by the visual figure leads us, the viewers, to reflect on how Jones's "refiguration" takes on the role of indexical sign as something that is not a mere index or copy of an "original" (if there can ever be true forms of either). It becomes a sign for the absently present body of Broodthaers and, as a consequence of the self-reflexive video, also for different "figures" from other times (and not just the past), media, and contexts. As a redo, her digital work establishes a nuanced relationship with the analog film, which is "stored in an archive with different materiality and accessing and indexing principles."[61] The artist's gaze brings out the documentary quality that is missing in the photographic archive, in cultural memory, and in the digital file, thus simultaneously explaining the many deviations from the earlier film. Not regarding these as "mistakes" is crucial. The relationship to figures from the past does not automatically refer to a discourse of original and copy but is initially, in this case, merely generative. "The strict distinction between object and copy . . . dissolves on the threshold of motion. Because movement is never material but is *always* visual, to reproduce its appearance is to duplicate its reality."[62] For Jones, this reality is confronted in the process of finding, reconfiguring, and offering a redo of *La Pluie (projet pour un texte)*. She encourages YouTube viewers to follow this process and test it out in the process: not only as an obvious re*figur*ation but also as a potential re*vitaliz*ation, re*medi*ation, re*verber*ation, re*sign*ation, re*gener*ation, re*amy*ation, and re*iter*ation that opens up lateral fields of meaning. For this, as we can see in the image of her direct address to the viewers, she sticks her neck out.

Two

In Masahide Otani's description of his version of *La Pluie*, the Latinate prefix *re-* is combined with a thematization of repetition itself. Like Broodthaers's version, *Bureau Belge* takes place in the courtyard of an artist's studio, in Otani's case at the École des Beaux-Arts in Lyon, where he was studying.[63] While it was shot there in 2008, it traveled that same year to a different place of projection, a former branch of the Bank of Japan in Hiroshima whose architectural core survived the atom bomb. "One can tell just by looking at this building that it is a Western-style building that suggests a long history."[64] Historically concerned with preservation

in terms of its crucial role in the circulation, distribution, and safeguarding of valuables during wartime, the former Hiroshima branch is now, officially, a place of preservation. As one of the most well-preserved *hibaku* buildings, those buildings which remained after the bombing, it has been classified as an "Important Cultural Property."[65] When it becomes a site of reception for *Bureau Belge* in 2008, it's one of the last remnants of Western architecture in the city, no longer a functioning bank but an art and cultural center. On the relationship between this video and "l'événement de 1945 dans cette ville," the event of 1945 in this city, Otani explains: "[The video] re-presents its own bibliography, because it is a question of re-doing, re-telling, re-writing what has been done, said, written in the past, and through this repetition, to find an opening of meanings that each document virtually possesses."[66] He works with a variety of documents: from Japan, Belgium, and France, from 1945, 1969, and 2008, but also from 1959 and 1974, when the films *Hiroshima mon amour* (Hiroshima, My Love) and *Un homme qui dort* (The Man Who Sleeps), which Otani cites, were released, respectively.

Bureau Belge begins with a flashback of sorts, a moving image rendition of the photograph of the empty Belgian garden—the "office" of *La Pluie*, if you will—that is often included in exhibition catalogues on Broodthaers. We see the office/film set from *La Pluie* with a desk, ladder, and spotlights illuminated before us as the first shot. In this video from 2008, the scene is in color with sound in a digital recording. Then the spotlights dim, and the backdrop of urban noises fades out. A quotation from Georges Perec's novel and film *Un homme qui dort*, translated into Japanese, is pasted onto the black screen: "Mais n'es-tu pas le plus silencieux de tous?" (But aren't you the most silent of all?) Otani subsequently appears on set and reaches up to turn on the spotlight. Taking his place at the desk, he prepares the instruments before him, turning the page of what looks like a notebook, pressing down its crease, and removing the lid from the inkwell. He is writing from right to left, filling the page vertically toward the bottom. A close-up shows it to be a phrase from Alain Resnais's film: "Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima" (You didn't see anything in Hiroshima), evoked by the constant repetition in Japanese characters. Seconds later, the rain from overhead quickly makes the writing illegible. Otani keeps writing on the next page, which is soaked by puddles of bluish-purple and black ink in alternation. The close-up shots of the paper reveal that only a very few of the ink strokes escape effacement. The rain subsides but small pockets of water have collected in various locations on the pages of the notebook. With the paper holding too much water, the writing continues to be impeded. A stroke of the pen can leave a line with watery edges, not completely straight and contained but still visible as a line or, if it is applied to the space of the page containing a little pool of water, can leave the nib surrounded by a growing cloud of ink spilling in all sorts of directions. The lines that are left are faded, blurry, irregularly distributed.

In formal terms, *Bureau Belge* consists of three parts, which emphasize the division between the places of association, production, and distribution. The

FIGURE 27. Masahide Otani, *Bureau Belge* (2008). Still from DVD, 3:28, color, PAL. Courtesy of Art & Communication / Pascal Bouchaille, Galerie Cortex Athletico, Bordeaux, and the artist.

three scenes underline the dimensions of the sensory perception of different media. The beginning of the video shows a still of the motionless stage set, a reference to the widely disseminated photographs of the scene of writing in Belgium. The text from *Un homme qui dort* addresses the question of the soundtrack and imitates the intertitles of a silent film. When Otani finally engages in the act of writing, sound and color return, now in a moving image. He can assemble and rend these parts and their historical contexts and documents so easily because he reads the apocalyptic central metaphor in the background literally: the rain falling in Brussels, Lyons, and Hiroshima was "as dark as ink" (figure 27).[67]

Whereas Broodthaers was exploring classical storage media—paper, manuscript, painting, film, and so on—Otani is interested in the effects of intermediality that this black rain produces. Close miking conveys the intensity and rapid tempo of writing, since not every noise is clearly audible: the scratchy strokes of ink, the hard drops on the soaked surface, the sound of the pen hurriedly knocking against the inkwell. The work forces us to listen to the pen and the paper amid the sounds of the city, of writing, and of raining. The ink need only be watered down for us to suddenly become aware that images were hidden in the dark pigment from the outset. By using color, *Bureau Belge* appears to be alluding to the fact that

"in digital space, all colors carry the possibility of all other colors within them."[68] Whereas the lines of ink in *La Pluie* leave behind gray trails, the pools of ink here develop bright-blue edges and a dark-violet center. The characters become geometric forms—triangles and semicircles—while the shortened strokes of ink can no longer formulate a sentence but only a vertical pattern. The phrase repeated on the paper—"Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima"—takes on an unexpected form under these conditions. In the context of Resnais's film of 1959, the sentence advocates for language. Each time the female lead insists she saw something in Hiroshima, her lover disputes her perception and hence also her knowledge. Like the proclamation "This is not a work of art" in front of Broodthaers's eagles, viewers find themselves in a paradoxical situation that they did indeed see something in Hiroshima: the written repetition that rejects the visual experience. As the writing flows apart, "Hiroshima" momentarily loses its form.[69]

Differences inevitably occur in the repetition. The contours of the words, "language charged with great personal and historical meaning," get lost, while the rain "foreground[s] the palpable, tactile and material qualities of words, . . . a *thingness* of the isolated word [that] makes the qualities it stands for vivid, concrete and yet almost unfathomable."[70] In Otani's project for a text, we recognize a materiality "structured from the outset by repetition, temporality, and delay," and like the digital format of video, he compresses his context into small units, into a desk or a quotation.[71] But this isn't to say that he is merely "reciting" or "copying" these words and trying to connect the dots between a range of dates, places, contexts, and references. That would be a misunderstanding of the kind of writing that is taking place here. In his work on Japanese calligraphy in film, Markus Nornes makes a point of distinguishing between *shosha*, handwriting or transcription, literally "writing + copying/photographing/describing," and *shodo*. The former

> is what students are doing when they are learning to write. *Shosha* is about the beauty of uniformity and evenness . . . and arranging words in perfect order. *Shodo*, by contrast, is about the beauty of equilibrium . . . . The difference is interesting for us. Equilibrium involves the very human process of bringing various and dynamic factors into a *perceived* balance. Because weight and power are uneven, that balance is anything but forced and stolid. Rather, it is delicate and dynamic. In calligraphy, this dynamism comes from the entry of emotion and the human—from subjectivity, which is registered by the pace of inscription and the thickness or thinness of the line and the particular qualities of the ink. *This* is what transforms mere handwriting into calligraphy.[72]

By understanding what we are seeing here along the lines of calligraphic repetition, rather than a transcription or recitation of quotes, the dynamic forms it produces on the page situate this repetition as a means of bringing out a different form of knowledge, one that is controlled not by overdeterminations and

generalizations but rather by simplicity and specificity in surroundings produced by chance.

Rather than mapping out the trajectories of this video in terms of 1945 (Japan), 1969 (Belgium), and 2008 (France), as well as 1959 (*Hiroshima mon amour*) and 1974 (*Un homme qui dort*), as we did initially, it would be more fitting to think of this kind of processing work in terms of inscriptions upon a sketch map. This would be a mapping out of space and territory not based necessarily on a strict, objective scale, but done roughly and quickly, often relying on observation, memory, and gesture.

> To draw on a sketch map is merely to add the trace of one further gesture to the traces of previous ones. Such a map may be the conversational product of many hands, in which participants take turns to add lines as they describe their various journeys. The map grows line by line as the conversation proceeds, and there is no point at which it can ever be said to be truly complete. For in every intervention, . . . "the gesture becomes part of the map" . . . . To draw on a cartographic map, however, is quite another matter. The marine navigator may plot his course on a chart, using a ruler and pencil, but the ruled line forms no part of the chart and should be rubbed out once the voyage is completed.[73]

The cartographic map is contrasted here with the sketch map: Whereas the former conveys a fragmented, "destination-oriented transport," "the route-plan," "a pre-composed plot," an "occupation" of environment, and a way of knowing that is based on "joining up" the predetermined, stable dots between one place and the next, the latter unsettles these categories and epistemological claims.[74] It conveys movement and fluidity, is a type of wayfaring through which the paths on the sketch must be "*work*[*ed*]," "turning them into 'conduits of inscribed activity,'" a way of "inhabiting" the environment through traces of gestural movement, moments of tension, and acts of pausing and resting rather than points on a path of "successive destination."[75] From this perspective, the destination in a cartographic map is already known from the outset and can thus already be envisioned and imagined. In the sketch map, however, the journey happens in the doing, in the process of movement and habitation along the map. It is a line that is truly fluid and, in that sense, not yet stable. The same goes for the "documents," as Otani calls them, that are collected in the process of *Bureau Belge*, the collection of dates, places, novels, and films that might be misconstrued as being "cited" here. As part of this sketch map, they are neither source texts nor stable, finished products to be surveyed and passed over with some sense of mastery. The paper is never empty. *Bureau Belge* can take us along from Japan to France to Belgium for Broodthaers's *La Pluie* or from Belgium to France to Japan for Pierre Alechinsky's documentary *Calligraphie japonaise* (Japanese calligraphy, 1956) by refusing to let the ink settle in, by submitting these contexts to the operation of chance, and

by taking the lines out for a walk in the rain.[76] This gives significance to the idea that "[the video] re-presents its own bibliography," as Otani suggests, rather than a collection of prelocated places, figures, or films that might be said to have the last or final word.

Three

From the diverse facets of media that Broodthaers performatively layers onto celluloid in *La Pluie*, Haegue Yang constructs a series of material palimpsests. The eighteen framed panels in her installation include handwritten and printed text as well as black-and-white photographs running across the corner of the museum (figure 28). When seen from up close, the written pieces in the various panels look very different from one another. One immediately notices black and bright-blue ink, cursive writing, faded letters, small blots of ink, and large whirlpools of ink that, in this iteration of the installation, are arranged in a series of plates in an orderly way on two white walls. Without any previous contextual knowledge of the project it is engaged in taking up as a redo, it is probably unclear at first what the two small letters, "MB" or "M.B.," that conclude several of the texts might refer to. If one rounds the corner into the neighboring room, however, a potential object of reference is clearly visible: On one wall of the adjoining room, "MB," an initial for more than just one name, is still writing.[77]

The pieces of paper in the panels are documents of the creative process: They have soaked up the ink strokes, raindrops, and the flowing together of the two in a variety of forms and patterns. They leave behind only a delicate memory of the *scriptio inferior*, the now blurred writing of the lower layer of the palimpsest. Nevertheless, the visual similarity is not the only reason to understand the project in terms of a palimpsest. Next to every sheet of ink-stained paper in a panel lies a printed text that competes with its neighboring document for the readers, which immediately undermines its own authority as an accurate translation. The printed texts explore a range of topics, many of which are also relevant for our project: the gravitational pull of originality and origins; questions about authorial intent, futurity, and medial content; poems and rhymes that must politely ask to be considered "seriously" within the (male) avant-garde; the ventriloquization of subject positions; the repetitive exoticization of the non-Western artist in contemporary contexts; and uncertainty about the symbolic meaning of the past, general doubts about it, and precise instructions on how to make or remake it.[78] Some of the printed texts in the panels are accompanied by photographs of discarded paper floating in a fountain or left lying next to a gutter, making us wonder if these pages had been subsequently found, dried out, and framed in this very same panel.

While reading the narrative of the printed text, we find that it is usually in the first person and claims, if we choose to read the letters as initials, to have been written or typed by Broodthaers. His signature appears frequently in his works, often causing uncertainty about the authenticity and originality of the work rather

FIGURE 28. Haegue Yang, *Quasi MB—In the Middle of Its Story* (2006–7) with *La Pluie* (1969) in the foreground. Eighteen panels: handwriting on paper, photographs, text, framed. Each panel 14⅝ × 20½ in. (37 × 52 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Dohmen Collection, Aachen. Installation view of *Integrity of the Insider*, Walker Art Center (2009). Gene Pittman for Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN. Courtesy of the artist, Dohmen Collection, Aachen, and Walker Art Center.

than guaranteeing it. In his artist's book *Magie: Art et politique* (Magic: Art and politics, 1973), for example, Broodthaers demonstrates this principle by inserting photographs that illustrate the monogram on a magic slate (*ardoise magique*).[79] Anything written "can be wiped off just by pulling out the plate. Yet it remains invisibly engraved on a film inside the device."[80] The text is wiped or washed away but is nevertheless stored on celluloid. The story sounds familiar. This dialectic of enduring storage and infinite storage capacity, or an "ever-ready receptive surface and permanent traces of the notes that have been made upon it" as Freud calls it, is brought to a standstill in the photographs.[81] By appropriating the artist's signature in the divided panels—a palimpsest in a broader understanding—*Quasi MB* reflects in detail on the structures of meaning of the visible and legible initials that do not simply purport to remake or imitate Broodthaers, contributing to documenting a fantasy of a faded past.[82]

But this installation asks where this specific time is hiding, how it can be delimited, and how far back it reaches. A historical or intertextual reference such as "Broodthaers" becomes a fictive training ground for creative operations and their concatenation. The fantasy starts with chopping apart the medial operations. Shredding the film on paper, making it into notes of delays, detours, and deviations

not on a linear path from then to now, but within something more akin to how Bruno Latour performs a shredding of the history of photography usually told along the lines of histories of invention. The standardized, company-driven narrative is that Kodak created the amateur market for photography with the introduction of its first roll-film camera in 1887, forever changing its medial trajectory. Latour pulls the various dates and details involved in this media history out of the historical texts, chops them up, and places them next to each other, with slashes separating each "program," as he calls the details supporting Kodak's version, and each "anti-program," including the many historical actors involved (instead of just single-name "inventors" and product rollouts).[83] After using such a cut-up method to visualize this messy history, we can see how the "later proliferation of amateur photography and its combination in a single system of standardized films, cameras, and services—the later *Kodak system*—is the unplanned and unforeseen consequence of a decades-long battle for the professional market with its technical innovations. . . . The development of the Kodak camera, for instance, as the summer of 1887 shows, is a consequence of the economic and social development of the amateur market, and not vice versa."[84] What is actually just as important, particularly in terms of methods for dealing with fantasies of a faded past that don't privilege the finalized work over the messy media process that got it there, is the way in which this process of working on and through historical leftovers shows the concatenation as well as all the histories of impasses and detours along the way. To see it, we first have to work on "restoring confidence in these slips of paper [the unedited notes of the research], in other words: to present history in such a way that each step becomes recognizable again as an indeterministic occasion for further steps."[85] We first have to get comfortable with all the panels of little pieces of paper, slashes, and scribbles that break up a neat research narrative that is driven from here to there, and from then to now.

The pieces of paper in *Quasi MB* engage in this cut-up process to reflect a broad spectrum of states that can be achieved over the course of diverse writing exercises. Its artistic forms and strategies, which result in a sense of temporal depth, a complexity of material, and a precision of space, capture the moment of ambiguity that fluid ink as a medium of writing opens up. They include eighteen versions of texts in various stages of marring: discoloration, drops, smearing, streaking, and blotches as well as folding, crumpling, unevenness, and tears. Looking at them in detail, we can imagine texts materializing on various rainy days and that, while they were being written, they were sometimes exposed to the rain, sometimes removed from it, and then collected and assembled together in ways that document the passage of different times. We can identify the use of several colors of ink, strokes of varying degrees of thickness and boldness, and many different kinds of text: poems, reviews, questions, and statements. They convey the impression that the texts were written simultaneously in several geographic locations and different conceptual spaces. The photographs of the "discarded" (and then,

presumably, "found") inked texts in particular confirm this, such as in one of the plates that includes a black-and-white photograph of a tree trunk on the street and a crumpled-up piece of paper in its planter, insinuating that one of the inked texts, or something similar to it, has been found. In a printed text underneath this photograph, the place, year, and even the weather conditions initiate and serve to authenticate the note and insist that this "found" text is part of a series spread over different times and geographical locations: "fi. 18 / Sao Paulo, cloudy, 2006 / I kept finding similar wet paper with text signed by M. B. as in Paris, Seoul and Akiyoshidai / I found more or less the same text under the tree / in Pinheiros that explains that he or she was writing in the rain to unwrite his writing."[86]

Jones, Otani, Yang: "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," which is also the title of a lecture that J. L. Austin delivers to the American Society of Political and Legal Philosophy in 1958. The theme of the meeting is "responsibility." How can actions be distinguished in terms of responsibility? Spilling ink is the example Austin starts with. "A schoolteacher may ask a child who has spilled the ink in class: 'Did you do that intentionally?' or 'Did you do that deliberately?' or 'Did you do that on purpose (or purposely)?'"[87] According to Austin, there are three possible connotations for carrying out an action. *Intentionality* emphasizes a general plan that has been formulated in advance and can be compared to the final result afterward, but it reaches only as far as the light from a "miner's lamp."[88] Doing something *deliberately* refers more to the action and means it was not carried out impulsively. In contrast to this deliberate carrying out, one has "a purposeful air" when one does something purposefully, then "get[s] the preliminaries, the first stages, each stage *over with*, in order to proceed to the next and get the whole business achieved."[89] For all their differences, Austin notes that such nondeliberate cases, of spilling ink or otherwise, have one thing in common: "There is something 'precipitate' about the act in every case."[90]

"Something *precipitate*." According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, this means "of an action, judgement, etc.: characterized by excessive haste or lack of deliberation; hasty, rash, unconsidered"; or, if taken more literally, "moisture that falls to the earth after condensing from water vapour in the atmosphere; a particular form of this, as rain or snow"; and finally, "to fall headlong, to plunge; to descend steeply."[91] Every definition points to a kind of "fall," having made a decision too quickly and consequently ending up in a negative situation (say, falling into a hole, or, in German, *in der Tinte sitzen*, to be sitting in ink, meaning to be in trouble) or to rainfall or to a tragic fall. Austin, "like a good skier, delights in slides and slips," and so Shoshana Felman considers this feeling of falling to be inseparable from the further meaning of his text: "Falling is an *act*: *the* act, indeed, in so far as it is a failure—the very prototype of the *acte manqué*."[92] She pays special attention to this form of expression, and especially to the title itself: "Three Ways of Spilling Ink." The three ways refer to ways of spilling, but they should also be considered, she writes, "*three linguistic ways* of *speaking* of the . . . act, of describing

its intentionality; in this latter case, it is Austin himself who is the ink-spiller, as he studies the three expressions and *writes his article* on the . . . 'three ways.'"[93] In this view, Austin's title is a strategy for getting entangled in the problems of spilling ink, in the scene of writing. Ink is "spilled" in order to write (about) "responsibility" but intentionally without the usual "*care*" that is necessary "to ward off impingements, upsets, accidents."[94] Austin instead embraces the shifts of signifiers. He is equally interested in making seemingly self-evident words complicated and in the playful quality of concepts that self-reflexively call the act of writing into question. So, he spills some ink about spilled ink accidentally on purpose.[95]

Randomness, mistakes, *actes manqués*, accidents—these are the kind of concepts that motivate the three ways of redoing Broodthaers's ink. Jones reproduces the 1969 version of *La Pluie* without ever having seen it, and this redo and unboxing of the "key" moments and frames as well as hearsay of the cultural archive affords various opportunities for unexpected encounters and perspectives. Otani experiments with expressing the impossibility of knowing for certain what the destination will look like before setting out on his active inscription upon *La Pluie* as a kind of sketch map, leaving it to chance as to whether something unpredicted turns up in his redo. Yang's panels filled with the detours and fantasies along the way back to the leftover include printed text that sometimes matches up with the handwritten words next to it, but sometimes these ink-stained words appear out of order, or the paper is marked with different words altogether, or no words can be deciphered within it. Even ink that was visibly not spilled can still spill. Next to a torn-up, crumpled, but seemingly clean sheet of paper in one of her plates, the printed text reads: "Even if there was hardly any recognizable written trace found on this sheet / I saw an unavowable connection between this and MB."[96]

One thing that these three redos understand as fundamental to *La Pluie* is its approach to chance. This unfinished quality is also inherent in Austin's text. He concentrates on words that are used with excessive haste and too "precipitately" perhaps because they are used to describe actions that lead to uncertainty. His description of these words relies on the slipperiness of language, which, as Felman suggests in her reading, leads to random meanings and occurrences. He thus joins the rank of the ink spillers, just as Jones, Otani, Yang, and others do, indicating a willingness to get a little loose, let go a little, and grant leeway to their words and forms. They do not fight the rain, the flood of images, or the polysemic meanings that try to destabilize the text. Austin explicitly wagers on the multiplicity of meanings.[97] As the editor of his manuscript explains, "It can be said from these remarks, however, that *one* thing Austin most likely had in mind was this: we should not only compare and contrast these three expressions . . . with each other, but each should be compared and contrasted with other expressions as well."[98] Declaring the materiality of ink and the different ways it runs to be the true area of study for the act of writing, and thus keeping it open for further inscriptions,

immediately makes it clear that there are already three-plus possibilities to spill ink (again) intentionally.

QUASI-PROJECTS

Rather than position any of these three redoers as either the active producer or passive recipient of Broodthaers's imaginary found film, a basis of reference that might be understood as already constructed and finished, it makes more sense to think of these projects in terms of a performance on paper (or on a box, in a sketch, or cut up on the wall) of what Michel Serres discusses as the emergence of quasi-objects. In theorizing the collective, Serres raises the problem of conceptualizing the role of subjectivity, of the "I," within it. Before analyzing the shifting roles of subjects in the context of a sports team, a paragraph about a children's game raises a helpful example of what we seek out and look for when we participate in such team environments. The *furet* (ferret) in this French game he describes functions like the button in the game *button, button, who's got the button*. It's an object that marks the child who holds and carries it, forging a role they will take on and centering them anew within the collective as something else (they're "it"). This object not only distinguishes them from the others but also directs the attention and movement of everyone in the group, including, of course, the person who holds it. Thinking about what the button does here sets the readers up to better understand the role of the ball in the sports team that Serres subsequently describes, which is a team that is focused on ensuring the progression of the ball (perhaps a rugby team, but it could also be a basketball team).[99] What is central in this example is understanding that the role of the ball when it is played is no longer passive. It becomes an active entity within the constellation of the collective:

> This quasi-object is not an object, but it is one nevertheless, since it is not a subject, since it is in the world; it is also a quasi-subject, since it marks or designates . . . . This quasi-object that is a marker of the subject is an astonishing constructer of intersubjectivity. We know, through it, how and when we are subjects and when and how we are no longer subjects; "We": what does that mean? We are precisely the fluctuating moving back and forth of "I." . . . The "we" is made by the bursts and occultations of the "I." The "we" is made by passing the "I."[100]

Just as this different subject is co-constructed by holding and carrying the ball (a quasi-subject), this ball would be something entirely else were it not being held.[101] The subject does not disappear in this constellation of the team but shifts while it circulates, and thus the team, according to Serres, cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts, the sum of all the "I's" within it.[102] The ball, like the ink in these projects, is an entity that, in complex collective situations, leads not only to

something generative but also to relations and directions that cannot be known before it is set, and sets, into motion.[103]

We can return to our last redo, which in its title already takes up some of these ideas, to see how this concept might help us further understand these projects: *Quasi MB—In the Middle of Its Story* performs and offers up the emergence of this quasi-object with the diacritical mark. Its collection of papers is therefore not searching for a lost, forgotten, or inaccessible "Broodthaers," the great Western artist (it positions itself in the middle of *its* story, not his), but for a form of recalling that can activate more than just a reply or response to a referent that is presumed to be fixed. Its position as a medium, "in the middle," is more of a node than a point on a linear path, one from which it is able to explore a variety of arenas in which the redo experiment inevitably begins.[104] Rather than imagine some neutral ground, place, or subject position from which we can look onto and observe an object "out there," this positioning acknowledges that we always arrive from somewhere, coming into an experiment or experimental system with certain preformed ideas, since we are always already underway in some kind of field of knowledge, bringing specific experiences with us and, in this case, the quasi-object of spilled ink that remains unstable.[105] What is legible in the various plates or figures in *Quasi MB* doesn't cohere into a singular artistic voice on a progressive path toward some predetermined goal or truth. Instead, the printed texts experiment with various voices, tones, and subject positions: They can be read as admissions, doubts, critiques, and refusals, as well as assumptions, including the assumption of assorted figures, roles, and self-evidence. These voices and positions also overlap with and contradict each other. There is more than one plate marked with "fi. 20," for example, indicating that what it "says" can't be completely demarcated and separated from what's going on in its neighboring figures. Again, a dismissal of a neutral, fixed source text or figure. This collective of quasi-objects and quasi-subjects takes detours, interrupts itself, and seems to embrace moments of speculation. As soon as you take on the responsibility of spilling ink again, intentionally, you're *in* the game, not on neutral territory, and thus the clearly defined boundaries between the subject that acts (looks, writes, draws, spills) and the object that is acted upon (looked at, written, drawn, stained) are not that clear anymore, but quasi this and quasi that.

Thus, rather than play the game that is often asked of artists in certain contexts, the game of offering up a "meaningful," finalized product that is easy to market and can be quickly digested, it seems that what these redos are all after is a way of prolonging the possibility of chance and moments of speculation that might exist in this quasi-state. If we thought about them in the context of an experiment of spilling ink, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger might say that the interest lies in the "epistemic thing," which serves to actively produce a "continuous reemergence of unexpected events."[106] In case studies of historical experimental systems, both

scientific and artistic, Rheinberger identifies epistemic things as "material entities or processes . . . that constitute the objects of inquiry. As epistemic objects, they present themselves in a characteristic, irreducible vagueness. This vagueness is inevitable because, paradoxically, epistemic things embody what one does not yet know."[107] Epistemic things do not answer research questions but are question generators. They are there to generate the questions one does not yet know to ask at the outset of an experiment. In his epistemological reframing of the history of experimentation, Rheinberger argues that the epistemic thing has historically been that object within research settings that has driven innovation by radically shifting previously held beliefs about the objective of the work to be carried out. Despite the crucial role it has played in experimental history, this epistemic thing has been elided in scientific historiography in favor of narratives that privilege linear clarity, finalized results, and meaningful takeaways and discoveries that are the direct outcome of a supposedly isolated experiment based on a pure method of hypothesis-test-thesis—when actually, he notes, such "discoveries" are "the inescapably historical product of a purification procedure."[108] Drawing attention to the epistemic thing serves to highlight the crucial role that a broader experimental system for producing uncertainty, delay, and unexpected detours plays in innovation. To be in the middle of a story means rejecting the "purification procedure" that is placed upon projects after the fact in order to market them as finalized, meaningful, simple things.

The precise conditions for intermediality in all of these redos, from 1969 and the present to future iterations and back, are elicited by using experimental setups with surprising combinations and unpredictable trajectories. With their projects for a text relying on various media technologies, platforms, geographies, histories, concepts of time, and collections of media, Jones, Otani, Yang, et al. redo and rework the complex situation of *La Pluie* in ways that are as subtle as they are experimental. The program is an epistemological one. By intentionally spilling ink on the ink of *La Pluie* and leaving the design of keyframes and dots, quotations and connections, and picture panels as new-old media to the rain, they are working on something whose end result is willfully left unknown. "An experimental system that gradually acquires contours, creates resonance between different representations, and conveys manageable meanings to stabilized signals, must create at the same time a space for the emergence of things unheard of."[109] In these projects, ink exposed to rain delays the delivery of something final, functioning as an embodiment of what we do not yet know that can take us past predictable consequences and routes of circulation to unheard-of things. As a research goal, an epistemic thing provides the impetus to drag out the creation of form, to delay and prolong it, as in the medium and moment of the sketch, and to increase random encounters with preformed materials. It is in this function as a generator of chance that the epistemic thing plays a central role in the

experiment—"how research gets enacted at the frontiers between the known and the unknown"—and, in these diverse redos, allows knowledge to hover between abstraction and representation.[110]

It's a practice of knowledge production that might look familiar to us, as it's reflected, not coincidentally, in the Rorschach test, in which various states of ink acquire meaning. Hermann Rorschach, or "Klex" (from the German *Klecks*, or "blot"), as the inventor of this test was also known, inscribed very specific colors, symmetries, sizes, and densities into the test images he utilized and at the same time relied on the forms being able to trigger diverse associations in the test subjects.[111] Even apart from psychodiagnostic testing, ink has long served as an instrument for understanding constellations of texts and images whose material qualities can lead to unexpected discoveries: The graphic stroke of ink, "'because of its convenient rapidity, its expressive richness, its unpredictable and pleasing chance discoveries, produces admirably fertile invention.'"[112] By feeding *La Pluie* into the experimental setup, the redos are reflecting, precisely in the moments when they lose control of the production, their own role and our role in the construction of knowledge. The results are presented to us in such ways that encourage the forms and figures in the puddles of ink to begin to speak, and the weave of conceptual relationships and constellations to (re)emerge. Those who have deliberately spilled their ink here and at the same time also reinscribed it are pointing out that there is something in this experiment, this intentional, unpredictable, dirtied act of delaying the formation of ink on paper and leaving its forms unbound, that is clearly generative. To get the blots and markings of ink flowing and put them back into motion (also here) in order to observe their material states in that uncertain but very promising stage of the sketch, one has to play along in the media process of delay and the exercise of reading and writing, an aesthetic experience and project that always "constitutes a recreation of the work: 'To enjoy is to create.'"[113] In the next chapter on the logistics of packaging and the box as medium, we will think more about how this unbound state can be prolonged or maintained after the "work" has been delivered and has arrived at one's doorstep, precisely by considering it re-created, and maybe also enjoyed, every time one engages in the media process of unboxing it anew.

4

Unboxing Magazines

I opened up a box from the 1960s (figure 29). I heard one would find sculpture, performance, and film in there, as well as records, photos, and pieces of cardboard.

When I had difficulties trying to close the box, having to order and fit all of the different objects back into the box, I was reminded of something an archivist told me on another occasion: "Well, you have to work for these things."[1] To access this sort of magazine, that is certainly true. As a guide for its readers, *Aspen* includes a table of contents. In a magazine, the table of contents is a place where contributions are typically arranged according to text type and a particular mode and sequence of reading is fostered.[2] It offers us, the readers, some early cues as to how to navigate this text consisting of multiple authors and types of contributions. It promises a chance to see the structure of the entire work at a glance, but it is also a place where authorial and intertitular particularities surface. Tension can become obvious here between the diversity of contributions and "the work" as a whole. In the 1967 double issue (5+6) of *Aspen*, a boxed magazine published in New York that experiments with the media process of packaging, the table of contents becomes the first step into a different system of organizing, experiencing, and knowing. This system reorients the kinds of objects we might expect to find in the context of art museums, such as "work by well-known minimalist artists including Sol LeWitt, Mel Bochner, Tony Smith, and Robert Morris."[3] Instead of entirely dismissing the logic of the white cube in its message about institutional critique, *Aspen* focuses on what actually brought it here and puts it up front and center: the box, that icon of logistics. Before the cube comes the box. Which is suddenly here to stay in the spotlight.[4] While we usually expect modern containers to function according to the principles of optimization, efficiency, and faithful preservation,

FIGURE 29. *Aspen* 5+6 (Fall–Winter 1967). Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the Estate of Brian O'Doherty.

this box, as evident in the initial indications of its organizing principles, tempts readers with the possibility of order and seamless delivery, ultimately experimenting with what happens when the image of the whole comes undone. But to come to know this, we have to work for these things. We first have to unbox them.

In *Aspen* 5+6, we find the table of contents at the front of the box on a white piece of paper, folded twice to form an eight-inch square.[5] It announces the magazine title, issue number, guest editor-designer, guest art directors, and a dedication. In the digitized version of *Aspen* 5+6 on UbuWeb referenced in art blogs and library catalogues, this dedication has morphed over time: "for Stephen Mellarmé [*sic*]."[6] To the right of the one I was unboxing is a tab with vertical writing marked "contents."

Unfolding it, we find two formulas consisting of letters and numbers: "B = L∪F∪R∪B∪D" and "28 = 1 + 4 + 5 + 8 + 10" (figure 30). These are expedient ways to indicate the essential components of a box (literature and film and record and board and data) and the quantity of each of the 28 components (1 piece of literature, 4 films, 5 records, 8 boards, and 10 data), as if they were the elements of a set. The guest editor-designer for this issue, Brian O'Doherty, explains the ordering logic: "I wondered if I could converge the entire project in one word, a single equation, using set theory. So I went to a mathematician and he said 'It's the easiest thing in the world, you use B for book, F for film etc, and ∪ for and.' This ended up as L∪F∪R∪B∪D, and I said, that's my Rosebud."[7] This shorthand

FIGURE 30. Table of contents. *Aspen* 5+6 (Fall–Winter 1967). Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the Estate of Brian O'Doherty.

mathematical notational scheme, similar to a score, serves to abbreviate the temporally and materially complex container, reducing it to its supposed essentials and indicating the potential for reproduction, adjustment, and reinterpretation.[8] It suggests that "28" is just one of many possible sums of content, as other media can always be added to the mix, the characters belonging to the same medial category are essentially equal, and the particular combination is what is important here. In a multimedial, unbound magazine without explicit navigational instructions, the medial categories in the table of contents aim to visually reduce the complexity of the box. But if "media are perhaps most interesting when they reveal what defies materialization," then one is also compelled to consider just how well this system of medial classification is able to contain and keep separate the variety of materials, raising questions about its validity.[9]

The equations and classification tables seek to establish a pretense of order and the visualization of the "work" as a whole that the excess of unbound content in the box swiftly undoes. Designed to distribute a cross section of the late 1960s art world, its medial compilation was key in forcing a rethinking of how individual formats function within and alongside a broader multimedial context at a time that is often historicized as an era of "alternative" media.[10] New developments in film and video reduced the cost and technical barriers associated with moving-image production, allowing practitioners outside the established studio infrastructure to participate more easily. At the same time, the institutionalization of

earlier media technologies such as photography unsettled long-standing assumptions about authorship, originality, and creativity. Performance-based practices and strategies of dematerialization likewise questioned the status of the art object as a commodity and cast doubt on the authority claimed by museums and other cultural institutions. The circulation of artistic media through mass-entertainment formats, including the convergence of network television and modern art, brought renewed scrutiny to the processes through which cultural value is assigned. These developments exposed social hierarchies tied to race, gender, sexual orientation, and class that sustain distinctions between elite and popular culture, professional and amateur production, and intellectual art and mass entertainment.

Alternative magazines are often historicized within this context in terms of their objectives to democratize the reception of art by circumventing the institution in ways that were ideal and utopian, but unsustainable.[11] As the circulation of *Aspen* was short-lived—the magazine was published from 1965 to 1971 before folding under financial constraints—it might be tempting to read such projects as having ultimately "failed."[12] But what often goes missing in this description of how this particular magazine participated in these debates is its form of packaging, which we have to deal with before we're able to access it. The box as a medium is fundamental for understanding the specific kinds of institutional critique it puts forth, such as the argument that any criticism of the institution falls short if it doesn't interrogate the ordering logic and forms of knowledge acquisition that it perpetuates outside its own walls since, as Andrea Fraser writes, "the institution of art is not only 'institutionalized' in organizations like museums and objectified in art objects. It is also internalized and embodied in people. . . . Above all, it exists in the interests, aspirations, and criteria of value that orient our actions and define our sense of worth."[13] The box, more than merely circumventing the physical site of the institution, insists that packaging is a key barrier to getting into the institution, to accessing it, but is also maybe a potential point of departure for rethinking how we order things, how we place them in certain hierarchies, approach them, and what we expect of them, and that rethinking *this* could be a first step in a different direction.

Focusing on the different kinds of ordering logic and the reorientation of values and priorities the box as form demands entails an adjustment to our standard method of approach. Filled to the brim with stuff, all sorts of media, big names and unknown artists, a range of aesthetic styles, priorities, and arguments, the box is difficult to grasp, conceptually and literally. One strategy of approaching these complex containers has been the list.[14] To illustrate that *Aspen* "presented a peculiar challenge to its readers, requiring various types of concentration and hands-on interaction," Gwen Allen provides us with a list of its contents—the 8 mm film, flexi discs, texts, performances, sculptures, and poems that require reader participation.[15] It offers a first impression of this complexity, and we could expand upon this by asking about the consequences of the medial juxtapositions resulting from the packaging in which these objects are prepared and delivered.

How can we take the container as form seriously in order to understand how it might motivate the strategies, operations, and effects of this mixed-media compilation? We could ask a similar question about the online version of *Aspen*. When all ten issues of *Aspen* migrated to UbuWeb in 2002, its contents were organized according to media forms with hyperlinks offering an opportunity to closely read the texts, inspect other visual media, and listen to the sound pieces.[16] For instance, issue 5+6 included an 8 mm film by Hans Richter from 1921 that is experienced online as a wholly separate time-based sequence: After viewers click on it, a QuickTime window opens that fills a small part of the screen, extracting the moving image work from the surrounding context of other medial objects in which it was physically distributed to subscribers.[17] While its relocation to a digital platform has allowed it to reach a broader audience that might not have access to the libraries and archives in which most of these issues are now stored, there is a fundamental characteristic of the box that could go overlooked if we consider only its digitized version.

This online version of the magazine is, without a doubt, extremely valuable. It affords these rare objects a different life decades after they were circulated in physical form. It is free, provides helpful contextual and historical information, has been meticulously planned and executed in great detail, and can function, as UbuWeb founder Kenneth Goldsmith describes the impetus of the site, as a different way of getting in:

> There's a back door to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City that few know about. . . . While the front sparkles with glamour and sexy commodities, the back door favors that which is economically worthless but historically priceless. . . . At once playful—even prankish—and deadly serious, the back door is perverse, embracing contradiction and impurity. It's also wildly utopian, proposing to make the impossible possible. . . . If you do something wrong for long enough, it eventually becomes right—paradoxically transforming the back door into the new front door.[18]

To this, we could add one more way of getting into the logic of MoMA besides waiting outside the front door and looking for a back door. We could rethink the white cube in the form of a box. That key aspect of the project that is still missing. The materials held apart from one another in the digitized version seem so clean, pure, organized. There is no chaos, no unpacking surprises, no spilling out of contents. In the case of this digitized version of *Aspen*, the container these objects come in is not up for inspection at all. Its description is listed and there's an image of it, but no link to it.[19] What is missing is the experience we had when we first opened this box from the 1960s—specifically, the way in which the box as medial form allows for chance discoveries, chaos, and reordering possibilities each time it is unpacked anew. It's an experience that has affinities with historical precursors of the box that advanced forms of knowledge acquisition based in material encounters and embodied, comparative, and self-reflexive practices.

The literature on the *Wunderkammer*, the cabinet of curiosities in European contexts, is extensive, and for our purposes here, we're interested in what this new, semi-open physical form offered various epistemological traditions—namely, its proposal for how knowledge can and should be organized. Anke te Heesen recounts how, beginning in the late seventeenth century, the cabinet develops from a piece of domestic furniture into a crucial container that offers strategies for organizing and managing excess, storing and suggesting new relationships between diverse objects, and partitioning collections into subcategories and classifications.[20] These modifications to the use of the cabinet were the result of logistical excess on various fronts: Different forms of the *Waarencabinett*, a cabinet of wares, were developed in the attempt to efficiently manage the influx of new exotic products arriving in warehouses built to accommodate wholesale marketing and demographic changes; the *Kunst-* or *Wunderkammer*, the cabinet of art or curiosities, could entertain burgeoning fantasies of totality, offer eclectic mixes of artistic and alluring contents amid a growing interest in collecting, and become a dynamic object around which to form new social ties; and the *Wissensschrank*, a knowledge chest, was a form of storage with strategically placed partitions for collecting, sorting, and displaying scientific specimens and objects stolen from former colonies and accumulated abroad.[21] The box becomes above all an object to think with. "By providing a stage for the 'comparative gaze,' it permits classification, activates the senses, and allows haptic access. . . . Boxes or containers generally occur where things are drawn into a specific functional relationship to human beings and where human interest in an object has special significance. The box supports this significance and allows a special field of activity to arise between hand, thing, and box."[22] The juxtaposition of different objects takes on a new epistemological value. Different kinds of content require senses of smell and touch next to and alongside vision in order to be fully appreciated, and the physical movement of things and partitions within the cabinet offers a way of learning and organizing that is embodied, grounded in the experience of specific materials, and open to the possibilities of trial and error. What is important to note about the role of the box, why it seems to be this epistemological object of interest and fasciation at a certain moment in time across a variety of disciplinary contexts, is that it is not just a mere tool for the immediate delivery of goods and content. The way in which the order of things inside the box suggests relationships, priorities, and classification systems initiates an ordering logic that we can ultimately take with us and apply to things beyond the box.[23] What we learn in and from the box doesn't necessarily stay there with it.

Some museums have found inspiration in such epistemological possibilities of the box. The disciplinary functions of the museum, a focus of institutional critique in the 1960s and 1970s, are perhaps most immediately obvious in terms of its spatial layout: It navigates the visitor in specific directions along predefined paths of presentation, regulates detours, provides a select amount of background

information, and directs the visitor's gaze toward conclusive notions of artistic and cultural legitimation.[24] Given this, it's not a surprise that some museums have thought about taking on the structure of the box as a means of reflecting on their own role in actively presenting, organizing, and authorizing knowledge.[25] The Museum of Jurassic Technology (MJT) in Los Angeles almost goes without saying in this context. Its vitrines, with their spin on the speculative technologies of the modern *Wunderkammer*, can contain everything from the original smell of Proust's madeleine (which turns out to be the stuffy air of the vitrine that preserves it) to paintings of Soviet space dogs and collections in trailer parks.[26] They force visitors, from their first steps into the lobby, to question if these knowledge claims are true or made up, which objects in the collection are authentic or artificial, and the process by which they have come to make these determinations. In 1994, MJT opened a German branch, a *Tochter-Museum*, within the Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum in Hagen, a collaboration that director Michael Fehr describes in the catalogue for the exhibition on the idea of the "open box."[27] Reflecting on the development of this exhibition, he notes that he was wary of the tendency to see museums as mere "*providers of content*."[28] Instead, the catalogue wonders what would happen if museums thought in a more related way between their forms of presentation and the fictions they might tell. Might it be possible to conceive of museums "as spaces that present the fictions we need for orientation in the world as fictions, as individual spaces that allow the viewer to understand themselves as a historical subject and to emancipate themselves in relation to history, as second-order systems in which viewers become observers and can observe the emergence as well as the decay of systems, finally as spaces whose inner organization corresponds to what they organize, and which thus enable and demand not only a mere recognizing or seeing, but a structural kind of seeing"?[29] In our case, it's not first and foremost the inner organization we have to pay attention to in order to foster this kind of self-observant mode of seeing and knowing, but rather the paratextual packaging of the box, which seems to be so easily discarded and disregarded but which fundamentally organizes the experience of it.[30] These forms and processes of packaging, moreover, are not unrelated to such broader epistemological concerns. Unboxing *Aspen*, in order to look at it more closely, will take us into a context that is—like the box itself—not purely concerned with "art."

If you're already familiar with what unboxing videos are, the description of them as "sitting somewhere between a frog dissection and a striptease" will probably resonate.[31] If you're not familiar with them yet: Unboxing videos are "amateur" recordings uploaded to YouTube in which some prepacked product —really, anything—is unboxed from start to finish, with the performance of the unboxing remaining in the foreground of the video. This usually includes first-person narration along the way, accompanied by a soundtrack of the tactile encounter with cardboard, tape, and plastic and a view of the unboxer's hands as they experience all the struggles and surprises and express their

disappointment, frustration, excitement, and joy not only about the thing they ultimately unpack but about the process itself as well. Unboxing videos gained traction around 2014, driven by an increased fascination with the latest models of high-tech devices, such as various iPhone releases, which viewers were likely eager to have a better look at before buying.[32] These videos emphasized the haptic experience of the box itself that is now a convention of the genre. They reached another peak of popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a whole genre of videos devoted to hospital workers unboxing their first batch of vaccines, for example. While the immediate counter-consumerist impulse is frequently cited in responses to the viral trend of unboxing, they can also tell us something else. "'Unboxing videos, ultimately, are aspirational—they represent what people wish they had' . . . . Unboxing, at its most elemental, has a hopeful quality to it. It's exciting, new and full of possibility."[33]

When IntellivisionDude receives his *70th Anniversary Wizard of Oz Ultimate Collector's Edition* in the mail, he handles it as a precious object even before he knows what's in it. He redirects the viewer's attention to that object which is often neglected in favor of what it makes accessible, legible, and perceptible.[34] The box is typically considered an object deserving of attention, if at all, only after the elements that it structures and organizes have disappeared, once it has been emptied out. This misses the opportunity, however, to consider it in all its complexity and to earnestly reflect on the process of "digging through the stuff with our own hands," since "to be concerned with the appearance and packaging of . . . [an object], one must [first] think of appearance and packaging as things worthy of concern."[35] Insisting on the objecthood of both the container and the contained elements is fundamental for the genre of unboxing videos.[36] Taking a box cutter to the outside of the white packaging, IntellivisionDude asks out loud, "Why am I carefully cutting this?"[37] (figure 31).

Inside the cardboard box is another box, a shiny green one. Inside this, a book. He narrates the first impressions and discoveries in first person as he unpacks: "Nice, *very nice*." Under the book is a bunch of unbound A4 pages. "What is this a reproduction of?" As he flips through them, we find out that they are copies of the projection of costs for producing *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), including costumes, meals, and lodging. The next item he finds is "The Complete Campaign Book." "Not sure what this book is . . . a lot of papers that come with it . . ." It's a collection of advertising material for the original release. "Very cool, I like this. 'Cause it's all . . . like . . . pictures from a long time ago. It's all retro. Love it." Inside a silver tin box is a *Wizard of Oz* watch "that I'll probably never wear." He pulls out the bonus digital copy with download codes, advertisements, and finally the DVD collection itself. In his unboxing of the collector's edition of *The Wizard of Oz*, it's not only about Dorothy, or Victor Fleming, or Technicolor. It's also about the soft black fabric lining the box, the ribbons keeping the objects ordered and holding them together, the watch that will probably break on him, the fragile bottom of

FIGURE 31. IntellivisionDude, "The Wizard of Oz Ultimate Collector's Edition 70th Anniversary DVD Unboxing" (December 27, 2014). Screenshot from video uploaded to YouTube, 12:07 min.

the container, the sixteen hours of "'wonderful wizardry about the movie classic,'" including documentaries, a TV movie special, and the 2007 Hollywood Walk of Fame salute to the munchkins.[38] At the end of the unboxing extravaganza, while looking upon this mass of papers, books, images, discs, containers, and objects now spread out in front of him, IntellivisionDude signs off: "I have a feeling that we're just not in Kansas anymore."

And we're not. What unboxing videos can do differently is insist on a medium, such as a film, as one medial object among many others in the set by putting the medial features and possibilities of the container on display. The film is no longer intrinsically defined by what it alone represents on celluloid but enters into a network of relationships between the representational matter of other media and their actual materialities. Such approaches insist on a contemporary understanding of one medium, such as a film, through its expansion to other contexts outside of itself, so outside of the cinema here to other media, therein challenging established concepts of medium specificity, "the work," and authorship. They trouble the exclusive consideration of the moving images contained in any singular film, positioning film not as a mere practical mediator but as a material object itself. It's a helpful method of approach when considering what the *Aspen* box was capable of. Although it might be exciting to find out that it contains an 8 mm film by a now canonical filmmaker, what it was interested in was not any singular artwork, film, or essay but the various assemblages of media, forcing a juxtaposition between still images, moving images, sculpture, music, and texts that is based on chance combinations.[39] Unboxing *Aspen* means collapsing any pretense of order. What happens to the films in *Aspen* when they are unpacked or, taking this a step further, what would an unboxing video of *Aspen* actually look like? Where would we start, what would we show as important through commentary and close-up perspectives, and how long would this video last? With what order, speed, care, and attention would we select objects from the box, and how would we approach its internal logic of disorder and excess?

One of the possibilities built into the modern container, Alexander Klose writes, is this logic of disorder that, in the case of shipping, became an asset of the medium over time. He delineates the differences between the modern moving box, which was becoming the standard type of shipping container for

personal belongings toward the end of the nineteenth century, and the chest, the previous moving container of choice, highlighting this lack of predetermined order built into the modern container: "Boxes that were uniquely individual became common containers. Everything had its place in the box, in the beginning and forever, even while transitory, but precisely this kind of fixed order was lost with the implementation of the modern moving cartons."[40] In our cases, it's evident that the objects are not meant to remain in some fixed, predetermined, linear order because of the logic of the box they arrive in, but also sometimes because of the nature of their content. The thirty-two-page booklet in *Aspen* with double- and triple-column texts by Roland Barthes, George Kubler, and Susan Sontag is likely not read linearly in one sitting. Maybe it's interrupted by Hans Richter's black-and-white screens on 8 mm film, or folded in with William Burroughs's signature drawl on a recorded reading of *Nova Express*, or put aside to build a miniature version of Tony Smith's *The Maze* out of an assortment of square, hexagonal, and rectangular cardboard pieces, almost like a series of boxes, all packaged in the same box.[41]

A different kind of ordering logic takes over in the process of unboxing it. *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault writes, came about after he broke out in "laughter that shattered" while reading in Jorge Luis Borges's imaginary Chinese encyclopedia that "'animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sires, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush,'" etc.[42] The thought of this brings about such explosive laughter because Borges's sorting out of things seems so absurd and so utterly fantastical. It might, in effect, not be precise enough to describe this classification system as "imaginary," since it posits, in such a matter-of-fact way, its system as truth—a truth that is, in its painstaking detail, radically other, therein giving rise to a sense of marvel. The marvelous asks that these new laws, according to which the world we now explore has been drastically reconfigured, at least be considered, and maybe entertained.[43] For Foucault, pondering this possibility means acknowledging that a system governed by such laws would completely lack the "operating table" of Western thought.[44] He describes it as that "table, a *tabula*, that enables thought to operate upon the entities of our world, to put them in order, to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designate their similarities and their differences."[45] While his laughter about this curious classification system persisted, it wasn't alone. It was accompanied, he writes, by "a certain uneasiness that I found hard to shake off," an uneasiness not about the lack of his trusted tables per se, but about a more troubling disorder, one in which "things are 'laid,' 'placed,' 'arranged' in sites so very different from one another that it . . . [becomes] impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a *common locus* beneath them all."[46]

The shattering laughter and coinciding anxiety about the possibility for a radically different logic for ordering what might seem like standard, known entities is a reaction that *Aspen* plays with. Instead of consisting of pages bound to a codex, this magazine takes its etymology seriously, functioning as storehouses containing an array of objects, sometimes necessary provisions, and—why not?—explosive elements, but ultimately defined by their storage capabilities rather than their contents alone.[47] Although it's a site in which a seemingly non-order prevails, the common ground needed to generate relational references that Foucault fears is lost in almost unimaginable classification systems is not altogether absent here. One can't get a sense of it by cataloging objects, which neglects their proximity and juxtaposition to other objects, nor by closely looking at one object in isolation from all others. But by unpacking a couple of objects in this magazine, one can start to become more aware of its medial implications—how these pieces are affected by their medial surroundings and why this matters—and one can also start to unpack the different organizational logic underlying its contents that are prefaced by their packaging. Perhaps, in thinking about how this box takes on and rearranges the possibilities and problems of the white cube and the modern container, we can find a perspective on media logistical concerns that also takes aesthetics into account.

For the book launch of *Assembly Codes: The Logistics of Media* in September 2021, John Durham Peters, who wrote the foreword to the volume, offers two brief thoughts on new directions in media studies research that this book might suggest. The first concerns terminology, "the wild array of terms that are being sought [at this moment] for this stuff in the middle, all the materiality of ensembles and infrastructures and logistics."[48] Then he notes another potential:

> This book is a direct response to the idea, which has been floated around in philosophy for a long time and is a kind of cultural bias, and it's probably an ultimately misogynistic bias, that things having to do with matter—[Lat.] *mater*—are things which are not poetic, not beautiful, not wonderful. . . . I really do see this volume as a contribution to the ongoing effort to show that questions of logistics are not only important and essential and vital, politically and environmentally and economically and ethically and in terms of justice, but they're also beautiful.[49]

The questions about the underestimated role and operational dynamics of packaging thematized by *Aspen* intervene in and enrich ongoing discussions of alternative distribution practices in "avant-garde" art and film, preservation politics in the so-called digital age, and the current institutionalization of objects that were initially interested in circumventing the institution. And perhaps, like those who have engaged online with the excitement of digging through the box with their own hands for some time now, there are aspects of these takes

on the media process of unboxing that we might be able to find some beauty in as well.

ASPEN UNBOXING PARTY

Of the 5+6 double issue of *Aspen* mailed out to subscribers in the fall of 1967, *Time* magazine wrote that, clearly, this was a publication "for people who don't like to read much."[50] But *Time* didn't have to say this. *Aspen* advertised this all on its own: "It comes in a box stuffed full of all sorts and sizes of things—from records to posters to film—whatever medium is most appropriate to the subject matter. . . . Mail the coupon today—then start planning your first ASPEN Box Party" (figure 32).[51] The Tupperware box parties that came before it in the 1950s set the tone for what these kinds of unpacking festivities should look like: black-and-white images of happy, curious people, all suspiciously similar looking, gathered around in "'the world's largest auditorium—the American living room'" to demonstrate and inspect a range of previously unfamiliar items of various shapes and sizes (figure 33).[52] This auditorium was no longer reserved for domestic events alone, instead allowing for a different kind of sociality to emerge and inviting neighbors and friends into this otherwise intimate, sacred family space to witness and take part in the inherent chaos of the parties.[53] The *Aspen* auditorium advertises itself as a social setting in which novelty objects are to be spread out, passed around, closely inspected, and enjoyed in all their unique materiality, with all these different modes of object engagement occurring, as in the ad below, simultaneously. As the Tupperware in-store demonstrations and retail campaigns dared their potential customers: "'Yank it, bang it, jump on it.'"[54] Or as the title of the *Time* review suggested for *Aspen*: "Hear It, Feel It, Hang It."[55]

Aspen parties don't just mock Tupperware parties. There is something sincere behind this reference. The scholarly discourse typically posits the *Aspen* boxes as portable art galleries, which is based in part on the exterior appearance of one of its most well-known issues, the 5+6 box, a white square suggesting "the proverbial white cube of the gallery space," and also based on a later series of essays about the "white cube" by the guest editor-designer for this issue.[56] It would be shortsighted, however, to exclusively discuss *Aspen* as an attempt to distribute a "miniature museum."[57] This would elide the self-understanding of the magazine, which encouraged a playful engagement with the objects that arrived in its so-called white cube. On the left-hand side of the *Aspen* advertisement below, the woman on the sofa holds open pages of text, reading and smiling as the man seated next to her glances over her shoulder. There are several records, not all in covers, spread out over her lap. He holds a film reel in one hand and might be holding a record in the other. On the floor, the same couple has laid out pieces and squares of black cardboard. He seems to be holding a cut-off part of the material or maybe a right-angle ruler used to measure the model pieces, while she is showing him a

The Madisons Have Just Received Their First Issue Of Aspen, The Multi-Media Magazine

When ASPEN arrives, you don't just read it—you hear it, hang it, feel it, fly it, project it, even sniff it. ASPEN is the multi-media magazine. It comes in a box stuffed full of all sorts and sizes of things—from records to posters to film—whatever medium is most appropriate to the subject matter.

ASPEN is about excellence in any field. It brings you new ideas in new formats. Each issue is built around a different theme by a different editorial-design team (the best that we can find). So the content and format change radically each time. ASPEN readers-listeners-viewers-participants never know what will pop out of a new issue.

Our last issue, a double one edited and designed by Brian O'Doherty, is "a museum of the moment" presenting the most memorable names of our generation in 4 films, 5 records, 1 sculpture and 13 articles.

Our next issue on Far Eastern Thought will be brimful with five rolled scrolls, miniature screens, Zen parable cards, even a dragon kite. All scented with incense. It's the issue you'll hang all over the house.

Other issues-in-the-works: an English Christmas Box edited and designed in London by Britain's top artists and writers . . . a Buckminster Fuller issue with each article folding into a geodesic dome or other geometric construction . . . a Wilderness issue complete with Gourmet Survival Kit . . . a Cybernetic Art issue documenting the merger of art and science . . . and Much More.

Would you like to see what ASPEN is like? We have a tempting subscription rate to help you find out. ASPEN is published four times a year at $4 per issue. But try ASPEN on our money-saving subscription offer and pay just $10.95 for one year.

You may pay later if you prefer. But if you send payment with your order, saving us billing costs, we'll reward you with a free gift—a small surprise that will be a delightful preview of ASPEN itself. You may cancel at any time and pay only for the issues mailed. Mail the coupon today—then start planning your first ASPEN Box Party.

ASPEN MAGAZINE, Box 205 Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014 ER-108

☐ ASPEN sounds great. Send me one year (4 issues) for $10.95 — a $5.05 saving over the single copy price of $16.

☐ I want to take advantage of your subscription rate for two years. Send me 8 issues for $19.95.

☐ For $16 send me a one-year subscription, plus the O'Doherty issue containing 4 films (Richter, Moholy-Nagy, Morris/Vanderbeek, Rauschenberg); 5 records (Robbe-Grillet, Burroughs, Beckett, Cunningham, Gabo, Cage, Feldman), 1 sculpture (Tony Smith), and 13 articles (Sontag, Barthes, Kubler, Butor, Graham, LeWitt, Bochner, MacAgy, O'Doherty).

☐ I'm enclosing payment. Send me a free surprise.

☐ Please bill me. I will pay within 30 days.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Please include payment with orders outside continental U.S.A. Canadian and foreign rates: $12.95 for one year; $23.95 for two years.

☐ This is a new subscription

☐ Renewal

FIGURE 32. Advertisement for *Aspen* 5+6 in *The Evergreen Review*, no. 58 (September 1968). Courtesy of *The Evergreen Review*.

FIGURE 33. *Brownie Wise Tosses a Bowl Filled with Water at a Tupperware Party in the '50s*. Photograph by Apic/Bridgeman/Hulton Archive via Getty Images.

three-dimensional cardboard sculpture, presumably one of the finished products. And on the coffee table in the center of the ad is another version of this couple. He is on his knees setting up the film projector. She is behind him, hands on his shoulders, smiling. The *Aspen* box, the "white cube," is lying open on the table, its lid toppled over on its side. The box is surrounded by several iterations of the same two people fascinated by the objects it once held, part of it even covered up by a man in the foreground who is playing with a flip-book. "Highbrow" and "lowbrow" objects are not ordered hierarchically, but are equally important, codependent entities in a mixed media assemblage with no clear linear direction, no starting or end points. *Aspen* 5+6 distributes "high" theory by the likes of Susan Sontag, but it also insists that such texts be read next to and, as playfully suggested in this ad, maybe even at the same time as a toy maze that must be cut apart, glued together, recolored, or made anew with completely different materials.[58]

As founder Phyllis Johnson announces in the first issue of the magazine in 1965: "The articles [in *Aspen*] will be as surprising as the format, ranging from beautiful picture stories on nature and sports to the more esoteric subjects of art, humanistic studies, design, underground movies, music (always with a record), poetry, dance, architecture, gourmet dining. In other words, all the civilized pleasures of modern living, based on the Greek idea of the 'whole man' as exemplified by what goes on in Aspen, Colorado, one of the few places in America where you can lead a well-rounded, eclectic life of visual, physical and mental splendor."[59] *Aspen* was not just an art magazine. It was art combined with architecture, music mixed with food, poetry placed next to skiing. Johnson was inspired by the city's unique ability to combine and fuse these elements of life. It wasn't unusual that, during this time, inspiration for expanded forms of engagement with art and culture were sought not within the site of the museum, but outside of it. In the wake of modernist minimalist sculpture, having absorbed its pedestal and symbolically severed ties to its physical site, the concept of institutional critique assumed a different focus. By emphasizing the role of space in aesthetic contemplation, minimalism ushered in concerns about the materiality of one's viewing environment, a new regard for natural landscape and the potential that could be found in cultivating an "impure" or ordinary, everyday space for art. Artists in the late 1960s and 1970s "variously conceived the site not only in physical and spatial terms but also as a *cultural* framework defined by the intuitions of art."[60] The interest in what goes on in Aspen corresponds to such an engagement with site-specificity, "the pursuit of a more intense engagement with the outside world and everyday life—a critique of culture that is inclusive of nonart spaces, nonart institutions, and nonart issues (blurring the division between art and nonart, in fact)."[61] The budding artistic community in Aspen in the 1960s was shaped by the forms of commerce, politics, nature, and leisure fostered by neighboring institutions, including the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, the Aspen Music Festival and School, and the International Design Conference in Aspen, all of which industrialist

FIGURE 34. A. M. Cassandre, advertisement for CCA (ca. 1937). Copyright Estate of A. M. Cassandre / © 2025—Approval A. M. Cassandre / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Walter Paepcke had a hand in founding.[62] "These were the Aspen muses: music, photography, design."[63]

Paepcke financially supported these developments, and his business connections helped bring Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy from Chicago to Aspen, later adding to the mix artist and designer Herbert Bayer, who, "finding Aspen's mountain climate reminiscent of his Austrian homeland," eventually moved there.[64] Bayer played an important role in the redesign of the city as well as in Paepcke's profitable company, the Container Corporation of America (CCA), which was formed in 1926. Bayer organized, for example, the *Modern Art in Advertising* exhibition in 1945 at the Art Institute of Chicago, which was exclusively devoted to the container company's distinctive artistic advertising strategy since the mid-1930s. "Although not the first exhibition of modern advertising art . . . , no other single company could display a collection of modern advertising art like this. . . . The exhibition of eighty-nine pictures by forty-four artists from [Adolphe Mouron] Cassandre and [Jean] Carlu to Ben Shawn, Richard Lindner, and Willem de Kooning led visitors through a dramatic maze of mostly abstract images and subtle propaganda."[65] These ads weren't selling products; they were selling a corporate image. And the image they sold was of boxes, or, more broadly speaking, containers (figure 34).

The idea was "to use art metaphorically to 'package' the company."[66] CCA advertisements emphasized the essential qualities of the container, such as its potential to package an array of objects and its ability to distribute these valuable items to places where they would otherwise be inaccessible.[67] They also visually bind the

concept of the package with a standard figure, the three-dimensional square, functioning as a carrier of a potentially unlimited variety of other figures and, in doing so in this serialized fashion, proceed to make the package an abstract object.[68] Although CCA produced a range of container types, their logo, a minimalist, isometric open box, abstracted the image of the container. The container, as a medium, is visualized here as epistemologically shaping its content, making it knowable in certain ways. In these advertisements, the package is indeed an object that is visible—we can see its outlines and its basic shape—but it is also something that is meant to recede from vision, fading into the background and allowing its contents to take center stage. The advertisements play out, therefore, a basic media effect: "Media make things readable, audible, visible, perceptible, but in doing so they also have a tendency to erase themselves and their constitutive sensory function, making themselves imperceptible and 'anesthetic.'"[69]

In this figure, the abstracted logo, the box as storage medium, is born from the eye, subject to its will and imagination as it gazes into the universe.[70] The text in the advertisement reads: "Tomorrow's containers envisioned today," positioning the box as a space of potentiality and the not-yet-known. "When Noel Coward, whom Paepcke had met casually in the twenties, jocularly inquired of him in the year CCA's corporate image took form, 'What is a container and what does it contain?' Paepcke might have replied, 'It is a box designed to be seen. It might contain nothing at all.'"[71] Other advertisements thematized the act of storage, eliminating the outside appearance of the box in favor of highlighting its contents or the process of packing itself.[72] Many of these artists envisioned the uncertain threshold between the box and its content to be a source of epistemic value.

The wide range of artists working for CCA were thinking boxes, storage, and knowledge, and how to communicate these relationships on the page. *Aspen* was thinking about these same relationships but making the opposite move. It was not interested in ways of visualizing volume and space on the page, but in ways of manifesting what is routinely encountered on the (magazine) page in a three-dimensional, unbound space. It took some of the propositions of CCA artists seriously, such as insisting that the box can function as experimental site. Once artistic objects enter the space of the box, they become laboratory items and could come out, therefore, in different states and unexpected forms, leading to exciting and even fabulous research results, as promoted in one of *Aspen*'s ads: "It's definitely *fab*—an exploration of the Pop/underground worlds done in a three-dimensional manner not possible until *Aspen*'s unique box format came along. Until now, every magazine was a bunch of pages stapled together. . . . But why? asked our editors. *Why* couldn't a magazine come in a box? . . . *Aspen Magazine* is the answer. Our editors, no longer limited by the restrictions of a bound magazine, could let their imaginations soar. And they did. They began thinking in three dimensions. And there was no end to the exciting ideas."[73] These representations of the box uphold its significance as the most basic form of a three-dimensional

shape, which, as a result, enacts imaginative thinking about the different items it could contain, transport, and release into disparate contexts, from a watch and a washing machine, as advertised in a CCA ad by A. M. Cassandre, to sculptures and articles in an ad for the 5+6 issue of *Aspen*.[74]

While the International Design Conference is often cited as the main inspiration for Johnson's founding of *Aspen*, this adjacent history of CCA gestures toward a central line of inquiry for the magazine, evident in its self-advertisement, in Johnson's opening statement about the purpose of the publication, and in *Aspen*'s explicit intermediality as well as its insistence on it. Was *Aspen* about design? Yes. But it was also about what a package could be and its crucial role in mediating accessibility. In addition to rebranding its image, the ads for CCA rejected the idea that the carrier is a secondary concern, some everyday object of marginal importance. From this perspective, one might also be reminded of Joseph Cornell's serialized boxes, which insist on a mode of contemplation that lingers on the threshold between outside (box) and inside (its contents). In many contexts, the box signals the violence of the (modernist) grid, referencing histories of imprisonment and entrapment.[75] For Cornell, the logistics of the box offers a potential for visualizing an internal organization of disparate categories of everyday things. "He [Cornell] seeks empathy with experiences and things that risk becoming increasingly devalued, and cultivates a fascination that places disparate things and contexts on the same plane. Cornell seeks hidden affinities rather than tension and conflict. . . . Cornell's approach . . . redeems the world of objects by investing the everyday with a uniqueness that is not at odds with the serial, reproducible character of urban mass culture, and suggests that an alienating reality allows for new ways of seeing and appropriating the world of things."[76] The threshold of the box becomes a malleable boundary that can make visible the process by which the value of objects is derived not from their supposedly intrinsic qualities but from the specific ways in which they are combined, defamiliarized, and serialized. Or, to say it with rubbish theory: There is a region of flexibility between durable objects (which gain value) and transient objects (which lose value) that the threshold of the box might afford.[77]

The *Aspen* box made the construction of value systems a topic of conversation and also itself became a site for the projection of such systems. The *Aspen* box that arrived at the University of Minnesota in 1968, for instance, was first circulated as a magazine, not preserved as a rare art object, an example of how "libraries also maintain a kind of 'reduction of information' with regard to the books entrusted to them."[78] One scholar recounted in an article that looking at this issue of *Aspen* at the University of Minnesota could be a "heartbreaking experience," not only because of its used appearance but also because the first object in it was stolen, the one that is normally filed in the front of the box behind the table of contents: Roland Barthes's text "The Death of the Author."[79] If it's not missing, the eight-inch-square, flimsy, stapled booklet opens with thoughts on Honoré de Balzac,

printed in small black font on shiny off-white paper. This piece of "literature," as the table of contents categorizes it, seems less like a book or a volume than an artwork meant to be looked at, not just read. The text is laid out on the page in block form, and there is no guide for its readers as to what it could be about, except perhaps some kind of review of Balzac. What does this have to do with the magazine-box in our hands?

Although not mentioned in the publication at the time, the text was actually written specifically for this site after the guest editor-designer of this issue seemed to encourage Barthes, in his invitation, to contribute to it with a multimedial work and received the following reply: "Your project is of much interest to me, but I for one hold a *radical* belief in writing, and cannot imagine doing anything but writing."[80] This isn't only, or even necessarily, an expression of a preference for the written over the visual or multimedial text, but a commitment to a kind of expansion of writing, a radicality that Barthes views as inherent to the writing process. "Writing," the first page of this booklet describes, is "this special voice, consisting of several indiscernible voices. . . . We know that a text does not consist of a line of words, releasing a single 'theological' meaning . . . , but is a space of many dimensions, in which are wedded and contested various kinds of writing."[81] Glancing behind the page and into the open *Aspen* box, we might start to contemplate these several indiscernible voices, dimensions, and kinds of writing it contains. The arguments in "The Death of the Author" against understanding a text as a mere block of words, as wholly original, and hermeneutically conveying a singular message gain a deeper significance by being made in the context of this multimedial assemblage. This is especially noticeable when "literature" is referenced in the text followed by a comment in parentheses: "(actually, these distinctions are being superseded)."[82] Yes, indeed, they are. Even the little flimsy booklet in our hands, which at first appears to be about "literature" and Balzac, is itself literature, classified as such in the table of contents. Its theoretical arguments about the contemporary expansion of the text are put into practice in the very same moment that they are read on the page, such as when it asserts that acknowledging the absence of the Author results in a drastic alteration to how a text is approached and conceptualized, therein "utterly transform[ing] the modern text"—after all, what is a more utterly transformed and modern text than the magazine we're currently unpacking?[83]

When this part of the booklet argues that "every text is eternally written here and now," it has implications for media beyond the written word.[84] It functions as an unexpectedly apt description of the imperative contained in the one object classified as "print" in *Aspen*, O'Doherty's *Structural Play #3*, which requires that subscribers maneuver around a grid, experimenting with the form of the box, in a performance score, an object of print that insists on being "written" and enacted here and now, as this is the only iteration of time during which the work can fully come into being.[85] When this booklet explains that the modern writer

can only "combine the different kinds of writing, to oppose some by others, so as never to sustain himself by just one of them," it ends up sounding here more like the job of a magazine editor than the author referenced in the text's title.[86] This booklet ultimately returns to the question raised at the beginning of the text—namely, whose voice, precisely, we think is speaking when we read a text. Even if it's clearly the voice of a narrative character, for example, we might wonder how much this character is influenced by other voices, thereby doubting their distinct motivations. Even if it's clearly the author, we might wonder if this is the voice of the biographical author or the literary author, if this is a voice that speaks based on personal or professional experiences. Even if it's clearly the narrator, we might wonder if this voice is drawing on anecdotal evidence or cultural beliefs or broad universal wisdom. In a final example of how characters in the genre of Greek tragedy continually misunderstand and confuse these voices as true sources of origin, the text suggests that there is someone who might not. For us, those who are sifting and flipping through the text printed on the shiny off-white paper, it's no longer necessary to skip over the comment about this someone that appears in parentheses. Because it suddenly makes so much sense, not only via this final example, but in the multimedial context through which we are interacting with the text: "Yet there is someone who understands each word in its duplicity, and understands further, one might say, the very deafness of the characters speaking in front of him: this someone is precisely the reader (or here the spectator)."[87] While the most expedient way to read the insertion of "here," in parenthetical remarks, is to anchor it back to the spectator of the Greek tragedy, only to do so would ignore how we're actually reading this text: how, through the process of engaging with the diverse theoretical claims embedded in the array of voices and magazine objects before us, this new kind of reader, or spectator, can emerge, here.

So, *here*, while reading this magazine, we do what is asked of us: We read through this "multiple writing," the space of which "is to be traversed, not penetrated."[88] Cutting across this collection of twenty-plus authors, maybe we take out a record: "Text for Nothing #8 (1958). SAMUEL BECKETT. Read by Jack MacGowran as requested by the author. 16-2/3 rpm—monaural."[89] What we hear sounds like chipmunks. Although media histories illustrate that by 1967, the 16⅔ rpm flexi disc, widely known as the format for "Talking Books," was becoming obsolete, one was included in *Aspen* with two speeches, both of which would have been indecipherable on the then standard 33 rpm player, although they look, on the outside, exactly like the other four 33⅓ discs in the box.[90] On this outdated format, MacGowran reads Beckett's "Text for Nothing #8," a twelve-minute text about speaking that, on the 33 rpm player, would have been heard at double speed. On the other side, Naum Gabo spends seventeen minutes reading *The Realistic Manifesto* from 1920. This is a text that calls for a new kind of art that is free of academic and descriptive labels, as its public has expanded beyond the site of the "white cube": "In the squares and

on the streets we are placing our work convinced that art must not remain a sanctuary for the idle, a consolation for the weary and a justification for the lazy. Art should attend us everywhere that life flows and acts . . . at the bench, at the table, at work, at rest, at play."[91] If an outdated player were found, we could hear something else besides chipmunks: On the one side, MacGowran's deep, steady voice reading the lines of "Text for Nothing #8" with patience and a sense of intonation that makes the recording seem more like a dialogue than a speech. On the other side, the recording of Gabo reading out loud, in which the "punchy [typographical] paragraphs" from the text are replaced with some stuttering and awkward hesitations.[92] The emphasis that was conveyed through bold and capitalized font in the printed version of *The Realistic Manifesto* is now stressed through the reader's raised voice, sometimes at expected moments, other times somewhat abruptly. Rather than reproducing the textual forms of these older works, the recordings inscribe in them a sense of presentness. There is not a representation in them of a past that is perfectly reanimated in the present, but one that contains the traces of this process of reanimation itself: the esteemed, squeaky voices on the 16⅔ disk, the questions MacGowran seems to address directly to the listeners themselves rather than an abstract audience, and the accented speech of a manifesto for a kind of art that, now, has long seemed to be underway.[93]

Having the white cube delivered to your doorstep does not mean that you are already in. Entering an institution is no walk in the park (as we know from our waiting experience, if we happen to be reading linearly). One reviewer of *Aspen* describes the work this box requires: "I . . . had to arrange a film showing in my school in order to see the films . . . . I had to borrow a phonograph with extra-slow time speed in order to hear Gabo reading his manifesto . . . . And I had to wrap up the essays and 'data' . . . and take them on a train to read."[94] Discussing developments in digital environments for the reception of media content, Francesco Casetti also emphasizes that new forms of distribution and accessibility do not necessarily lead to a more immediate or intimate engagement with content. He illustrates this point about what he calls "the new media of delivery" by providing an example of the experience of watching a film on a laptop while riding in a train: "There is no auditorium . . . . The place where I am now [the train] seems just the reverse: with its noises, its activities, its comings and goings, it seems to interfere with my attempt to be a spectator."[95] Although there is not a singular normative exhibition environment that could be modified to heighten the *Aspen* experience, that doesn't mean it can be "read" just anywhere, anytime. One of its aesthetic qualities is its immediate illegibility: from missing players and projectors to the pieces of it that went missing in the Madisons' chaotic auditorium-living room of the 1960s or the University of Minnesota library. The excess of materials and media formats is designed to be structurally overwhelming. Even after the archivist assisting me with this issue of *Aspen* went to the trouble of digitally transferring the outdated record formats into sounds one could more easily decipher, the

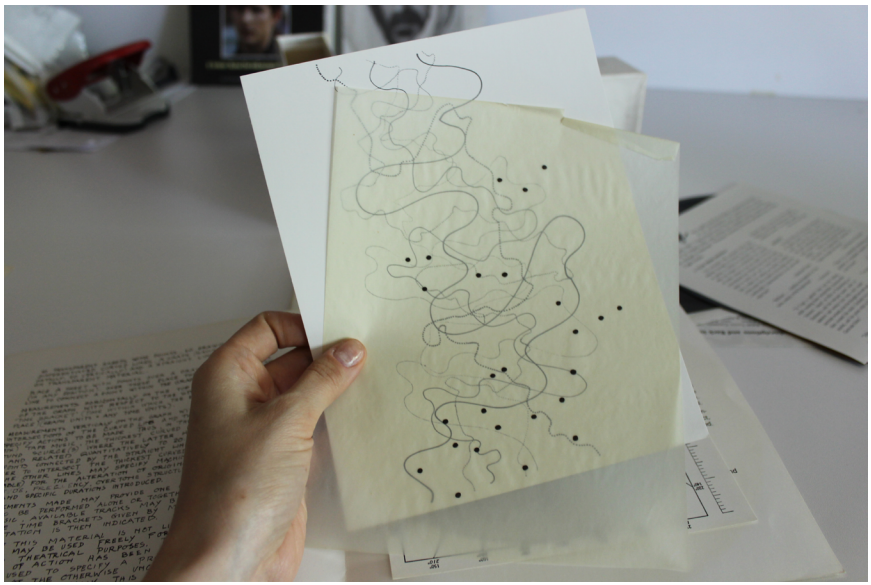


FIGURE 35. John Cage, *Fontana Mix* (1958), in *Aspen* 5+6 (Fall–Winter 1967). Realized by Max Neuhaus, November 6, 1967. Single sheet, 16 × 8 in. (40.6 × 20.3 cm), enclosing three 6⅛ × 8 in. (15.6 × 20.3 cm) sheets, one of which is translucent. Recorded by *Aspen* magazine, November 1967, in New York. 8-in., 33⅓ rpm, monaural recording on flexi disc, 09:57. Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the Estate of Brian O'Doherty.

time-based media in this box, the four films and five records, still require hours to be linearly experienced in full, and much longer if one wants to pause in between the materials and go back and review some of them in order to take the density and complexity of all the various topics and media forms into account.[96] Moreover, the different kinds of projects found on identical formats force one to rethink the conventional categories of and protocols for reading, listening, and viewing. If one thinks it's possible to tackle the excess of materials by playing a record while reading a text, for example, one quickly learns that not all records in this box contain background music.

The score of *Fontana Mix*, as distributed in *Aspen*, consists of a grid and sheets containing points, curves, and coordinates (figure 35).[97] The positioning of these sheets on top of one another determine the specifics of the score, thus fostering elements of chance in the process of composition. "For example, the height of a curve on the grid determined the amplitude of the sound. The duration of a sound would be determined by the point at which a curve first touched the grid and then left it. Spaces in between the intersection would mark silence."[98] While the insistence on indeterminacy in musical scoring was one of John Cage's trademarks, this was located predominantly in the production process, with the performance of the

score relying less on contingency and interpretation and more on the reading and execution of the score itself.[99] Even though magnetic tape, as a carrier, enhanced certain kinds of experimentation in the production process, any fixed, material inscription of the score (including on the MP3 version of the eight-inch flexi disc on UbuWeb) can also be understood to run counter to the contingency of the scoring process.[100]

> A magnetic tape composition, no matter how the material was conceived, remains forever fixed as a recorded performance in time. Cage was conflicted over this [. . .]. "Everyone now knows that there's a contradiction between the use of chance operations and the making of a record. [. . .] I do think that one can live without recordings. And I do that. I don't play them, except when I use them in a live performance . . . I still believe that's true; that if you want music to come alive, that you must not *can* it."[101]

But how canned is *Fontana Mix* in this box? As part of an assemblage to be played in a sequence of other actions—unfolding, building, counting, listening, watching, and so on—the score, even though it is inscribed on this material carrier, is still reliant on chance operations and encounters. The *Aspen* box encourages a kind of *Zweckentfremdung*, a misappropriation of its objects, on the basis of them having to coexist and be unboxed alongside other media formats that affect their own. As Merce Cunningham states on one of the records in *Aspen* about his process of staging dance performances, creating music specifically for a dance or creating a dance for a specific piece of music was not his objective, also because this would inevitably imbue each part of the dance with intrinsic qualities.[102] He was more interested in how a recursive relationship could be fostered between them in the process of coexisting. By circumventing the centrality and linearity of a fixed starting point, choreography, space, and time did not have to be conceived to seamlessly align with each other.[103] "You don't come at it [the dance] [with the idea] that there is a center of interest, as in the proscenium stage—there's a center point, to which or from which everything radiates, front and center business, you know [laughs]. Well I decided that any point was of equal interest in whatever area you were in. And therefore, any place that anybody went was of equal interest also. But that was, again, was done separately from the time, so when the two are put together, they *act* together, but they act *separately*."[104] Constitutive parts of the dance performance, such as the time-based choreography and the spatial layout of the stage, would first be processed separately and only upon their exhibition in a shared space and time would the cooperative result become known. Almost as if the stage were envisioned as an unbound (boxed) format, something with which the "readers" of *Aspen*, while unpacking these different media objects and thinking about how they are juxtaposed against one another and how they might interact and cooperate in this space, would have been very familiar.

In outlining the potential of researching processes of "media cooperation" rather than continuing to organize research in terms of single-medium formats with supposedly intrinsic qualities, which would also overlook the ways in which older media are regularly grafted onto and reconfigure so-called "new" media, Erhard Schüttpelz and Sebastian Gießmann emphasize the need to explicitly consider the role of noise, disturbance, or interruption (*Störung*) within cooperative, infrastructural settings.[105] It's a methodological reorientation that emphasizes how media are produced cooperatively by other media, therein rejecting invention-driven histories of technology that teleologically trace a medium's emergence back to a single actor (usually male, usually Western), and it directs attention to the interplay of technology, cultural techniques, institutions, amateur practices, and bureaucratic frameworks through which media emerge. While media research in cultural studies has been greatly aided by the notion of the parasite, allowing for "noise" to be studied beyond the boundaries of information theory, Schüttpelz and Gießmann note that what could still be made more explicit "in German-language research on 'disruptions,' 'parasites,' and 'quasi-objects'" are the media theoretical implications of how noise plays out in cooperative media settings.[106] In the context of the logistical form of the box and related media process of unboxing, this could include a consideration of those situations in which transmission is not seamless, precisely in order to shed light on the disruptions and interruptions built into media communication systems but often disregarded as insignificant or brushed off as small annoyances or errors within the flow of content.[107]

Jaimey Hamilton Faris picks up on this in her discussion of what she describes as "infrastructure art." She draws on Jack Burnham's essay "Systems Esthetics" (1968) in order to trace a potential lineage of infrastructure art back to the rise of "systems art" in the late 1960s, those kind of artistic practices "that shifted from a sole focus on the art object or 'thing' to the ways, methods, processes, relations, and connections *between* things."[108] She suggests that Burnham's essay transcends the singular focus on institutional critique that characterized the era, and highlights the ways in which artistic practices in the 1990s started to embrace topics related to infrastructural systems and systems aesthetics in their materiality and themes, particularly in light of what was, by that time, the omnipresence of containerization. While discussing how the container in global infrastructural networks takes on a parasitical relationship with the ships by which it travels, she emphasizes the problem of the container in terms of appearing neutral in this role and having a neutralizing function on its contents, as it must remain indifferent to what it carries in order to maintain its intermodality. In other words, the noise, friction, and disturbances are edited out by this illusion of neutrality. In practices associated with infrastructure art, these kind of problems take center stage as artists seek, for example, to "trace the parasitical exploitative movement of the container through ports in relation to labor . . . , but also to open the box and see what is inside."[109] Relevant to our case study, Hamilton Faris remarks in a footnote that this artistic

preoccupation with infrastructure and opening the box and seeing what's inside has a much longer history that takes us back to some of the objects we've been unboxing: "It is worth charting these connections in more detail at another time (especially with regard to the history of the Bauhaus, which, in moving to Chicago, was initially supported by the Container Corporation of America). Suffice it to say that artistic interest in the container principle could be traced back through an expanded history of systems aesthetics that looks at [Donald] Judd's boxes, as well as [Andy] Warhol's, through the lens of infrastructure."[110]

While *Aspen* is usually discussed in art historical contexts along the lines of individual objects and well-known names that are included in its compilation, overlooking its packaging in the form of the box (something which it explicitly and repeatedly thematized in its advertising) would mean missing out on what Schüttpelz and Gießmann argue are the important media theoretical implications of noise and disturbance, which seem to be embraced by this box rather than eschewed. It would also mean missing out on the opportunity to consider how this box might contribute to what Hamilton Faris describes as this expanded history of infrastructure art, as well as how it was possibly testing out ways of intervening into some of these standardized value systems underpinning the financialization of art. While containerization was just starting to emerge as the prevailing form of global land-sea transport in the late 1960s and its massive consequences for systems of labor, the environment, the Global South, and Indigenous lands and populations were not yet fully known on a broader public scale, it was around this time that the container itself was starting to become more visible in the US landscape.[111] Containers were not omnipresent as part of logistical supply chains as they are today, but in the late 1960s, ports and railroads were starting to fill up with them, and transatlantic trade was becoming more routine and efficient.[112] Instead of thinking about *Aspen* as a purely "avant-garde," "artistic," and "utopian" endeavor wholly detached from this history, its packaging could indicate a parallel preoccupation with the box that was deeply interested in ways of rethinking systems of value across modes of processing, storing, and transmitting information and media.

REBOXING

The way I opened the box this time, here, will be different from the next time I do it. "In the box, all histories are reconfigured with each load. What lands inside it depends on chance, the organizational and logistical competency of its packer, and, ultimately, the standardized volume and capacity of the box itself."[113] Through the medium of the container, what gets thrown into the box is always subject to different configurations when it is unpacked, as well as when it's repacked. This could theoretically be said of every aesthetic experience, time based or spatial. But what is required at the end of this endeavor in particular is a task as equally

FIGURE 36. *Aspen* 5+6 (Fall–Winter 1967). Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles. Photograph by KM, courtesy of the Estate of Brian O'Doherty.

important as the unboxing previously performed: I must now close the box. After having spent the time carefully pulling out these diverse objects, negotiating all the confusion the objects sowed, and looking at a few of them under a critical lens, this task of tidying up, coming to a close, is not necessarily as simple as it might seem. "Well, you have to work for these things."[114] It's hard to put a lid on it, to fit it all back into one nice, neat package according to the nice, neat, linear guide we looked at in the beginning. The table of contents, an abstract map with various formulas showing me how all the smaller squares and rectangles and boxes flowed into the one big box, served as a kind of map for the package when I initially opened it. But what does this flowchart look like once it's unpacked, one square booklet amid this unboxed mess, suddenly one item among many, one part of a sprawled-out collection on the table in front of us (figure 36)?

Perhaps the flowchart is always just that: a map for how things are expected to work, how they are expected to flow, relate to each other, and become processed, rather than a representation of how they actually work. Perhaps the flowchart can be an expression of how things are believed to work. A couple of charts in art history that worked like this quickly come to mind. In Alfred Barr's "Development of Abstract Art" (1936), one finds the well-known example of how an ideology of

art history, its assumed genealogy, could be visualized. The source of abstract art, for Barr, is Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, and Seurat, and it culminates in two branches: "non-geometrical abstract art" and "geometrical abstract art."[115] George Maciunas relied on a series of interconnected boxes mapped onto a page to convey the lineage of what he saw as the "expanded arts" (figure 37). Included in a special issue on the topic in *Film Culture* in 1966, Maciunas's flowchart abounded "with rectilinear forms and lines running the length of a full page."[116] As with Barr's history of art, "Maciunas's diagram was also highly prescriptive. From this contemporary vantage point, the diagram presents a discursive code that arranges information in order that it may be more visible, while also remaining dogmatic and potentially authoritarian."[117]

While Maciunas, in the introduction to the chart, alludes to the possibility that it could "be expanded to include more artists" and that "any comments, suggested additions and/or changes from readers will be welcome," these boxes are also not completely modular.[118] While some flow through diagonal pipes into others, there are many boxes that are unlikely to meet up. The "joke" category at the top of this chart is separate from "dada," for example, just like "Yoko Ono" is relegated to the box labeled "Events/Neo-Haiku Theatre," separate from "John Cage" in "Acoustic Theatre," "Merce Cunningham" in "Kinesthetic Theater," "Claes Oldenburg" in "Happenings/Neo-Baroque Theatre," and "Dick Higgins" in "Verbal Theatre." There are different paths one can take through this chart, but that number is limited by design.

If a flowchart conveys how processes are expected or believed to work, then how could such a map of interrelated boxes possibly help guide us in a situation like the unboxing and reboxing done here, which is, by definition, expected to be carried out differently every time? This would have to be a graphic representation of the magazine issue that acknowledges that previous unboxings affect those that follow, that "previous steps determine . . . present reactions," even if such reactions were essentially "unpredictable: an output once observed for a given input will most likely be not the same for the same input given later."[119] Such a chart would capture this inherent duality: A false hope or expectation that its orderly abstract constructs yield a definite, uncontaminated meaning as well as a guarantee that this meaning will be, in practice, each time and always, different. An unpredictability that is iconographically built into the organizational flow (figure 38). It comes in a box.

"Can one step into the same flowchart twice? There are people who would answer: not even once."[120] When Schüttpelz analyzes the iconography of Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver's flowchart of a communication system, he notes a key difference between this and earlier models of the system—namely, the fact that "the 'noise,' proceeding from physical interferences but then transferred to everything that negates the success of a signal transmission, has become an independent element of the diagram; this was not and is not the case in comparison with other

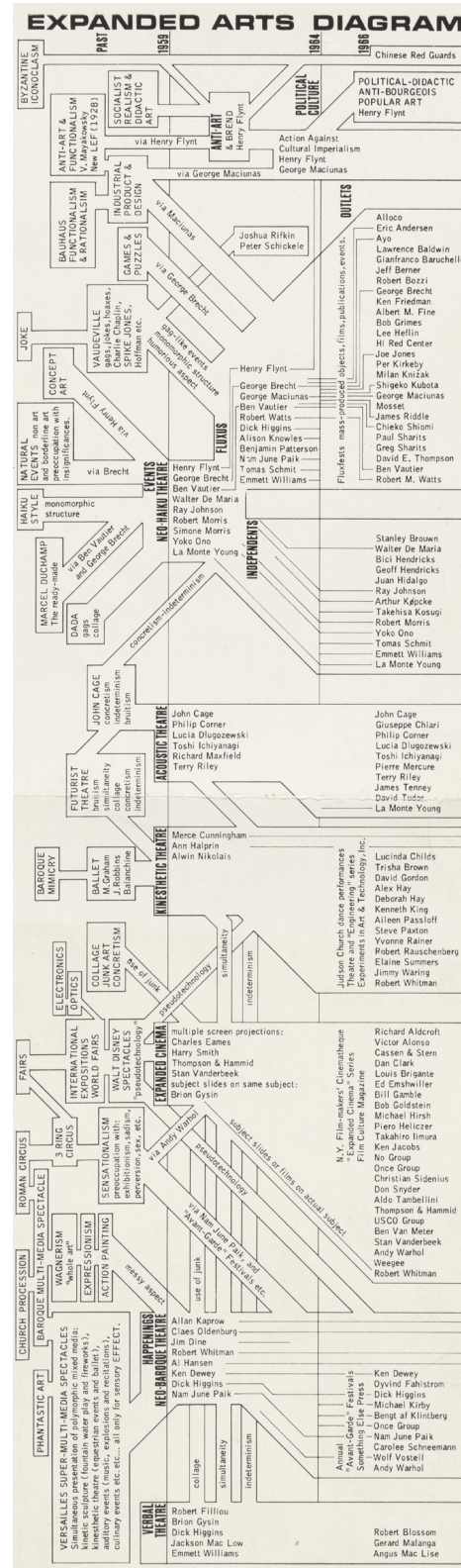


FIGURE 37. George Maciunas, *Expanded Arts Diagram* (1966). Offset lithograph, sheet: 13 × 4 13/16 in. (33 × 12.3 cm). The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. In *Film Culture* 43 (Winter 1966): 7. Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.

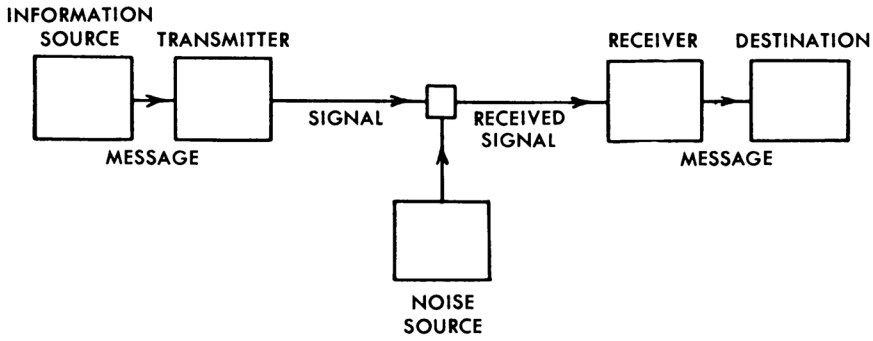


FIGURE 38. Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, "Schematic Diagram of a General Communication System." From *Mathematical Theory of Communication*. © 1949, 1998 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Used with permission of the University of Illinois Press.

'models of communication.'"[121] The box as a unifying element in the chart was key to this. Despite its placement in the lower part of the chart, "Noise Source" is not outside of the communication flow. Its modularity means that the box can be connected, shifted around, and reconnected to the process flow without being inside of it, and its relevance is reflected in the size of its box, which is of equal proportion to all the others in the chain.[122] In fact, when building, not just modeling, his "Ultimate Machine," Shannon again relied on the box as ultimate logistical form, one which ultimately reboxed itself. "It is merely a small wooden casket the size and shape of a cigar-box, with a single switch on one face. When you throw the switch, there is an angry, purposeful buzzing. The lid slowly rises, and from beneath it emerges a hand. The hand reaches down, turns the switch off, and retreats into the box. . . . There is something unspeakably sinister about a machine that does nothing—absolutely nothing—except switch itself off."[123] He coalesced the flowchart into a single box in which input reverses output, a box that contains only that which is not expected: a machine that is automated to undo what you have just done, as if mocking, or hyperbolizing, the entire system of feedback.

In *Aspen*, interruption and noise in the forms of excess, misappropriation of media categories, and dispersed authorship are also part and parcel of the compilation of the box rather than errors that occur in the experience of it. From our current perspective, this could seem like a counter-container logic that seeks to turn the box as a logistical icon of efficiency and optimization on its head, as announced in *Aspen*'s table of contents and performatively enacted in its unboxing. But maybe, within the context of an emerging history of media logistics that is expanded and transdisciplinary in its approach, we can understand this box less in terms of a time capsule or fossil capturing an exceptional and ultimately unsuccessful example of an attempt to democratize art, and rather interpret it as advancing

a different way of thinking about systems of value and hierarchies of media categories that did not end when the magazine was discontinued in the early 1970s. Similarly to the *Wunderkammer*, this kind of box can include exclusionary partitions between media objects that seek to categorize and classify, and it can also, by insisting that media categories are produced in cooperative and logistical settings, make the threshold of the box more dynamic, permeable, and exploratory. The ephemerality of this magazine is as important for arguments about institutional critique in the art world as it is for taking seriously the possibilities of the category of rubbish to rethink standardized systems of value. Far from a container that neutralizes its contents or packages them as end products, this box allows for the self-observation of media use to recursively inform the constitution and cooperation of media. As a result, the supposed end product can be recurrently reconfigured in the process. In the next chapter, focusing on one particular film, a medium usually understood as "finished," such systems of value will come under further scrutiny as it thematizes its own process of creation: the supposedly mundane application for film funding and bureaucratic rhetoric that is needed to get it going. Rather than treating this as routine preparatory paperwork that is simply required to play the game, as an initial step along a linear procession toward its ultimate success or failure, this film makes us stay with its own pitch, suggesting that this value threshold is perhaps more flexible than it seems, but only when we linger on it.

5

Film Pitches

In 2020, paperwork got a headline. "US artists can now get $5,000 emergency grants without a tedious application process . . . and they don't even have to put on a dog-and-pony show to prove their talents."[1] The need to get artistic projects funded quickly at a time when museums, cinemas, and art and film festivals had abruptly closed their doors highlighted the customary restrictions to the means necessary for producing creative work in the first place. The headline brings to light not only the various routine bureaucratic hurdles that artists must jump through to even apply for funding which, in the US, is comparatively limited, but it also offered an image of what this kind of work typically looks like.[2]

This kind of work is role reversal training. It's training dogs to be horses pulling carriages, monkeys to be coachmen fixing a carriage wheel, horses to be upright Tiller girls in formation, smaller dogs to be bourgeois passengers (figure 39), and children to be dogs playing fetch (figure 40). One thing takes the place of another, and the image of this reconfiguration provides insights into the supposed original, the referent. "Instead of fixing image and referent in a close relationship, the figure of analogy effects a type of *mise en abyme* of the referential play of the signifier, so that the image has its own difference mirrored within itself."[3] In the dog and pony show, this difference is also directed outward, toward the viewer, who at various times has also played these roles. *What have I looked like as the passenger? What do I wear? How do I sit? How does my dog present its bounty to me? Would I bow like this, too?* It's part of a regime of the visual spectacle that, while objectifying the performer, also unsettles the viewer as model for what is being rehearsed.[4] "What at first was necessary then becomes an imitation threatening to replace or distort its model."[5] While it might seem harmless, the work of role reversal training is not without risk.

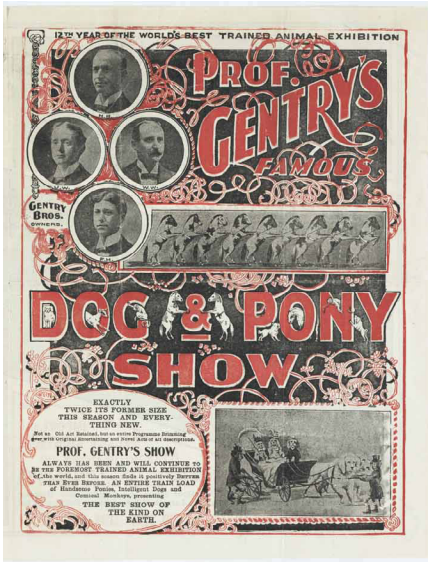


FIGURE 39. Advertisement, "Prof. Gentry's Famous Dog and Pony Show" (1901). Courtesy of the Washington State Historical Society, call number: EPH-B 791.3 P943 1901.

FIGURE 40. *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (1978), dir. Hellmuth Costard. Screenshot.

This kind of work is an obedience exercise. The dog and pony show is an amateur performance. One isn't seeing lions and elephants on display. It's not a mastery of training and taming big exotic animals that is witnessed here, but *Fleißarbeit*, diligent work and routine, something that everyone could theoretically do. This kind of work is always comparative. The lion and elephant versus the

dog and pony. Dog and pony shows are what one would get to see when the big shows weren't available, the contemporary euphemism emphasizing "the rinky-dink aspect compared to the grand affair of a circus with a marching band . . . and maybe the elephant and the odd rhino or what have you. So, it all kind of descends from this kind of petty warfare between these traveling shows . . . . It's sort of like a poor substitute for a circus or a menagerie then. A knock-off. Rinky-dink. Not even a good circus."[6] For this reason, the kind of work advertised here must be embedded in references to the original, novel, and daring. "EVERYTHING NEW THIS YEAR . . . BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE."[7] It's the work of theater to cover up the mundane, shows that are small and nomadic. It's rehearsals in which the unremarkable is dressed up as the fantastic while remaining ridden with anxiety about status.[8] A kind of playfulness in this work is also sometimes implied, suggesting that behind playing fetch or, historically, behind the dog and pony shows, something else, something more devious, is going on.[9] In 2020, when the reliance on papers of various sorts was feared, criticized, and lamented, avoiding the dog and pony show was a one-time means of circumventing the history of these bureaucratic prerequisite practices involving *Fleißarbeit*, the "onerous paperwork," a type of work that had become an everyday routine for struggling artists, those who hadn't (yet) made it to the big circus stage where lions are tamed and paraded around.[10]

It's not so often that one sees the dog and pony show of film production on-screen—meaning it's not often that cinema shows its own work of performing analogies that is based in the amateur, mundane routines of obedience and rehearsal. The labor that is typically associated with cinema begins when the camera starts rolling: household names on the set, lights and props surrounding them, and another household name peering through the lens and giving instructions to the crew. That's the fantasy. The lion. It's work that is supposed to be creative, glamorous, and dynamic. This is visualizing cinematic labor along the lines of major decision-making activities, work that is executed on set and captured live on a film reel or video, and it quite often reinforces heroic self-descriptions. But something is conspicuously missing from this image of how cinema works: the role of paperwork, which precedes and underlies the supposedly more innovative, "actual" work of film.

The 1978 film *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (The little Godard: To the Production Board for Young German Cinema), directed by Hellmuth Costard, opens with gestures of imitation, big authoritative names, and paperwork. Gaumont newsreel music, *Reflets d'automne*, from 1955, introduces the first title, "DER KLEINE GODARD"—not all that little in reddish-pink capital letters against a black background. In 1955, Jean-Luc Godard was still rather *klein*, still rather little, having made his first two films around that time, both about his own working situation.[11] *Opération Béton* (Operation concrete, 1954) turns the dam where he was employed at the time first as a manual laborer and then as a telephone operator into the Eiffel Tower, as announced at the beginning of the film: "At an

altitude of 2,500 meters, in the Val des Dix, a thousand men are building a concrete wall as high as the Eiffel Tower: the 'GRANDE-DIXENCE' dam."[12] His next film, *Une Femme coquette* (A flirtatious woman, 1955) documents an office worker breaking out of her routine by imitating the work of another, a sex worker's game of signals that are rehearsed and sent out in an attempt to eventually hit their target, and in the end the impersonator, the amateur, unwillingly succeeds. The little Jean-Luc Godard in 1955 is thinking about transforming obstacles, sellouts, architecture, infrastructure, the technological sublime, transportation and transmission, and documentary and fiction, and rehearsing professionalism as an amateur still doing other jobs on the side. The subtitle to Costard's film, *An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (To the Production Board for Young German Cinema), still in the same reddish-pink font on a black background but this time in lowercase, is of a different register. The subtitle refers to documentation, to paperwork, while it itself also documents, foregrounding its own conditions of production.[13] The pitch and paperwork are not to be hidden or forgotten behind some unifying title sequence soundtrack but are rather written into the name of the work itself. The third iteration of text on screen, "Ein Film von Hellmuth Costard" (A film by Hellmuth Costard) sets the two parts of the film's title into motion, calling attention to their discursive nature and qualities as well as their interdependency. "Der kleine Godard," the little Godard: Costard's nickname given to him by a German film critic, critical praise and a sign that he is following in the footsteps of the big boys now, that imitation and rehearsing certain gestures is working and he has (almost) made it, with the music taking us to a time when this authority figure himself, Godard, was in a similar position.[14] *An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film*, to the Production Board for Young German Cinema: a salutation indicating his target audience, the addressee of his film funding application, a sign that he is in the paperwork phase, trying to win approval with his dog and pony show, repeatedly reworking and resubmitting the standard elevator pitches with the hope that one sticks, and a sign that he is still new at this. Funding from the Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film, a nonprofit German film funding organization established in 1965 and initially financed by federal funds and later also by the federal states (regional governments), was intended for those working on their first or second films.[15] This is a film about what happens after one makes it (Der kleine Godard) and what happens before one makes it (an das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film). It's a story of success whose neat linearity, throughout this film, comes undone.

We hear the undoing from the beginning. The title cards give way to the future, two children at a lake playing fetch, as if on a Super 8 home video, resulting in a mismatch: synchronizing a 1970s popular amateur film format with the symphonic sound of 1950s French television.[16] Into the image, the sign of a production is inscribed that one does not own—namely, the historic sound of Gaumont, one of the oldest international film production companies. It marks an attempt to keep up the pace, the various dog and pony adaptation processes that are the prerequisites for film projects. Like the girls playing fetch, the score is based on repetition

with slight variations on the theme. Big sister drops the bounty right in front of her and then kicks it farther out. The little one brings it back in her mouth, bending down like a loyal pet while she presents it to her sister. The big one exaggerates her gestures, winding up her pitching arm before lobbing the stick into the water. The little one flutters into the lake, her hands held out to her sides as she hunts it down. A pitch is not a throw. It's a part of a game that relies on objectives and persuasion, on a target person or place that one plans to reach with rehearsals and rhetoric. This is training for working without thinking, getting used to orders that have to be carried out right away. A way to fantasize that one is actually hunting something down. In West Germany in the 1970s, this involved rethinking paperwork as more than a means to an end. Paperwork was not just a tedious task one wanted to complete and get out of the way in order to accomplish something new and creative. It was no longer a means to hunt something down. Rather, bureaucracy was becoming the end goal of the hunt itself.

After this opening scene, Costard, the filmmaker as bureaucrat, reads aloud a typed text that scrolls down the frame. It details his plans of the past that have failed, while the paper on which it is typed begins to burn from the inside out, igniting a void in the middle of the page that continues to grow: "1974. Our Hamburg Filmmakers' Cooperative has finally collapsed."[17] The cooperative, which Costard cofounded in 1968 amid appeals for "a different cinema," had collapsed by the mid-1970s in part due to a rift between filmmakers who saw themselves as explicitly political and those whom they considered to be making films that were merely aesthetically revolutionary and experimental.[18] Around this same time, Costard continues in his voice-over, New German Cinema is becoming financially successful—"through much persuasion and considerable financial effort"—while he is still striving, "equipped with a small television commission, to produce my own camera system. Something always forces us to spell out our own misfortune."[19] So we already know how this story ends. The widely subsidized New German Cinema has turned fat and missed its point. For understanding the complex process of making films "differently," the moniker falls short. What is needed is a way to account for various film types alongside the inevitable feature film, as well as the many underrecognized yet integral agents and agencies involved in questions of infrastructure, technology, bureaucracy, and funding.

While the big Godard and the little Godard were clearly thinking about such challenges early on, they weren't alone, of course. We could quickly sketch out a few other projects alongside these that would illustrate a broader perspective on this landscape. If one were to construct a foundational moment for independent early steps in film practices that is comparable to *Opération Béton* within a German context, it could be Alexander Kluge's first film, *Brutalität in Stein* (Brutality in stone), from 1961, a documentary short on architectural remnants of National Socialism as both built and unfinished, destroyed and planned order.[20] Rather than unfolding as a linear narrative from then to now, it interrogates infrastructural

production processes as ongoing, manifesting through various media and materials: buildings, drawings, scale models, stones, paper, and sketches. It was a collaboration between a filmmaker, Peter Schamoni, and a specialist on organization, Kluge, who had written *University Self-Government* (1958) and *Cultural Policy and Expenditure Control: On the Theory and Practice of Auditing* (1961).[21] Together, they question how it might be possible to make the structural importance of this essential infrastructural work visible. It's a question that is also, of course, of particular relevance to Costard.

Not long after, in 1964, Kluge, the organizational expert turned filmmaker, addresses what he calls "the most important problem of film funding," one that will seem familiar to us by now:

> A writer will always produce a draft first. When in doubt, a publisher will ask for a sample chapter. A film creator (*Filmautor*), like any creative person, will always create drafts that are then either abandoned or developed in a different direction than originally conceived. If you want intellectual freedom, you cannot eliminate this risk. But one of the peculiarities of film is that although it is possible to cobble together the overall financing, it is almost impossible to persuade a producer or distributor to finance a draft. The film industry generally does not spend money on the exploratory or orientation stage. A screenplay, on the other hand, is not an adequate preparation for the film, since it can address the most important part of the film only in literary terms; a work is created in the process of working, not prior to it. . . . If it were possible to use public funds to support the preliminary stage in which the conception of the film emerges, culturally significant results could be achieved with relatively little money.[22]

Later, Kluge shoots the other major German film on the big elephant in the room of the dog and pony shows of filmmaking: *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: Ratlos* (The artists in the big top: Perplexed, 1968). Although both practices, Kluge's and Costard's, could be seen as two poles of thinking about the workings and logistics of film that supplement each other, they are rarely discussed together.

As a legal expert, Kluge would go on to found the Development Company for Television Program (DCTP) in 1987, negotiating independent cultural programming slots on private television stations and remaining the go-to person for questions of the independent film economy amid shifting media formats and production and distribution channels of the time. Costard, meanwhile, is interested during the process of working on film in offering a different take on what is scripted, both prior to and in parallel with the influence of state-sponsored funding and related institutions. This is affected last but not least by a plethora of technologies and the materialities of a medium made out of paper and celluloid. Costard had already playfully demonstrated this in a prize-winning experimental short *Der warme Punkt* (The hot dot, 1968), in which he collaborated with filmmaker Thomas Struck. It depicts a day in the life of two filmmakers

who are "trying to grasp this film in this film" ("in diesem Film diesen Film zu begreifen"), in its becoming, attending to the medium in its processual, provisional state: while it is being shot, prior to its projection.[23] The film material is pre-exposed with a point of light that appears briefly in the exposed film at ever-changing intervals. While they mention toward the beginning of the film that such a "mistake" in the material, like a point, would be "really, really dumb," they spend their time feeding birds, walking around the city, and talking to kids at school and passers-by about the point, trying to guess where and when the point might be coming, or already came, or is now, maybe at this very moment, on screen: "Vorsicht, der Punkt!" (Watch out, the point!).[24] The material they do not see, and which they planned in advance but can no longer get hold of, nevertheless orients them.

When Costard applies for funding in *Der kleine Godard*, he continues at exactly this point. What he wants to experiment with is not yet another mode of storytelling, but a different approach to basic recording systems. He says his desire is to make feature films completely without fantasy: to find a way to enable a story to originate through the mass of cameras and sound technologies alone and to exploit the undisturbed sequence of events as the perfect filmic staging (*Inszenierung*) using a multicamera setup, montage, and shot/reverse shots (none of which we see in this scene), "[and with this] to create the impression of a filmic staging."[25] We later learn that the complex camera system that Costard and his team had developed relies on the format of Super 8, the implementation of which is described in detail in a subsequent section of the film. With the plans now burned away, a hole is created on-screen through which the diegesis can take place—namely, two hands working a needle. They are Costard's hands repairing a hole in his shirt. His voice-over details that he wants to make it transparent to us, the viewers, that he is offering up the illusion that we are currently immersed in a story. But he states that three years later, in 1977, he must admit that his attempt to realize this advanced technology has failed. The illusion in which we are knowingly immersed is thus one of repair. He rubs his hands along his chest to see if the hole has been fixed. We hear that the consumer equipment that was part of this independently produced camera system was vulnerable to something, and "this vulnerability . . . has become our undoing. I sit down to prepare an application for film funding for the Production Board for Young German Cinema."[26] This technological dream was stunted by a conflict between finished products available for the masses and their implementation in a draft technological setup, in addition to the events of 1968, the rise of television co-productions, and new film funding conditions. Around this same time, "the mid-1970s, two-thirds of all West Germans were acquainted with films only through the medium of television."[27] Film, from its first material iteration on paper to its distribution via the small screen, could no longer claim to be an exceptional or lone medium on celluloid, but needed to be conceptualized simultaneously with other media forms. The question of where a film begins and

where it ends was becoming increasingly tricky to answer, especially as changes to the practices of paperwork during this time in various areas of artistic and scholarly innovation and development began to undermine traditional notions of the supposedly primary project or medium, thereby blurring the distinction between the creative work and its supporting paperwork meant to be of secondary importance.

While *bureaucracy* was a key term in the US and Western Europe in the late 1960s, influencing art movements and social politics with various "rebellions against the bureaucratic mindset, against the soul-destroying conformity of the postwar welfare states," by the mid-1970s, as David Graeber describes, things begin to shift.[28] The time spent on bureaucracy increases, but the time talking about bureaucracy decreases. Research funding ramps up, but innovative research itself quantitatively slows down.[29] Changes to corporate tax laws, geopolitical objectives, and the outsourcing of labor through new technology and distribution techniques since the 1970s have contributed to these discrepancies between the reality of bureaucracy and the discourse on bureaucracy, and between research funding and innovation, which we can see proliferating up to the present moment: more paperwork and less time thematizing it; more research money and fewer breakthroughs. In spite of our fantasy of what work in Silicon Valley looks like, imagined to consist of a small team of skilled risk-takers led by an entrepreneurial, if controversial (usually male, usually white) genius, research is in fact

> still driven by giant, bureaucratic projects [such as "Big Science" or the Human Genome Project] . . . . What these management techniques invariably end up meaning in practice is that everyone winds up spending most of their time trying to sell each other things: grant proposals; book proposals; assessments of our students' job and grant applications; assessments of our colleagues; prospectuses for new interdisciplinary majors, institutes, conference workshops, and universities themselves, which have now become brands to be marketed to prospective students or contributors. . . . The result is a sea of documents about the fostering of "imagination" and "creativity," set in an environment that might as well have been designed to strangle any actual manifestations of imagination and creativity in the cradle. . . . "It is proverbial that original ideas are the kiss of death for a [grant or research] proposal; because they have not yet been proved to work."[30]

Bureaucracy was historically intended to depersonalize work-related interactions and chances of success, but noticeably since the mid-1970s, this has given way to a kind of exclusionary monolingualism. To succeed in various sectors of the workforce, one must speak the same language of paperwork. This code stipulates that immediately implementable end products matter, not research as a sketch, draft, or impetus for further research and—however belatedly, retroactively, or coincidentally—for innovation.[31] The pitch, crafted in this language, involves the work of tautology: *I have found this treasure, it's a sure thing, so please fund me to*

find this treasure. If one also spends most of one's time and effort—"imagination and creativity"—on writing grants promising such noninnovative research, what is the way out? If one channels all of one's innovation into bureaucracy anyway, rather than research, one might as well remain with and critically think about this kind of work. Stay with the pitch. If pitches should emphasize results, the finished, well-defined, and applicable product, one could stop long before that. Perhaps never make a product at all. Turn the pitch into the product, but without sealing it up and finalizing it and without discarding it as mere preliminary work, in order to rather actively channel innovation into the pitch itself. If one doesn't talk about paperwork anymore but does more paperwork and must speak the universal language of paperwork, one could show what this language looks like. Show the invisible work that is truly valued: one's own creativity with bureaucratic codes. Advancing in bureaucracy means playing along with the fiction of the *Antrag* in German, the funding application and the pitch.

Once the 1970s film historical stage for *Der kleine Godard* has been set, and set on fire, we are shown a first reenactment of the fiction of the *Antrag* on-screen. Before restaging this customary scene of (*Antrag*-) writing, in which Costard must play the Woody Allen author-genius with his pen and paper at his clean desk, waiting for inspiration to suddenly come forth from within, he engages in the home office ritual of suppressing the personal: clearing away all the magazines, newspapers, and books that have piled up and crowded the clean space for writing. While modern bureaucratization and the paperwork that comes along with it has sought to separate the public space of the office from the domestic space of the home, and therefore the public, professional self from the private one, this becomes more complicated when one is working on paperwork to achieve precisely the luxury of that public space—a workspace where one does not simultaneously eat, entertain, and read the paper.[32] The private-public transformation isn't seamless here. In response to us, the viewers who are growing impatient to hear his new pitch, Costard looks directly into the camera, and tells us with a smile: "I think you can all relax. It is not going to get going for a *long* time yet."[33] The pitch is then preceded by a pose. He enacts the disembodiment required of this moment, "the obliteration of the private persona and body, leaving only thinking spirit and its paperwork," transforming himself into Rodin's *Thinker* (*Le Penseur*, cast 1904, figure 41).[34] Turning his body into a predetermined thing—a statue—gestures toward the way in which utopic bureaucratization would require any trace of individuality and original ideas to be subsumed into this static figure of the professional thinker-artist. Paperwork, the *Antrag* as we know it, is the remains, the evidentiary trace of this process, and it possesses power in terms of this broader private-to-public transformation.

Files have a depersonalized nature to them. If this depersonalization were to be stripped away, one would be able to see how they often originate from a place of emotion—a complaint, a desire, a conflict.[35] Creating files involves transforming

FIGURE 41. *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (1978), dir. Hellmuth Costard. Screenshot.

passion and ideas into rationalized information and evidence. Like other forms of procedural paperwork, the *Antrag* mobilizes information retroactively. It registers routine experience as evidence of professionalism only once this information has proceeded, step by step, across a certain threshold, such as via voting members of a committee, and landed in the favorable pile.[36] This stack of pitches can now be categorized "successful," future films that will be funded and realized, having been successively sorted out from those that will receive rejections. Standard bureaucratic materials subject to this form of medial processing, from contracts facilitated by agents to pitches facilitated by producers, must be understood less in terms of a product of genius negotiation or unparalleled creativity and more in terms of their weight as complex transactions within a broader network of media culture.[37] If "'the auspices under which a project is submitted can define its worth as much as its intrinsic values,'" then real creativity lies not in the director having been gifted with talent but in cooking the books and pushing papers, in getting around, understanding, and negotiating bureaucracy.[38] To understand how files are intended to be mobilized as an impetus for thinking credibility, truth, and evidence, one must start at their beginning: how they acquire the transformative power for authenticating the authority of big names and well-established classifications ("Godard," "artist," "thinker"). In *Der kleine Godard*, this transformative power is put on display, and mocked, in this *Thinker* scene. Following Costard's prolonged silence spent seated at his clean desk, thinking about how to begin to fill the blank page in front of him, we finally get to witness his divine innovation, which he slowly mouths as he carefully writes it down on paper: "Dear Ladies and Gentlemen . . . Deeeear . . . Laaaaa-dieees . . . and . . . Geeentle . . . men."[39]

A standard salutation and formal requirement of application correspondence that is meant to remain on the margins of the content containing real ideas. "Creativity is marshaled to the service of administration rather than the other way around," and the performance of genius is part of the *Antragslogik*, the logic of funding applications, which requires that (bureaucratic) language take center stage not as a medium through which an idea is to be expressed but as a product in and of itself.[40] What one is tasked with creatively producing in such instances is *Antragssprache*, application language, and it's here, in the language of bureaucratic culture, that innovation takes place.

While the study of bureaucratic paperwork is not new to the humanities, looking at it is. "The new social history that dominated Anglo-American historical studies in the 1960s and 1970s discovered all sorts of interesting and important things by looking *through* paperwork, but seldom paused to look *at* it. That [is] . . . to say, it put paperwork to use in reconstructing the lives of ordinary men and women, but largely neglected the lives of the equally ordinary scribes, copyists, and clerks who produced and reproduced these sources."[41] *Der kleine Godard* is interested in pondering and lingering on the media process of pitching the film, a process from which it originates, rather that instrumentalizing documents as objects of set design that just help move the filmic project and the plot along. Its gaze shifts back and forth between paperwork and other more familiar processes of film work, continually questioning the relationship between the two. The film doesn't claim, however, to have found in the *Antrag* the missing link between labor and cinema. Focusing solely on the *Antrag* would isolate it, therein further estranging film's paperwork from film's glamorous work. Instead, it suggests that the position of the *Antrag* within the logistical supply chain is one that is relative to other kinds of labor operations, implicating both the more mundane and the more exciting varieties of film work. The *Antrag* is about shuffling papers as well as shooting stars. To take it as an overlooked yet exemplary object of the work of cinema means scrutinizing how its content and rhetoric shift according to a variety of circumstances: the funding agency to which it's sent, whether funding has been previously requested or granted, whether the applicant is an "amateur" or a "professional," new or old to the scene, and whether the pitch involves collaborations with big names. This allows for the routine yet decisive labor of paperwork, first and foremost, to be made visible on-screen and, second, to be seen together with cinema's more established site of labor: the film set, complete with crew, cameras rolling, and stars and famous directors in action. It makes one rethink the terminology that helps describe the work of film. Why is "creativity" in this discourse primarily associated with aesthetic decisions made by a single person about the film on celluloid rather than those that were made and negotiated beforehand by several people about the film on paper? If paperwork is understood in this way, can it also be considered a dynamic process, or does this, for some reason, devalue the exciting moment of film work—namely, when the cameras turn on? Why do

we continue to hold on to the idea that this is the moment when the work of film is set in motion? What is it about the bureaucratic material culture of film culture that makes us want to ignore or discount it, and what is it about this form of labor that makes us so uncomfortable?

One might assume that bureaucratic labor is often not taken into account in the scholarship because it's so self-explanatory. In other words, paperwork does what it says and shows what it says. Yet recent research in various disciplines, from anthropology and ethnography to legal and media studies, insists that it's not that clear-cut.[42] "These [mundane] documents are born in the work of staff and the recommendations of committees, circulate among and are given specific substance by individual scholars [and other authorities], and go on to figure centrally in the decisions made at other meetings. At the same time they and their consequences remain, in large part because of their very ordinariness, analytically invisible."[43] In contrast to this, it could be presumed that this kind of labor is not presently taken into account because the scholarship on it has already been exhausted. In the broader context of film studies, however, the complex medial properties of bureaucratic documents tend to play a limited role, if at all, as it's common practice to consider paperwork primarily or even exclusively in terms of its supposedly transparent representational value.[44] "Documents have also been overlooked because it is easy to see them as simply giving immediate access to what they document. . . . To restore analytically the visibility of documents . . . is to treat them as mediators, things that 'transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or elements they are supposed to carry.'"[45] If paperwork is treated as a mediator in film studies rather than as a mere means of study, then it usually happens in scholarship on industrial cinema. In this film genre, documents such as production schedules and budgets are analyzed for their discursive, aesthetic, and ideological value.[46] This is likely because industrial films, in contrast to classical Hollywood or experimental films, for example, are not as closely tied in the literature to the concept of a single author or auteur, and thus paperwork, and the multiple voices who have a say in the shape and circulation of paperwork, are analyzed as part and parcel of industrial production histories, aesthetic styles, and rhetorical strategies.[47] Our example pushes paperwork into a film genre that has been rather reluctant to be seen through the lens of multiple authorship: experimental and documentary cinema. By displaying the application for film funding as an object of equal importance to, and actually sharing the title with, the film itself, *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* maintains that this document, while signed by one, will be shaped by other authors along its journey from one desk to the next.[48] Already in its title, the film insists that this is a document with an addressee, that it's on the move, foreshadowing the ways in which its trajectory will be profoundly influenced by the many hands that ultimately helped make and repair the holes in the film we are now watching. If "we are only. . .beginning to enjoy the benefits to be had in close analysis

of paperwork's more mundane genres," then we are also only beginning to enjoy the benefits to be had in a first analysis of the many genres, exciting and mundane, of cinema's paperwork.[49]

This film focuses on a specific genre of paperwork (the film funding application, or *Antrag*), in a specific film genre (experimental/documentary), in order to think about the processing of paperwork that occurs before the file's final destination, before it has served its purpose in successfully signing lead actors or financing special effects, for instance, after which it is filed away. In between applications drafted by an auteur director that ultimately recruit a star actor are the various stages of bureaucracy that affect and disrupt the end product, what is perceived as the coherent filmic object. *Der kleine Godard* surveys what films are being made in and around a slice of West Germany, Hamburg, during a specific time, 1976–78, highlighting the work being done on these film sets as well as depicting the paperwork of preproduction and prerelease. It explores the overlooked but essential stages of bureaucratic labor, documenting different film sets, the site where the labor of cinema is prioritized and fantasized, while repeatedly returning to the setup of paperwork that allowed for this work on set to happen in the very first place. The *Antrag* turns out to be a key component of the production process to which the study of cinema's labor has been blind, perhaps because it too closely relates to a kind of work that is asked of scholars ever more frequently. "Bureaucratic records . . . have often been overlooked as a problem in their own right because anthropologists produce and use documents in much the way their subjects of study do. . . . The problem today is not that the natives' writing is out of place and farcical, but rather that it is often too like our own."[50]

As an *Antragsfilm*, a film that explicitly attends to this neglected aspect of the work of pitching a film, it insists that the objects and practices that originate from bureaucratic frameworks be brought to the foreground of our attention, denaturalizing them in the process. It ultimately asks us to reflect not only on this form of labor that helps determine which films are produced and written into film history and which are excluded from this historiography and on what grounds. It also appeals to us, as scholars, to reflect on our relationship with the themes and problems of bureaucracy raised in the film. "There is 'an affinity between bureaucrats, officials, professionals, and left-liberal scholars that may be disturbing to the latter but which progressive scholars would have to take self-consciously into account in pursuing future projects.'"[51] Perhaps the *Antrag* doesn't get much attention in the literature because it's too close to the work that we, as scholars, are doing but usually talk about only, if at all, as something wholly separate from our scholarship, rather than as something that, in various ways, conditions it. In light of the ongoing funding crisis in the arts and the rise of third-party contributions (*Drittmittelgelder*) and third-party pathway programs in western European countries and the US, respectively, for the funding of higher education, there is a pressing

need for projects that critically evaluate and interrogate this logic, yet they remain few and far between.[52] Instead of treating bureaucratic labor, and more specifically the medial process of pitching artistic projects, as simple, boring, but necessary preconditions for the work we deem more important, creative, and innovative, perhaps it's time to acknowledge the fantasy of this dichotomy since "new ways of *talking about* paperwork [can lead] . . . to new ways of *doing* paperwork," and new ways of doing paperwork can potentially lead to new ways of working on our own papers—new ways of writing them.[53]

THE LITTLE GODARD

The scenes of filmic and technological "innovation" in *Der kleine Godard* are, importantly, implicated in scenes of writing. Before the first glimpses of the Super 8 multicamera invention for which Costard is applying to the Kuratorium for funding are shown in the film, he is depicted at his desk composing a letter to the institution. The scene closes with a line he reads out loud: "to be expressed as simply as possible," smirking afterward, just for an instant.[54] We likely know this requirement quite well. Making research ideas simple enough to understand for "those outside your field" is a common expectation across academic genres, from grant proposals and job talks to "public scholarship" and published essays. What comes after this scene of writing, contrary to this standard prerequisite, is not so simple. Instead of the predictable shots of an artist alone in his studio experimenting with his tools and materials to express his divine idea, Costard is sitting at a metal press machine with other people in the fore- and background while punk music plays over the scene, set in a small factory. The sounds of the machines drift into images of what seem to be an adjacent small communal working room full of graffiti, cigarette trays, assorted papers, and cameras. The dream working environment of the late 1960s, but not without some self-irony. When Costard finishes the metal plate he's been working on, he holds it up, measures it, and shrugs—it apparently did not turn out right. He throws his hands up in the air and then sets it to the side. While this first scene demonstrating the process of working with technological instruments counters conventional heroic representations of invention, the following scenes make clear that the discourse on technology in this film also extends beyond what we might be tempted to understand as Costard's stated intentions.[55] That would just be scratching the surface of things. Statements in this film about technology that appear celebratory or deterministic at first glance are rarely so straightforward. Sometimes they are juxtaposed with imagery that diverges from this verbal content; or there may be a disconnect between the statement on the soundtrack and the movement of someone's lips in the image; or self-reflexive gestures, like interrupting the visualization of technological displays to change a cassette tape, further complicate the interpretation of this discourse. While Costard often explains his interest in

inventing a new multicamera Super 8 setup in terms of economic and technological imperatives, such claims repeatedly remain in tension with their very own portrayal in the film.

The fact that Costard envisions films that can think themselves into existence in the form of Super 8 productions only adds to the confusion, as this is a format most often associated with amateur productions, such as home movies, and with nontheatrical exhibition.[56] The words that one associates with Super 8 images include "low-resolution," "rawness," "dreamlike," "grain and grunge," and even "magic."[57] It's a format that represents, in most cases, the exact opposite of what the typed text detailing his past failed plans and future endeavors envisions. A Super 8 film that is "completely without fantasy," with an "undisturbed course of events," and a "perfect staging"?[58] Several interrelated themes come together in Costard's Super 8 dream: a fantasy of totality (more cameras are presumed to mean a broader frame of perspective, "the more, the larger, the truer"); a longing for capturing unstaged events through automation (when the unison of sound and image is automated, the wholeness of lived reality is thought to be easily maintained, and thus a script is not required); and a discourse of precision through medium fidelity (these statements are based on the idea that a perfect staging does exist, which a certain quantity of Super 8 cameras and technological augmentation and precision could document).[59] The film we see, however, already evident in the opening scene of children playing fetch at the lake with a home movie aesthetic, is not without fantasy, not undisrupted, and not perfect. The brief intertitles right after this scene underscore this. When the children walk out of the frame, the film retrieves a line from an earlier film regarding the significance of timing, portraying it in typed text superimposed over the apparent home movie footage: "Bruno (off): 'Each time the coast was clear, no witness . . . / . . . I hesitated a few seconds . . . / . . . and once again it was too late.' / 'LE PETIT SOLDAT' Jean-Luc Godard 1960."[60] Fantasies and concerns about missing the moment and the mark permeate this film from the beginning. Given this, why should one take the hyperbolic language in Costard's "statements" about technology at face value? *Completely* without fantasy. A *perfect* staging. "'Every camera and every tape recorder is combined with a super accurate clock. . . . This means the absolute intertwining of the mechanical process of film production with the unique process of time.'"[61] It's not an accurate clock, but a *super* accurate clock. Not an intertwining of mechanics and temporality, but an *absolute* intertwining. Such statements, on the surface, retain a pronounced utopian aspiration for technology to perfect reality, yet they also carry an ironic tone that becomes increasingly apparent whenever Costard indulges in excessive superlatives, a critique of the common *Antragssprache* rhetoric, the over-the-top promises and language of funding applications. Or, in the words of the dog and pony show, "EVERYTHING NEW THIS YEAR . . . BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE."[62]

The film presents us with a certain tension in which we are torn between concentrating solely on a statement's content and considering its discursive purpose.

Keeping this tension in mind helps us perceive how the film directly addresses the material foundation of this film technology—namely, how it draws attention to the ways in which formats are codified, presenting more than an "internalist" perspective on media technology that would imply "a sort of formalism, attending more narrowly to how things work."[63] The film delays, for example, for over eight minutes before providing the answer to a question that has long been on our minds: "Why [use] Super 8 at all?"[64] The question is raised by Jelena Kristl, who narrates this sequence, "a woman . . . with a pronounced non-German accent" and cited in the credits merely as "die Ausländerin," the foreigner.[65] Like her, we, the viewers, are most likely foreigners in this context, as most of us lack the knowledge of the complexities involved in setting up an experimental Super 8 system in West Germany in the 1970s. Unlike her, we struggle to comprehend the specifics of this setup she articulates throughout the sequence, all this *Antragssprache*, this specialized application language. The foreigner doesn't simplify things or slow down for us; instead, she presents a technical system that's challenging to grasp even for industry experts. The level of detail with which she describes the Super 8 setup borders on hyperbolic absurdity. It almost comes across as a parody of the explanatory paragraphs commonly required in funding applications, which demand clarity and accessibility when explaining complex experimental technologies to nonexperts, to those outside your field.[66] By portraying Kristl as an outsider to his own system, Costard implies that only an outsider can reveal the futility of attempting to encapsulate, in a few paragraphs and sketches, an experimental setup that has taken years for a team to develop. Through this foreign perspective, one outside our realm of familiarity and cultural norms, we are forced to acknowledge our detachment from this specialized world. It highlights our limitations and our own position of being outsiders in this system—an "ethnographic reversibility of authorization" that exposes our relative primitiveness.[67] The technical explanations of the experimental Super 8 system that she narrates with the help of numerous diagrams and highly complex instruments are beyond our comprehension, but it can actually be "instructive to apprehend as strange those aspects of scientific activity which are readily taken for granted. It is evident that the uncritical acceptance of the concepts and terminology used by some [experts] has had the effect of enhancing rather than reducing the mystery which surrounds" their practices.[68]

When the foreigner revisits a phrase we've heard before, from the typed letter that was burned at the film's outset, new information is communicated to us about the intricate relationship between film formats and film funding. She repeats that the impetus behind this technological setup is the aspiration to create "feature films completely without fantasy" and achieve a "perfect staging," with "Spielfilme, die sich selbst ausdenken" (feature films that create themselves or think themselves into being) becoming a recurring motif throughout the film.[69] Within this motif, a blend of dreams and anxieties emerges: the promise of automation

FIGURE 42. *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (1978), dir. Hellmuth Costard. Screenshot.

through technological progress, the anxiety of missing the opportune moment in unscripted reality, and growing concerns about institutional support and bureaucratic hurdles, given that this special setup challenges traditional film production processes.[70] If this system is aimed at capturing unscripted reality, then things like a script could not be provided in advance, not even to funding institutions that require precisely such conventions as part of the grant application process. Consequently, securing funding for this technological innovation proved challenging, and Costard's "proposal to the *Kuratorium* in May 1977 was rejected. That rejection letter, included in the film, explains that the *Kuratorium* could accept 'only fully worked out screenplays' and not 'treatments, exposés or outlines.' . . . The *Kuratorium* had resolutely ignored that Costard's project renounced the idea of writing a script to dictate the direction of his film."[71] Thus, the foreigner explains, they had to find a more cost-effective way to bring this dream of an unscripted reality to fruition. A quick cut then shows the December 1970 issue of *Filmkritik* with the title "Alles über Super-8" (Everything you need to know about Super-8) and featuring an illustration drawn by Costard (figure 42).[72]

It was in this issue of the journal that "[Edgar] Reitz identified synchronized sound recording as the most serious problem. Since no super-8 sound blimps existed on the commercial market, many filmmakers had attempted to hand-produce their own."[73] That year, at the Hamburger Filmschau (Hamburg Film Festival), Costard introduced his version of the sound blimp.

> The blimp is green, made of plastic, and red in the front where the lens sits. In the film that Kurt Rosenthal showed at the Hamburger Filmschau, Hellmuth Costard was seen standing in a Hamburg park with his green blimp and with his Erlson device in a satchel, and, lip-synchronously (!) he demonstrated to the viewer how his self-made equipment worked. Hellmuth Costard had thus staged himself

> as a super-8 man. His performance is charming, even if he couldn't convince the audience of his synchronous super-8 technique. Costard's equipment is unfortunately more extensive and more conspicuous than today's very convenient and professional 16mm equipment. The advantage of Costard's super-8 setup is that one doesn't quite believe that he can actually film with it. Presumably, this is how he often elicits the amusement from his partners that he needs for his films. (Cf. the cover of this issue [of *Filmkritik*]).[74]

The filmmaker's portrayal of submission to a sovereign on the journal cover seems to depict him bending the knee to his film "partners," a gesture of subordination to the patrons.[75] With his green blimp pushed forward as an offering, the filmmaker, worn out from drafting funding application after funding application and a range of unsuccessful experiments, presents his achievement, this new technology, as a tribute to the true filmmaking authorities, the institutions.

The foreigner continues her narration of the technological development, informing us that years have passed since this issue of *Filmkritik* addressing the limitations of the Super 8 format. Today, we learn, they have embraced advancements such as a timecoding system and a multicamera setup. Costard revisits his views on the format technology, illustrating the gains achievable through this technological experiment and highlighting what would be forfeited without it: "What if I start a synchronous shot and then I want to cut and I don't have the second camera—because as long as I can only work with one camera, every cut produces either a time jump or, at the very least, the second shot is asynchronous. That's why I say montage loses its power through sound."[76] Synchronization guarantees not only, ideally for Costard, the ability to catch that otherwise missed moment but also, in the particular case of timecoding, an exchange between and a blending of medial strategies. Timecoding developed out of the necessity to more easily synchronize image and sound in video (and thus, beginning in the 1950s, also in television). The sequence of images on videotape is, in contrast to those on a filmstrip, not visually intelligible, and thus "in the early days of video technology, this invisibility made manual editing complicated and subject to error. Electronic time markers on the tapes were then inscribed and read by the electronic video editing systems produced in the early 1960s. An addressing system of this type was introduced as the standard in 1969 . . . and . . . it was taken over by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) in 1972 . . . ."[77] Although synchronous sound was of course possible on film before this, Costard finds that a problem arises in this method between the stages of processing and storage, since the recording of images and sound in professional production often occurs separately from one another and noise is able to enter during their sequencing: "'A conventional sound film therefore consists of a network of exceptional moments that is no longer transparent to the viewer. Such a film is comparable to an almost completely destroyed mural after careful restoration. No one can say with how much ambition the restorer has introduced himself into the picture.'"[78] For Costard, the solution to

this problem arrived when a sound technology institute in Munich finally developed a timecode system which he could then modify for Super 8. It was released in 1976, two years after he and his team had started experimenting with their own solutions for amateur format synchronization and the year he began producing *Der kleine Godard*, which summarizes these stages of experimentation and modification and chronicles their ongoing efforts.[79]

While Costard and his team experimented with different format and synchronization technologies throughout the mid- to late 1970s, their consistent objective was to enable a more precise stage of processing via an affordable, accessible format and a multiple-camera system. The dream of automated audiovisual processing would eventually be realized in a different way: the application of a video-based editing method to film material through timecoding.[80] Like Costard's dream, timecoding marks "tendencies in audiovisual processes that have increasingly taken effect since the 1970s: digitalization and nonlinearity. The general functional principle of nonlinear editing systems is based on a separation of the image and sound data on the one hand, and on the other hand on their temporal organization during playback, editing. Thus, preliminary decisions with respect to editing can be stored independent of the material and used for a preview, or various editing alternatives can be compared with each other and ultimately rejected if necessary."[81] While Costard envisions a form of audiovisual processing that would, in the moment of recording, synchronize image and sound, the ultimate purpose of this was to improve the mode of editing and the subsequent stage of storage.[82] There's a fear of loss at the core of Costard's concerns about subjective editing, losing that moment that unfolds in front of the camera when the necessary sound-image composition takes place. With the development of nonlinear editing systems, the claim is made that now this moment, even after intense, experimental stages of editing, can still be preserved in its "original" form. That's not to say that Costard would see his project, which didn't achieve this end result of analog processing/digital editing, as having failed. He implies that, while automated audiovisual processing ("films that can think themselves into being") might have been an objective with which to initiate his project, an experimental setup is intended not just to "generate answers; experimental systems are vehicles for materializing questions. . . . It is only in the process of making one's way through a complex experimental landscape that scientifically meaningful simple things get delineated."[83] Implementing such a rigid and precise technological system is not about achieving success or avoiding failure for Costard. Instead, it serves as a point of departure for exploring territories of possibility that remain, at present, uncharted. As he writes: "But I had chosen this construction, that the film is destroyed the moment it is put on paper. That's an idea you can take seriously, but it's also just as ridiculous, of course. But I had taken it completely seriously, as a game."[84]

Although the precision of image-sound synchronization that Costard claims he is seeking is rarely shown in the film, other forms of synchronization become more

obvious, and perhaps, over time, begin to question the premise of this stated desire for a new form of film technology. Despite its initial paradoxical appearance within such an experimental framework, noise emerges as a pivotal component of this particular game. As the foreigner describes that the "documentary" approach and numerous cameras necessitated a substantial amount of film material, our focus shifts from technical diagrams and sample Super 8 footage. A new stream of images emerges—an unforeseen signal, almost as if someone had suddenly changed the channel. Footage from the set of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Despair*, filmed in 1977 in Mölln, near Hamburg, is presented, showcasing actors, designers, and props being transported to the shooting location and stars at hair and makeup (figure 43). A large production team gathers. Crew members push a 35 mm camera system along a rail for a tracking shot. These visuals diverge from what the foreigner is specifically describing yet simultaneously resonate with the bigger, more complicated situation the film aims to depict. As Costard describes in an interview about the West German filmmaking landscape during this time:

> I think the isolation of German film-makers, one from another, may change . . . . If you look at the way television is produced, it's already so like mass-production. It's so progressive, as far as the principles of montage and fast production go—like the live telephone conversation, transmitted by satellite . . . . When Hussein [bin Talal, King of Jordan,] visited Berlin, there was a police car with a tiny, tripod-supported camera and a very tall hydraulic aerial-mast transmitting directly to police headquarters. Equipment worth half-a-million, operated by five policemen! A team of film-makers, familiar with that equipment, and who no longer form and create, but simply transmit. Not even TV people can afford equipment like that. If you see things in that perspective, then Fassbinder and [Wim] Wenders and I are all sitting in the same . . . cinema boat. The difference is that Wenders, for example, hasn't understood this yet. He thinks he's in a different boat.[85]

This era marks a significant shift in media dynamics within the filmmaking landscape, where television, telephone, and cinema converge under the concept of montage, a term once exclusive to an individual medium. These realms now require collective consideration. Production materials have become more portable, extending accessibility beyond traditional industry boundaries and highlighting diverse filmmaking practices that, while existing for some time, are now more prominently visible. Both established and emerging directors, big names like Fassbinder and Wenders and the little names like Costard, may embody distinct filmmaking styles, yet they face a shared challenge: navigating their roles in this evolving media landscape. Fassbinder, for example, maintains his extensive crews, costly equipment, and theatrical releases, but now relies on television co-productions to sustain this filmmaking method.[86] The foreigner continues her narrative: "So the only path that remained for us was radical cost-cutting. That's why [we used] Super 8."[87] The final sentence elucidating their choice of film format is juxtaposed with an image depicting the delivery of a Rolls-Royce to Fassbinder's set.[88]

FIGURE 43. *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (1978), dir. Hellmuth Costard. Screenshot.

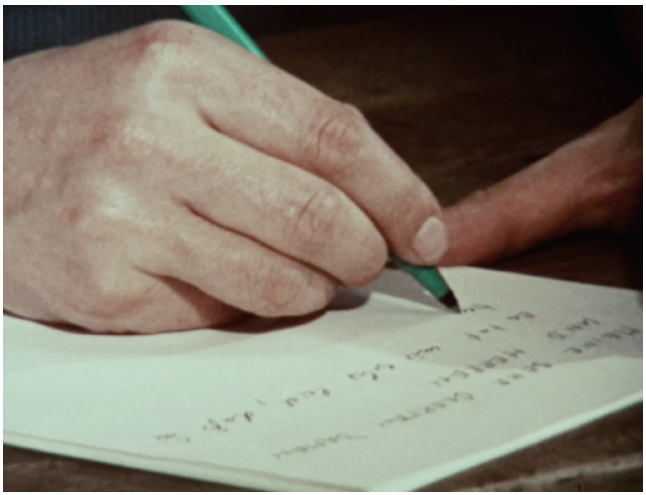


FIGURE 44. *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (1978), dir. Hellmuth Costard. Screenshot.

Rather than a sarcastic commentary on or criticism of production excess on the film set next door, these clips paired with the foreigner's soundtrack seem to try to draw these two scenes together, despite and maybe because of their outwardly apparent budgetary differences, to try to bring these two moments into the same boat. To do so, the film comparatively examines objects on set in their different configurations of film production. We see not only a close-up of the layered

notebook and sheets needed in *Despair* for sound-image continuity maintenance, but also the laborious drafting of project descriptions for funding applications for an experiment to improve continuity in *Der kleine Godard* (figure 44).[89] Costard's vision of achieving an exact audiovisual synchronization, in which sounds and images organically merge at the same time that they are being recorded, is not realized in the film. Instead, a different form of synchronization emerges: a visual-visual synchronization becomes apparent over time, synthesizing what initially seemed like two discrete visual narratives and conditions of filmmaking.[90]

The film shows an interest in the specific materials that undergird film financing and production in this era, indicating an understanding of these materials as individual if often underestimated components that, together with other bureaucratic objects and practices, cooperate to enact specific media processes. For a media object in emergence, a common historical strategy for beginning to define it has been to situate it in the form of a list. "At the time of its emergence, you cannot do better than explain what the new object is by repeating the list of its constitutive actions: 'with A it does this, with C it does that.' It has no other shape than this list. The proof is that if you add an item to the list you redefine the object, that is, you give it a new shape."[91] The logic of the *Antrag*, which typically requires many forms of lists (of costs, of people involved in the project, of equipment required, and so on), is spread out over the footage of other film situations. The filming of seemingly disparate objects—a leather vest, Super 8 outtakes, caked-on makeup, camera batteries, a tracking rail, technical sketches, a Rolls-Royce, a watch, continuity papers, application drafts—entangles the film within a series of logistical processes that usually get smoothed over in the final product, in the film that is eventually screened for the public. By avoiding long takes, a denaturalization of the film sets and filmmaking situations occurs. Both idolized and bureaucratic people and objects are now replaced by an inventory of shots that steadily redefines the particular situations we are trying to understand, therein taking stock of the cooperation of objects in this emergent media infrastructure.

Paperwork and planning, the bureaucratic minutiae that precede the exhibition and experience of cinema, now infiltrate the objects of the set design that might otherwise simply be perceived as adding to the historical or dramatic atmosphere of the film, resulting in strange hybrid objects. Rather than essentialize single-medium formats, this kind of perspective considers their characteristics to be more collaborative, malleable, and transferrable.[92] A Rolls-Royce no longer stands alone as a demonstration of Fassbinder's financial success but, when juxtaposed with Costard's paper trail, is an absurd part of a larger landscape of bureaucratic media processes that now raises questions about its legitimacy: How many times was this car mentioned in the film funding applications? How many pieces of paper precede and accompany this prop? It becomes more difficult to conceive of film as a lone, discrete, finished medium. "Film alone cannot be found."[93] *Der*

kleine Godard opens up a schema for understanding documentary and experimental cinema through the overlooked media processes that facilitate its production and circulation, such as the methods of preproduction and paperwork required by institutions.[94] The funding application logic explicated in the film suggests that there is less of a clear separation between preproduction and production activities, thus disrupting the assumption of a linear progression from so-called preparatory media and methods to a discrete end product, as well as myths about the single artist-genius who authoritatively controls and oversees this linear unfolding from initial idea to its ultimate and definitive medial manifestation.[95]

Der kleine Godard acknowledges the extent to which indiscrete media processes continue to affect the kind of project being made long after the paperwork has been filed, situating itself as intricately implicated in and an integral part of this supply chain. It is and presents one kind of *Antragslogik*, application logic, and it includes, for comparison and incorporation into a broader bureaucratic infrastructure, snippets of at least three others. We see, for example, Costard in a municipal committee meeting considering an artist-in-residence invitation for Godard and Godard meeting with Norddeutscher Rundfunk (Northern German Broadcasting) to discuss co-production possibilities; one of the projects Godard proposes is about whether "it [is] possible to make films in Germany today," but the committee seems more interested in showcasing him as a famous director.[96] He delves deeper into his video phase shortly thereafter.[97] We are shown scenes of a child actor in *Moritz, lieber Moritz* (Moritz, dear Moritz, 1978) handling a machine gun prop. The director, Hark Bohm, is on set, and his team uses a clapperboard for syncing image and sound and adjusts the microphones for the children. Bohm briefly visits our film set across the way, which is filming him, asking Costard several technical questions about his experimental film system before coolly ending the conversation and returning to his own director's seat behind the camera. From there, Bohm proceeds to film what "would become a leading German money making film in West Germany the next year."[98] In another sequence, Fassbinder is driven to the set of *Despair*, confidently approaching a 35 mm camera dressed in a leather vest and biker hat adorned with chains, with a cigarette in his mouth. The actors, decked out in full costume for the period drama, along with horses, carriages, vintage cars, expensive equipment, and the film crew, await his direction. The scene, lasting only seconds, is initiated by the director's presence as he strides onto the set, and he determines its culmination with a gesture of authority and validation: "Dan-ke!" (Thank you!)[99] Meanwhile, Costard's film continues rolling. It captures close-up shots of a crew member meticulously logging continuity details in a dense binder filled with assorted pages, logs, and smaller clipboards. It is around this time that Fassbinder begins negotiating co-productions with major West German television networks.[100]

All these figures are notably representative of specific roles for Costard, evident in how they are acknowledged in the closing credits: "the applicant: Hellmuth

Costard [. . .] first director: Hark Bohm [. . .] second director: R. W. Fassbinder [. . .] As guest: Jean-Luc Godard."[101] The collection of names in *Der kleine Godard* is not based on similarities in content, style, or political themes. It isn't seeking to insert itself into a revisionary history of New Wave or New German Cinema through an insistence on amateur additions to these labels. Instead, the film aligns these projects, audiovisually positioning them next to each other, by highlighting how Western European cinema of this era is grappling with a number of urgent questions about changes in film formats, funding conditions, and bureaucratic processes. This turns out to be the organizational approach that helps synthesize seemingly discrete filmmaking practices. The film eschews detailed biographies of auteurs or intricate film plots, since they do little to address such concerns. What matters more is how these names function as types within a series, reflecting the "*recursive* character of serial progression. Recursivity here means the continual readjustment of possible continuations to already-established information."[102] Each applicant, director, and guest serves as a category that remains relevant for future contexts, capable of being repeatedly filled, adjusted, and reshuffled to accommodate changing priorities. In fact, in *Der kleine Godard*, they are. While the credits tell us that "die Personen und ihre Darsteller" (the characters and their performers) are listed in the order of appearance, that is not exactly true. We find Godard in this film long before we see him on-screen. First, of course, in the title of the film—that place where "the author's sovereignty ends" anyway—and then in the opening sequence at the lake via the quote from his film *Le Petit Soldat* about timing, and once more before he shows up in the flesh.[103] When he does, it might take a while before we know it's him.

THE BIG MERGER

This iteration of Godard on camera arrives in the middle of the foreigner's explanation of the complex adjustments the team had to make to affordable and mass-produced Super 8 cameras, such as using mono-cell instead of mignon-sized batteries, integrating a quartz-controlled motor (*Quarz-Steuerung*) into the camera that, like a quartz watch, can more accurately synchronize sound and image between several cameras, and the infrared scanning (*Abtastung mit Infrarotlicht*) of the sprocket holes. When she describes that the primary audio track of the film stock would not be used in their experiment to record sound, but merely to record which sound element belongs to which image element, we see a hand on an editing table manipulating what we hear: a woman's voice with an echo behind it. We later learn that it belongs to Marie-Luise Scherer, listed in the credits as "the friend." She speaks slowly and hesitantly on the soundtrack, often pausing and revising what she is saying, and at one point, in midsentence, it becomes clear that she is translating something from French, from a different foreigner this time: "interests us less . . . in that . . . in the scheme in which . . . um . . . it

would oblige us—*en échange*—um, for exchange . . . in exchange for that money . . . um . . . to spend a year in . . . at this place."[104] The hand flips the switches on the editing table and we hear fragments of her voice again: "to spend a year in this . . . at this place . . . which is not ours—the place—even if the conditions, the terms are excellent."[105] The word order is slightly off, prompting the friend to correct herself as she speaks. The hand continues to move the sound forward and backward, jumping around in the material. Eventually, rather than the hand, viewers see the director, Costard, sitting at the editing table and then turning around in his chair to directly address the camera behind him. He nods to the camera as we hear his own voice on the soundtrack with the friend—"We now need to change the cassettes, ok?"—followed by the friend's acknowledgement: "So I don't have to keep translating now?"[106]

What we hear from the foreigner about the perfect synchronization of sound and image is exactly that which does *not* take place in the film we are watching. This is not a mini-instructional or industrial film embedded within an experimental film about a new technological development that we are able to understand if we are in the know, if we're part of the industry and familiar with the complex processes the foreigner describes. Sequences that seem to be primarily focused on technological precision, accuracy, and expertise are noticeably interrupted by cultural codes and practices (communication and translation challenges), financial concerns (thematized in the explanations of technical equipment and in the content of the translated text), and the realities of embodied human intervention (editing decisions that shape the experience of the film in terms of auditory register, sound-image arrangement, plot progression, and pace). In the buildup to seeing the "real" Godard on-screen, we encounter a range of interconnected technological, cultural, and bureaucratic practices that condition how he will appear and how his words will come across to us, heightening our awareness of the central importance of the pitch: how to articulate the potential of a film that has yet to materialize in a way that sparks our enthusiasm and curiosity yet leaves room for a bit of mystery.

A few minutes later, we are able to view the images that correspond to the voices we just heard on the soundtrack. The friend, Scherer, is sitting with Costard over coffee, about to translate for him a letter in French that he recently received from Godard. The visuals thus perform a reenactment of the translation we already listened to via the soundtrack at the editing table, which we now get to see played out and embodied in the film. As we previously heard, this turns out to be a complicated process. Sometimes the friend has forgotten the words, and other times she says the phrase is too difficult to translate. But in any case, she's impressed: "Is the letter signed by him [Godard]? Wow . . ."[107] The content of the letter, which is gradually revealed through her literal line-by-line translation and the contextual information provided by Costard, reaffirms what we might have suspected the first time we heard it on the soundtrack—namely, that it's about a pitch. Godard is

responding in this letter to an invitation from Costard on behalf of the Hamburg municipal committee for an artist-in-residence stipend. As with the hand at the editing table manipulating the soundtrack, in the next series of images, we hear something that doesn't correspond to what we see. Costard is hunched over a letter, pen in his hand, contemplating what to write and how to write it. Over this scene of writing, we hear Godard's disembodied voice. The German subtitles over close-ups of Costard's face, his gaze fixed downward on the paper, translate what Godard is saying for those who don't speak French: "Ich meine, wir . . . das schien uns tatsächlich etwas unklar" (I mean, we . . . that actually seemed a little unclear to us).[108]

In this scene, everything might seem unclear to us, too: It includes a montage of Costard writing or contemplating what to write (perhaps to Godard in response to his letter that the friend just translated for him, or perhaps it's part of his own film funding pitch), overlaid with a soundtrack of Godard's comments about his potential residency in Hamburg, other muffled voices, and things clattering and clinking in the background.[109] There are shots of Costard making lunch—*Bauernbrot auf Holzplatte*, farmhouse bread on a wooden platter, as German as it gets—synchronized with a question from Godard on the soundtrack, translated in German via subtitles at the bottom of the screen: "Ist es möglich Bilder in Deutschland zu machen?" (Is it possible to make images in Germany today?)[110] We see a quick flash of Godard at a restaurant, which we recognize as the visual source of this soundtrack. A version of this question becomes the title of the production he's proposing during the negotiations in Hamburg.[111] He elaborates on the pitch: "I would almost say: 'Is it possible to have imagination?' Loosely speaking: 'Is a German capable of making an image . . . ?'"[112] A pitch, rather than being a stable element that precedes and is discrete from the process of film production, is presented here as an experiment in and of itself, and thus it follows that Godard understands his proposal for Hamburg as an experiment in the form of a film, one that he imagines will yield results at the end of its production, in its exhibition and screening: "At the end of the film we will see whether [the answer to this question is] yes or no."[113]

The soundtrack might seem to represent conditions of film production that are drastically different from Costard's, forging a sound-image relationship that apparently symbolizes two distinct sets of circumstances and levels of status: the big Godard, courted by foreign committees and discussing in a restaurant a DM 500,000 request to potential financiers, versus the little Costard drafting applications again and again for small amounts of funds in his home office apartment, cleaning up the crumbs of his lunch over a small sink. But the two situations are nevertheless linked in this scene. Can a German make images? Yes. Can one make images in Germany? In this case, at least, yes. This juxtaposition is not a defensive retort to Godard, however. The two scenes of Godard and Costard pitching their projects exemplify, in some respects, contrasting ends of the spectrum in film funding models. While Godard talks vaguely about whether it's possible to make

films in Germany today, Costard, the Super 8 man (as he was called in *Filmkritik*), stages the format experiment in this film with such precision, often to a seemingly unnecessary degree, that he likely ends up estranging most viewers. The scenes showcasing his Super 8 system describe all the minor inventions that were needed to construct it, which might otherwise disappear in the apparatus. For example, the *Schallschutzgehäuse* (soundproof enclosure) that keeps the loud, constant humming of the camera from affecting the soundtrack, the electric *Funkfernauslöser* (radio remote control) with three speeds in both directions that allows access to all cameras in the system when the blimp is closed, and the idea to replace the *Luftbildsucher* (aerial viewfinder) with a *Glasfaser-Mattscheibe* (fiberglass matte disc) that costs DM 260, usually integrated only into professional cameras. The juxtaposition of these descriptions of Costard's project with scenes of Godard negotiating with institutions for his next project suggests that both filmmakers may be sitting in the same cinema boat, both having to learn how to navigate institutional funding requirements anew in this altered media landscape. At the same time that Costard is experimenting with Super 8 formats, Godard is testing out video formats, and his experiments are not that much more simplified.

By 1977, Anne-Marie Miéville and Godard had been working for several years with their production studio Sonimage, then based in Rolle, Switzerland.[114] The focus shifted in this time period from the more direct political action advocated in the earlier Dziga Vertov Group projects to a closer examination of the geopolitical site and financial and technological means of media production that enable these political views to materialize and circulate through aesthetic forms.[115] The move from Paris to Grenoble symbolized a break not only with the Vertov Group and their approach to politics and enacting change, but also with the city so closely tied with classical and, for Godard particularly, New Wave cinema, which often incorporated and recalled aspects of Hollywood genre films.[116] This corresponds with a departure from what was assumed to be the standard material format of cinema: celluloid. "The growth of video technology seemed to offer the possibility of gaining some autonomy at every level of production and Sonimage was set up with considerable stock of video equipment. At this time Godard seems to have considered, at least in interviews, the possibility of alternative distribution. His proposals were . . . for an alternative notion of distribution which would operate as though Sonimage was a handcraft industry with customers ordering video programmes for particular purposes."[117] In other words, Miéville and Godard sought two forms of autonomy during the Sonimage stage: autonomy from filmic materials and from the funding and institutional constraints dictated by Paris.

The second film Miéville and Godard produced at Sonimage, titled *Numéro deux* (Number two, 1975), relies on the ritual and rhetoric of the pitch to thematize the problem of authorship from the perspective of media formats. This film was a rejection of the possibility of returning to the aesthetics of New Wave cinema in this era, demonstrating this on at least two levels. First, *Numéro deux* was commissioned

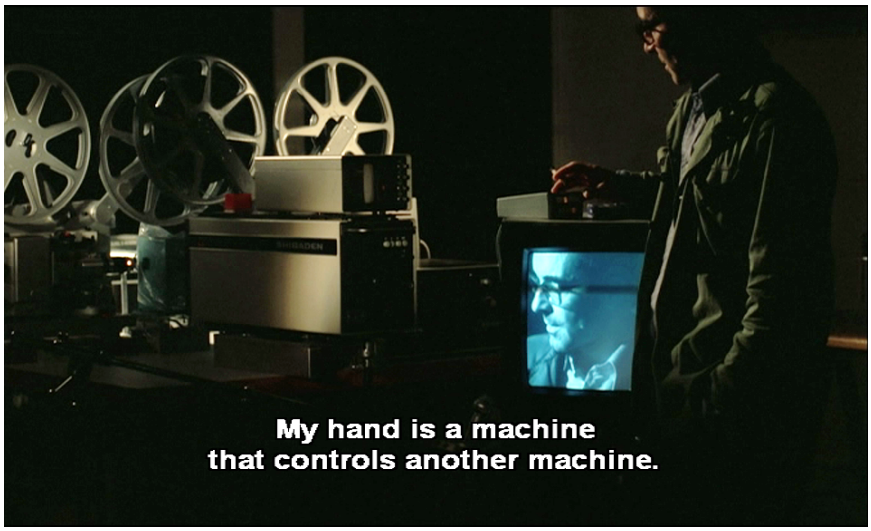


FIGURE 45. *Numéro deux* (1975), dir. Jean-Luc Godard. Script: Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville. Screenshot.

to be a remake, a "number two" of *À bout de souffle* (Breathless, 1960) that Godard never ended up making, therein ultimately serving as a dismissal of this premise.[118] Second, it further distances itself from the cinematic *dispositif* already in one of its opening scenes in which the director, Godard, is surrounded by film and video equipment as he discusses the narrative of the film and highlights some distinctive features of video formatting (figure 45). These features have to do in large part with simultaneity—specifically, the ability of video to simultaneously record and transmit, thus allowing the subject and object to be seen at the same time. "In film, one image comes after another, and implicitly negates everything which it isn't. . . . Video permits 'this' and 'that' at the same time. This principle of simultaneity is at the heart of *Number Two*, and one of the primary references of the title. . . . *Number Two* also gives us film and video at the same time."[119] In the case of the director in this opening scene, what we see is visually and conceptually a split entity, functioning as both subject and object. The subject, this figure, is describing the film, its themes, and his own tangential thoughts to the audience. He pitches his ideas to us while he stands next to his creation, leaning on the video monitor. With his head appearing on the video monitor, this figure is also simultaneously the object who is narrating the film we are watching.[120]

In this opening monologue, Godard describes to the audience how he came to make *Numéro deux* after his former producer, Georges de Beauregard, saw all of the video equipment in the Sonimage studio and urged him to use it as a point of departure for something. "I said, 'Georges, be honest, you need money. . . . I need money too, to pay for these machines.' . . . Georges and I discussed it. Then he said, 'I'll get

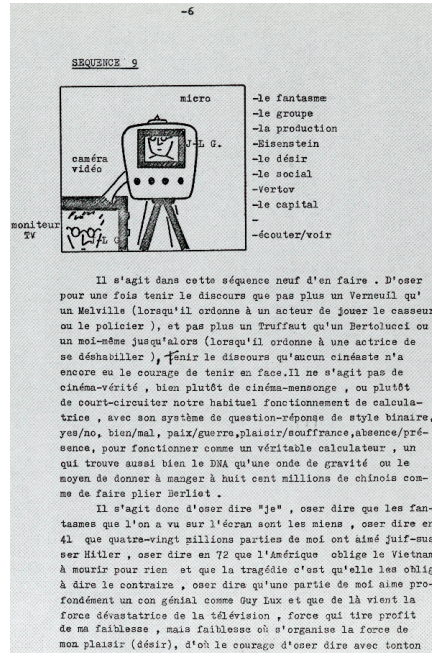


FIGURE 46. Jean-Luc Godard, *Moi Je* (1973), from Godard, "Moi je, projet de film," *Jean-Luc Godard: Documents*, ed. N. Brenez, D. Faroul, and M. Temple (Paris; Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2006), 212.

the money.' 'How?' I said. He replied, 'I don't know. I'll push some papers.' . . . 'I'll get you 600,000 francs. I'll make it happen.'"[121] Beyond this production pretense, Godard also discusses themes that are addressed in the subsequent narrative portion of the film revolving around a family, as well as personal circumstances and broad topics, such as politics, literature, and technology. In this monologue, he's an applicant, a director in isolation, an actor on-screen, a narrator of the upcoming film, and a partner. What he is experimenting with, his "tentative trying out of different authorial positions," is a way of thinking about the *Antrag*, the pitch, with all of its professional, institutional, and personal details, alongside the finished film in a nonlinear form.[122] The reason that it's difficult to pin all these details down to the diegesis that follows, or even to *Numéro deux* in particular, is that many of the visual situations and lines spoken by Godard were already part of an earlier unrealized project, *Moi Je* (Me I, 1973), which has been saved in the form of paperwork. More specifically, in the form of an *Antrag* (figure 46).

In *Moi Je*, consisting of paperwork for an application for state-sponsored *avances sur recettes* (financial advances) from Le Centre National de la Cinématographie (National Centre for Cinematography), one finds various sketches and lines that make their way into *Numéro deux*.[123] After *les trente glorieuses*, the "glorious thirty" years between 1945 and 1975, the global economic upheaval stemming from the oil crisis, compounded by widespread unemployment, political instability and transitions, and inflationary pressures, created a challenging environment in France

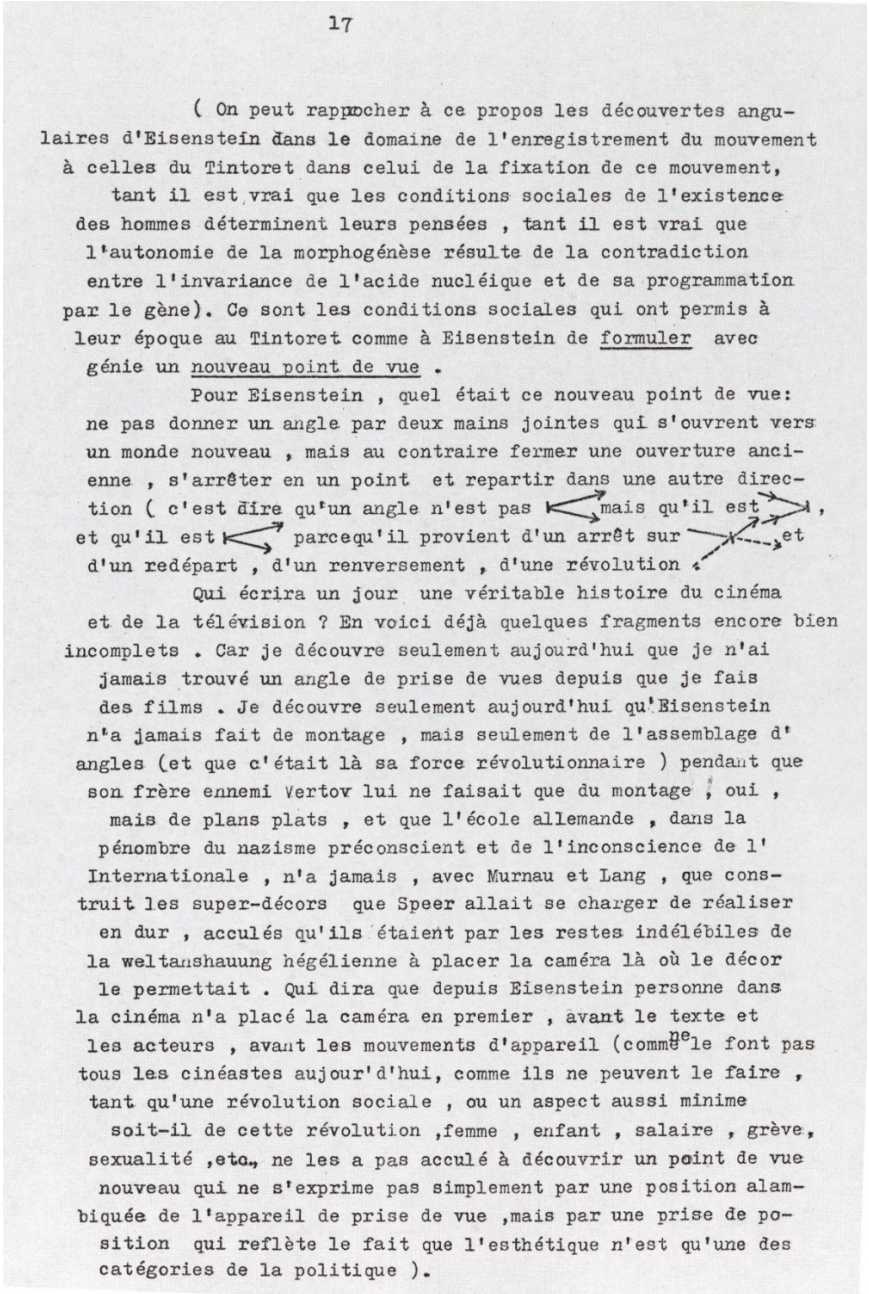
during the mid-1970s for pursuing national film funding initiatives.[124] In a context of competition and scarcity, one might expect that applicants would want to draft an *Antrag* that diligently follows the procedures and abides by all the requirements that Costard ventriloquizes at the beginning of his film: an application that is clear, explained as simply as possible, comprising a timeline, a cost breakdown, and a script. But what one finds in *Moi Je* is altogether different. Pages are filled with what looks like comics, sketches of a film strip or a storyboard of sorts, photographic collages, mathematical diagrams, and what appears to be typed code and/or concrete poetry.[125] A couple years later, he expresses more explicitly in relation to *Numéro deux* many of his thoughts about the changes occurring in bureaucratic organization and systems, as well as his fellow directors' unwillingness to acknowledge and adjust to these altered and evolving circumstances: "I am amazed that people who lack ideas for new films (including some old friends like [François] Truffaut, [Jacques] Rivette, who don't have any more ideas than the guys whom they denounced twenty years ago), continue to adhere to the one and self-same system of filmmaking, which is easy to describe: a sum of so many million, multiplied by so many weeks, multiplied by a certain number of people."[126] Thinking about pitches, their institutional politics, and their interaction with the finished film becomes critical to Godard's practice during this time and in the years to come. Soon after participating in *Der kleine Godard*, he started making what are now referred to as "preparatory sketchbook[s]," "rough draft[s] made on video," or "video essay[s]" about this underestimated yet indispensable process of pitching.[127] These include *Scénario de Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (Scenario for Every man for himself, 1979) and *Scénario du film Passion* (Scenario for Passion, 1982), for example, "usually conceived in part . . . with a view to securing production funds," which are in essence multimedia performances of his pitches for the films.[128] "On the whole, Godard interprets the genre of the funding application extremely freely; too freely, apparently, to actually be funded."[129]

The argument underlying these film pitches, these *Antragsfilme*, suggests that the distinction in institutional, critical, and scholarly reception between preproduction and production, between what anticipates a work and the work that is subsequently produced, is both a practical and a conceptual problem. It results not only in practical challenges for filmmakers such as Costard and Godard, or Fassbinder and Bohm and Wenders, but also in conceptual misunderstandings and impediments to innovation. *Antragsfilme*, in thematizing the pitch, intervene in what Erhard Schüttpelz has called the blindness to innovation that is necessarily manifested in disciplinary and artistic standards. To uphold these norms, which essentially distinguish the "master" from the "novice," innovative ideas must be initially dismissed as amateurish and lacking in professionalism. He notes, however, that "this blindness can be exploited, not as in the 'classical avant-garde' in order to produce or position oneself as an innovation, as the inventor who is the master . . . , but by exploiting the blindness itself, and producing something

that makes the barrier between production and reception, that is, the overall system—the symptom in which one is stuck, but in which everyone is stuck, from the master to the novice to the recipient—the theme of the subject itself."[130] Understanding *Antragsfilme* as making this blindness the theme of the subject itself helps shed light on the ready-made categories and tendencies within both institutional and disciplinary structures, such as the tendency primarily to attach the name "Godard" with the medium of cinema, regardless of his extensive work with video formats.[131] Increased scholarly recognition of Godard's work across different media would challenge and potentially destabilize conventional media hierarchies, resulting in a shift in perspective that "accords equal weight to all manifestations of the project, irrespective of budget or format . . . and renders redundant any meaningful distinction between research, work in progress, or finished artwork."[132] Nevertheless, there is a tendency in the scholarship to privilege the cinematic as a means of keeping "Godard" and his projects situated within an understanding of film that privileges single-medium theories and histories over more diverse and emerging methodologies in screen, television, visual art, and moving image studies, as well as paperwork studies and media logistics—disciplines in which it would be highly advantageous to consider the various medial practices embraced and experimented with in *Moi Je* as a pitch.

According equal weight to the pitch opens up new lines of inquiry that could disrupt conventional media hierarchies and shed light on the value of supposed amateurish preparatory work. As an example, although the title commonly cited in the scholarship of the transcription of Godard's 1978 "lectures" at the Conservatoire d'art cinématographique (Conservatory of Cinematographic Art) in Montréal is *Introduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma* (Introduction to a True History of Cinema), which was the title given to the publication of the lectures in 1980, reading the paperwork tells another story.[133] In contrast, it insists that the common abbreviation for Godard's project that elides one medium in favor of another is incomplete. "Throughout the 1970s, we find regular allusions to the embryonic *Histoire(s) du cinéma* in interviews and working documents, including the script of his major abandoned project of this period, 'Moi je' ('Me I'), the closing five pages of which are presented as 'a few as yet very incomplete fragments' of 'a true history of cinema', and include what would become over the ensuing decades a central strand of reflection on [Sergei] Eisenstein's and Vertov's montage theories."[134] Looking at the pitch, in the middle of the page, we see, however, that at least one other medium is still missing from the understanding of this project. At the beginning of this paragraph, Godard writes: "Who will one day write a true history of cinema and television? Here are, so far, a few fragments, still quite incomplete" (figure 47).[135] A true history of cinema *and* television.

Television as well as video are mentioned throughout this pitch alongside cinema as critical sites of production, projection, and diffusion, appearing next to handwritten arrows that redirect us to earlier ideas and reconnect us to words and



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(On peut rapprocher à ce propos les découvertes angulaires d'Eisenstein dans le domaine de l'enregistrement du mouvement à celles du Tintoret dans celui de la fixation de ce mouvement, tant il est vrai que les conditions sociales de l'existence des hommes déterminent leurs pensées , tant il est vrai que l'autonomie de la morphogénèse résulte de la contradiction entre l'invariance de l'acide nucléique et de sa programmation par le gène). Ce sont les conditions sociales qui ont permis à leur époque au Tintoret comme à Eisenstein de formuler avec génie un nouveau point de vue .

Pour Eisenstein , quel était ce nouveau point de vue: ne pas donner un angle par deux mains jointes qui s'ouvrent vers un monde nouveau , mais au contraire fermer une ouverture ancienne , s'arrêter en un point et repartir dans une autre direction (c'est dire qu'un angle n'est pas mais qu'il est , et qu'il est parcequ'il provient d'un arrêt sur et d'un redépart , d'un renversement , d'une révolution .

Qui écrira un jour une véritable histoire du cinéma et de la télévision ? En voici déjà quelques fragments encore bien incomplets . Car je découvre seulement aujourd'hui que je n'ai jamais trouvé un angle de prise de vues depuis que je fais des films . Je découvre seulement aujourd'hui qu'Eisenstein n'a jamais fait de montage , mais seulement de l'assemblage d'angles (et que c'était là sa force révolutionnaire) pendant que son frère ennemi Vertov lui ne faisait que du montage ; oui , mais de plans plats , et que l'école allemande , dans la pénombre du nazisme préconscient et de l'inconscience de l'Internationale , n'a jamais , avec Murnau et Lang , que construit les super-décors que Speer allait se charger de réaliser en dur , acculés qu'ils étaient par les restes indélébiles de la weltanshauung hégélienne à placer la caméra là où le décor le permettait . Qui dira que depuis Eisenstein personne dans la cinéma n'a placé la caméra en premier , avant le texte et les acteurs , avant les mouvements d'appareil (comme ne le font pas tous les cinéastes aujour'd'hui, comme ils ne peuvent le faire , tant qu'une révolution sociale , ou un aspect aussi minime soit-il de cette révolution ,femme , enfant , salaire , grève, sexualité ,etc., ne les a pas acculé à découvrir un point de vue nouveau qui ne s'exprime pas simplement par une position alambiquée de l'appareil de prise de vue ,mais par une prise de position qui reflète le fait que l'esthétique n'est qu'une des catégories de la politique).

FIGURE 47. Jean-Luc Godard, *Moi Je* (1973), from Godard, "Moi je, projet de film," *Jean-Luc Godard: Documents*, ed. N. Brenez, D. Faroul, and M. Temple (Paris; Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2006), 238.

concepts somewhere else on the page.[136] Godard had long been interested in the malleability of media forms and how they might conceivably cooperate: "Were the cinema to disappear, I would simply accept the inevitable and turn to television; were television to disappear, I would revert to pencil and paper. . . . The important thing is to approach it from the side which suits you best."[137]

The side that most still want to see is the cinema side: the big Godard with his acclaimed New Wave films and histories of cinema as the medium of the century. Godard's pitch in Hamburg was a question about the possibility of making images in Germany today, a film that was ultimately categorized as unfinished and unrealized. But instead of simply disregarding unrealized projects, eliding them within official histories of success as ostensibly "lost" opportunities, by paying closer attention to them in the time and context of their development and potential emergence, one can more clearly recognize the impossibility of making and dreaming images without these so-called "failed" film pitches side by side, as part of a broader landscape of complex media processes.[138] This reorientation in perspective could take into account the crucial cooperation of artistic and bureaucratic objects in an emergent media infrastructure, questioning the impulse to conceptualize the work of film as an object that is linearly produced, intact, and wholly discrete from all the various preparatory sketches on paper, negotiations in Hamburg cafés, and reenactments of bureaucratic process archived in amateur formats, which shape its very conditions of possibility.

Conclusion

Dunnage Deal

The end seemed to be in sight. In May 2021, after a prolonged period of drastic changes to the routines and rituals that govern our daily work, channels of communication, and everyday means of deriving value and pleasure, there seemed to be a promise on the horizon: that the relentless uncertainty we might have gotten used to would soon come to an end. Immunity was finally available, spring was finally here, and we could finally get back to normal. At this same time, a tiny, inconspicuous exhibition space in Southern California took a moment to pause to reflect on where we had just been and have a closer look at the media infrastructure that we had been both relying on and lamenting over the past years before we naively tried to turn the page and leave it all behind us, in the past.

The exhibition referred to the theme as a "pandemic era reckoning": "From Taiwanese semiconductor shortages, to stuck ships plugging the Suez Canal, to mysteriously missing boxes of bran flakes on grocery shelves, the global supply chain has finally come to the foreground, where it belongs."[1] Our business wasn't exempt from these realities. Far from it. Finishing up our own books had become a major problem. Books printed in Asia to save on production costs didn't have enough containers to ship them out. If they were shipped out, port congestion could stall the cargo ship in the middle of a storm, throwing the containers overboard and leaving the books at the bottom of the ocean.[2] If they made it safely, our books could remain in limbo off the coast, such as in the fall of 2021, when there was a record-breaking delay of over eighty cargo ships waiting to dock at Los Angeles/Long Beach, the largest port complex in the US.[3] If our books were set to be printed closer to home, they would need warehouse workers, printing plants, and, of course, paper, all of which were in short supply.[4] Instead of presenting us with the finished product, the prepackaged book that we've been waiting for and

that has finally arrived on our doorsteps for us to quickly take away and consume, this exhibition asked viewers to think more carefully and critically about the costs and precise conditions of this expedient desire for final takeaways.

Going with the Flow: A Portrait of Amazon Fulfillment in the Southland at the Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI) in Culver City, California, presents viewers up front with a series of role reversals.[5] Instead of arriving at a set of inviting doors clearly demarcated with prominent museal signage, we, the visitors, first have to find the door: It stands perpendicular to the sidewalk, hidden behind a gate, and once we've reached the doorstep, we have to ring the bell to get in—almost as if we were asking to enter someone's private home. Walking through the doors of this institution means entering the exhibition space, front office, and bookstore all at once. A bit odd if we're used to a designated space for art on display that is white, sterile, and sacred, serene and free of distractions, and also kept at arm's length from bureaucracy at work and commercial products for sale within conventional architectural layouts. (Even if we need only to glance at the art books on our coffee tables and the European paintings reproduced on our fridge magnets, which speak volumes about the history of cultivating taste, in order to remember that the autonomy of the white cube is a fantasy, since such objects, among many others, have always been part of a larger design to expand the once "faraway ideals of institutional sanction, aesthetic achievement, unique genius, and cosmopolitan culture" into everyday domestic spaces, far beyond the pristine white walls of the gallery.[6]) We might first notice that the objects on exhibit in this space don't seem to be where they should be. The series of photographs, images that we are accustomed to seeing in individual glass frames, are arranged claustrophobically close together, pinned directly to the back wall with tacks, leaving permanent holes in them behind (figure 48). And the wall is not white but brown, with lighter brown tape running down the middle of it, as if the wall itself were a flattened-out cardboard box.[7] The captions, the small, white strips of paper tacked up below the photographs, neither tell us about the creator, origins, or materials of the image, nor do they help us interpret its style or form. Instead, they tell us about the unremarkable buildings depicted in the images, which function as receive, sortation, and fulfillment centers, all key hubs in Amazon's rapidly expanding retail distribution infrastructure.

The objects that are protected within the vitrine are, in contrast to photographs on display, those things we typically throw away: manhandled cardboard boxes, promotional giveaways (toy trucks, vans, and planes), and ripped-open mailers, now enshrined in the center of the room.[8] As if these are the pieces of high art to be closely looked at, while the photographs in the background are things to be shuffled around at will, part of a storyboard for the more valuable object in the making, the trivial box prominently framed in the vitrine. And these images are, in a way, just that. The object at center stage originates and takes shape at all of these distribution sites, transforming the photographs into preparatory sketches for the final

FIGURE 48. *Going with the Flow: A Portrait of Amazon Fulfillment in the Southland*. Center for Land Use Interpretation, Los Angeles, 2021. Photograph by KM.

work to come: the arrival of the box that was promised. But the vitrine in which it is showcased, rather than consisting of glass to direct the viewer's focus toward the item it encases, is half thick plastic—reflecting both the contents within and the surroundings outside, like the books and postcards for sale and the institutional brochures on display—and half package, the lower part of it tightly wrapped up in a taped-together cardboard box. Within the vitrine, the objects are marked with red pushpins accompanied by a caption card: "The Anatomy of Fulfillment." As if inside this vitrine were a dead frog, or a new species altogether, rather, its body parts dissected for inspection and learning purposes, a means of training our gaze to become more attentive to details and to better comprehend the composition of a broader structure.[9] The relation between these parts, as another caption card tells us, is for the purposes of determining provenance: where the package was filled, sorted, and delivered, giving meaning to the obscure labels with barcodes and specific sequences of numbers and letters that inscribe the box with a customer name, product, delivery area, and address.[10] Scientific and art historical regimes of vision, among others, are mixed in this space, acknowledging that how we've learned to see in museal spaces can't be limited to our experiences there.[11]

By intertwining the objects in the vitrine with the storyboard of photographs in the background, one begins to understand that the big living organism that this

anatomy seeks to make comprehensible is precisely the system of the box. The exhibition asks us to look at these used, mundane containers in a transparent box that have come and gone through various passageways and conveyor belts, along with the ancillary products that accompany them, as objects of value, helping us conjure up a picture of the various underlying yet too often overlooked media processes involved in this broader, messier media infrastructure that is not so easy to visualize. It is interested in bringing to the surface more complex histories of containment, how something gets packaged up in a way that makes it seem discrete and self-evident, aligning with the broader interests of CLUI in "manifesting the things that exemplify interconnectedness" and those sites that seem so commonplace, in the hope that this compels you, the visitor, "to become *less sure*, to realize that things aren't quite as certain as you thought. We [at CLUI] try to suggest . . . that the landscape is fairly rich as it is, and in a way, you don't need to do too much to it other than change your perspective. Familiar objects, often unseen because they're so familiar, become more interesting and become something else if you change the context in which they're presented."[12]

In the case of this exhibition, such a defamiliarization strategy is carried out in a series of role reversals: from the relationship between content and form as something that is dynamic and circuitous to a beaten-up cardboard package as a form of high art and photographs as sketch materials. To take the "content" of the photographs as just one example: The Amazon buildings depicted in these images are quite ordinary, often even unmarked. Sometimes all they show is the physical barrier to sight, the gate far in front of these warehouses that photographers can't get past in order to get a better look. It's a threshold that is a crucial part of, and maybe more important than, the building itself. What do we expect to find in these photographs, images that all seem to look the same after a while, that we haven't seen before? What the series reiterates are the underrecognized sites and inconspicuous corners of interest, drawing attention to our inability to see, to our own blind spots, rather than a remarkable image of a building that will be seared into our memories after we leave. Tacked up against the backdrop of a cardboard box, the photographs and their captions also become the label, the markers of provenance, of the much bigger box looming over the room, which we usually fail to see at first glance. They end up telling us more about our difficulties with understanding and coming to terms with the ramifications of interconnectedness than infrastructure itself. In doing so, they emphasize the ways in which our attention to media cultural objects is so often severed and hierarchized along the lines of the container and that which it contains, a relationship that is both reenacted and subsequently challenged in this space through the physical separation between the photographs of these buildings and the box that they are integral in producing. It's difficult to fully comprehend both in a single glance, therein recalibrating what might have been a static mode of observation, an attempt to look "at" these objects, into something more dynamic: a back-and-forth, multidirectional encounter that asks us to

forge key connections between these vast areas of space and unspectacular places and the everyday thing that arrives on our doorstep before we relegate it to the detritus of history.

This presentation takes the box seriously as an object that is not a given but one that is made, and it insists that the value of an object is likewise crafted and created, rather than something that is determined by its "intrinsic physical properties."[13] *Going with the Flow* requires that we, the viewers, allow ourselves to be carried away by this new flow of information and stream of operations by devoting significant time to pondering the supply chain. We're asked to recognize how it tries to erase itself, evident in the ways in which the system of the box hides in plain sight, in all the details we overlook, even though they are announced each time on the very front of our packages via all the various indiscrete practices and processes that shape what we ultimately perceive and take for granted as the "final" product. In this way, the exhibition asks us to go beyond our expectations of an interconnected system laid out in front of us in which we might be able to distantly observe an image of the exploitation of human labor and the subtending operations of global capitalism, for example, and asks us to get more detailed and become more materially focused to think about our role in all this—our hands on the package, our package at the doorstep, our car driving past these unmarked warehouses—in order to critically consider the interconnectedness between our own history of media use and the media practices we are concurrently observing. The takeaway is to linger a lot longer in this particular mode of observation, in this encounter, before grasping for the takeaway. What is the lesson, what have I learned, what are the stakes of all this? If that is all we search for, a nicely prepackaged, finished product to take away, we will miss the work. The image of the human figure might be absent in this exhibition, but the mark it has left is indelibly present: on the box, behind the camera, and in the multipurpose exhibition space. A revaluation of the material and media processes in the in-between space, instead of a fundamental fixation on the finished work, helps us see these underacknowledged extras behind the scenes, the invisible hands and anonymous coauthors of our everyday media landscape.

It's a change in the terms of assessing value that privileges not just the box, but dunnage. This is the loose, "lighter, less valuable" material used in cargo transportation, originally referring to the "brushwood, small wooden blocks, mats, etc., stowed among and beneath the cargo of a vessel in order to keep it dry, stable, and secure during a voyage."[14] In infrastructural logic and operations, dunnage plays the crucial role of safeguarding the more valuable items on board, even if it does not qualify as cargo or merchandise itself, consisting of what most would consider to be mere refuse, as it maintains the "sole purpose of filling a void."[15] When the entire ship, truck, or plane is in the midst of turbulence, dunnage is the stuff in between and among all the precious cargo that mediates this interference, the padding and packaging that supports and holds the messy mix of materials and

objects all together, allowing the desired items to arrive at their destination seemingly intact. When it's not reused, dunnage is discarded once it reaches the end of the supply chain. If we don't know about it, or don't think about it, that which we deem valuable, the final product—the finished book we've been waiting for all this time—might seem to arrive on our doorstep as if out of thin air. "We need to ask: How did it [the commodity] get to these shop windows or display racks? It didn't simply materialize. . . . It seems taken as a given: the mysteries of its ability to appear are underplayed."[16]

Lingering on the role that dunnage performs in this production before we toss it aside makes the messiness of this creative process visible to begin with, emphasizing a broader network of practices and microdecisions that are implicated in supposedly discrete and finished works and offering crucial insights into how they have been stabilized and protected, boxed and unboxed, more times than we know along the way. This book is no exception (figure 49).

FIGURE 49. Lunch break at book manuscript workshop for what would later become *Working Title*. University of California, Los Angeles, Royce Hall 306. May 30, 2023. Photograph by Lena Sophie Trüper.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: THE WORK BEFORE "THE WORK." AND AFTER

1. Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*, 11.

2. The pattern of title/subtitle almost seems naturalized by now:

> In German studies, titles are usually divided into two parts. First comes the appetizer, "soft": the objects ("language"), a quotation, a metaphor; then the "hard" science: the program, the genre, the epoch, the thesis, the concepts. . . . At the top you formulate. At the bottom you argue. One is elegant, then substantial. The performativity of this model . . . lies in the demonstration of a process that primarily conceives of a translation relationship. . . . (As if it were that simple.) . . . How useful are normative guidelines in a phase of reorientation? . . . Shouldn't we be exploring our room for play? Trying things out? Making mistakes more quickly? (Hüser, "We Are Family—Remix 98," 574–75. Unless otherwise noted, all translations [and mistakes] are my own.)

3. Derrida, "Title (to be specified)," 5.

4. "A title is always an economy awaiting *its* determination, its specificity, its *Bestimmtheit*, what it determines and what determines it. Determining and determined, determination always *returns* to it. It returns in the direction whence it is responsible and in the direction that has always promised return from elsewhere, and according to a very unique mode of return" (Derrida, 12).

5. Derrida, 9.

6. For a different take on the logic of the book spine, see Hüser, *Geht doch*, 13–17.

7. On the emergence of the concept of "the work" at the end of the eighteenth century, see Goehr, *Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*; Bosse, *Autorschaft ist Werkherrschaft*; Foucault, "What Is an Author?," 205–22; Martus, *Werkpolitik*.

> Most of us tend . . . to see works as objectified expressions of composers that prior to compositional activity did not exist. We do not treat works as objects just made or put

> together, like tables and chairs, but as original, unique products of a special, creative activity. . . . We treat them as artefacts existing in the public realm . . . . And when called . . . to give examples of works, we usually look to the tradition of western, European, classical, "opus" music . . . . Who would dispute that Beethoven's symphonies, Schumann's concertos, and Schubert's sonatas are examples of musical works? (Goehr, 2)

8. See Krell, *Death of Empedocles*.

9. See Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms*. On media rhetoric in specific working groups and initiatives, such as Forensic Architecture's approach of narration via "chains of evidence," including their public forums that exemplify an "epistemic quality of aesthetic clarity" and trademark video aesthetic that has "become conventionalized not only as 'best practice' but also as a genre," see Rothöhler, *Medien der Forensik*, 146–47.

10. On the "synthesizing operations of a purely psychological kind (the intention of the author, the form of his mind, the rigour of his thought, the themes that obsess him, the project that traverses his existence and gives it meaning)," which are based on problematic notions of "tradition," "influence," "development and evolution," and "spirit," all of which "may not have a very rigorous conceptual structure, but . . . have a very precise function," see Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 21–29. See also Spoerhase, *Autorschaft und Interpretation*, 38–55.

11. Some spine philology highlights additional differences. In the Frankfurt Edition, the title of the text in the making is given neither on the cover nor the spine, but abbreviated: *Empedocles*. The notions of "*Text*" (as if there were one with confidence) and "*Lesarten*" are merged into Roman numerals: I and II, complexes in progress.

12. Krell, *Death of Empedocles*, ix.

13. De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender*, 26. "A while ago I used the expression 'space-off' . . . : the space not visible in the frame but inferable from what the frame makes visible. In classical and commercial cinema, the space-off is, in fact, erased" (De Lauretis, 26).

14. Instead, the logic of this edition "is oriented toward the draft character of Hölderlin's late work. Therefore, the conventional separation of the text for reading and the critical apparatus is to a large extent abolished. The text does not appear isolated from what preceded it, or even 'purified' from the final edits, but is shown in context" (Leiner, Sattler, and Wolff, "Vorwort: Editorische Notiz," 18).

15. "That . . . this edition cannot be free of error seems certain in view of the textual situation; nevertheless, it differs from the preceding ones in one decisive point. Here the last word is given to those who work with it" (Sattler, "Einleitung," 12).

16. Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*, 5.

17. On speculative media histories, see Field, "Editor's Introduction: Sites of Speculative Encounter."

18. Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*, 6.

19. Gitelman, 2.

20. Erhard Schüttpelz and Sebastian Gießmann write about this perspective as a means of thinking beyond single media objects and teleological histories of media. They note that while earlier phases of media studies gravitated toward the study of so-called mixed-media objects through comparative approaches, such methods often presumed the existence of a clearly identifiable "in-between" space of media, suggesting, in turn, that each medium possesses a stable identity and distinct characteristics to begin with. Thus, while "these

research methods have proven their worth, . . . they now face challenges that can no longer be met in the traditional comparative way, but require a practice-theoretical discussion of the foundations of media studies. This discussion has gradually moved to the center of media studies in Germany and now views media less as historical or current 'corpora' than as constellations of cultural techniques and processes of distributed and delegated agency" ("Medien der Kooperation," 7–8).

21. Irigaray, "Women on the Market," 175, 177.

22. On the often invisible but ubiquitous work of classification, see Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*. On gendered systems of value for pitching, specifically in the context of formal film pitch meetings, see Brannon Donoghue, *Value Gap*, 79–104.

23. See Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*. On histories of legitimation specific to these media forms, see, for example, Guins, "No Paraphernalia, No Nostalgia"; Newman and Levine, *Legitimating Television*; Henschen and Häusler, *Storyboarding*; Allen, *Artists' Magazines*; Kafka, "Paperwork."

24. See, for example, Newman and Levine, *Legitimating Television*; Sharma, *In the Meantime*; Pallant and Price, *Storyboarding*.

25. See, for example, Boyle, "From Portapak to Camcorder"; Comino, "Underground Film-Making"; Crimp, "Museum's Old / Library's New Subject"; Phelan, "Ontology of Performance"; Lippard, *Six Years*; Stimson, "What Was Institutional Critique?"; Spigel, *TV by Design*; Newman and Levine, *Legitimating Television*.

26. See Becker, *Art Worlds*.

27. Galloway, *Interface Effect*, 23. On one notion of processing in media studies as an active, interfering modification or intervention into that which is being processed, formatively shaping it, see Winkler, *Prozessieren*.

28. See Schlünder, "Generative Possibilities."

29. PBS Idea Channel, "What's the Deal." See also Hess: "In the same way that videos of people consuming mass amounts of food can be read as a strange commentary on underlying eating issues, unboxing videos reflect a culture that has issues *with stuff*" ("How Unboxing Videos Soothe").

30. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 8.

31. "The author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses" (Foucault, "What Is an Author?," 221).

32. See Rentetzi, "Epistemology of the Familiar."

33. See De Maria, "Meaningless Work"; Cras, *Artist as Economist*; Sigler, *Work*; Graeber, *Utopia of Rules*; Hull, "Documents and Bureaucracy."

34. "What if we refuse to embark from the premise of 'technical media' and instead begin from the perspective of their supposed predicates: storing, transmitting, and processing? With the verbal nouns at the helm, a new set of possibilities appears. These are modes of mediation, not media per se. The shift is slight but crucial" (Galloway, *Interface Effect*, 18).

35. "The author's name serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse: the fact that the discourse has an author's name, that one can say 'this was written by so-and-so' or 'so-and-so is its author,' shows that this discourse is not ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes, not something that is immediately consumable. On the contrary, it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status" (Foucault, "What Is an Author?," 221).

36. On "quasi objects," see Serres, *Parasite*, 224–34.

37. On the "neglected" category of logistical media, for example, see Peters, "Calendar, Clock, Tower," 41. On the ways in which logistical processes and the infrastructural networks they coordinate are typically noticed only when they break down and circulation is impeded, see, for example, Parks, "Around the Antenna Tree"; Rossiter, *Software, Infrastructure, Labor*.

38. See Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 21–22.

39. See, for example, Stanitzek, "Texts and Paratexts in Media"; Böhnke, Hüser, and Stanitzek, *Das Buch zum Vorspann*; Hediger, "Cinema of Memory"; Henschen and Häusler, *Storyboarding*; Hüser, "Luft nach oben"; Mindrup, *Architectural Model*; Hayles, "Transformation of Narrative"; Ingold, *Lines*; Siegert, *Cultural Techniques*; Galloway, *Interface Effect*; Parks, "Around the Antenna Tree"; Schüttpelz and Gießmann, "Medien der Kooperation"; Hu, *Prehistory of the Cloud*; Schabacher, "Raum-Zeit-Regime"; Peters, "Calendar, Clock, Tower"; Hockenberry, Starosielski, and Zieger, *Assembly Codes*.

40. On the narrow understanding of media in German studies departments at Anglo-American institutions of higher education, which is usually studied only in terms of "film," see Hake, "Contemporary German Film Studies."

41. Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions," 278. "Representations of the 'art world' as wholly distinct from the 'real world,' like representations of the 'institution' as discrete and separate from 'us,' serve specific functions in art discourse. . . . And with these representations, we also reproduce the mythologies of volunteerist freedom and creative omnipotence" (Fraser, 283).

42. Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*, 6–7. Gitelman specifically emphasizes intellectual property and promotional discourse as exemplary instantiations of media rhetoric: "Economic realities tend to enforce this rhetorical character of technological knowledge by requiring the literature of patents and the literature of commercial promotion. Both the need to identify property and the desire to exchange it ensure an insistently rhetorical character almost unmatched in science, where disciplinary pressures stand in place of commercial ones" (7).

43. See Crimp, "Museum's Old / Library's New Subject"; Wasson, *Museum Movies*.

44. See, for example, Schneider, *Performing Remains*; Schneider, "Small History (of) Still Passing." On the concept of "media hysteresis," the ways in which historical media cultural effects persist at present, see Theophanidis and Thibault, "Media Hysteresis."

45. See Schüttpelz, "Trance Mediums and New Media."

46. See Batchen, *Burning with Desire*; Behrend, *Contesting Visibility*.

1. IN LINE TO WAIT

1. Hilburg, "Reopening Unclear."

2. King, "MoMA QNS," 97.

3. Gaskin, "MoMA Closed."

4. Siegert, "Doors," 11. "The door puts inside and outside into a special relation in which the outside first becomes properly outside and the inside first becomes properly inside. . . . The closed door is both closed and also the sign of this closure" (Siegert, 9).

5. "The distribution of waiting time [at a specific location] coincides with the distribution of power. This proposition is based on the assumption that an individual's power

reflects the scarcity of the goods or skills he possesses; accordingly, the relationship between a server and client may be characterized in terms of organized dependency, for which waiting (under certain conditions) provides an accurate index" (Schwartz, *Queuing and Waiting*, 5).

6. Puff and Zacka, "Architectures of Waiting," 266–67. See also Barthes, *Lover's Discourse*: "There is a scenography of waiting: I organize it, manipulate it, cut out a portion of time in which I shall mime the loss of the loved object . . . . This is then acted out as a play" (37).

7. Siegert, "Doors," 10.

8. Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy," 26–27.

9. "Tarrying can be understood as a poetic procedure that enacts in dramatic fashion the destitution, the suspension of dramatic action. . . . It stages a decisive inactivity. Its appearance, the interruption and the pause of the action, . . . reduces it to zero and submits its power of imposition to examination. . . . This is dramatization in the most literal sense, in which drama, the *dran*, exposes itself and the questionability of its presuppositions and procedures" (Vogl, *On Tarrying*, 35).

10. DiBattista, *Fast-Talking Dames*, 118. Of course, any disassembly of the brontosaur kit always begins with the public, ceremonial removal of the tiny skull. See YaleNews, "Peabody Museum Bids 'Heads-Off.'"

11. Dialogue in *Bringing Up Baby*. Dr. David Huxley: "Don't worry. After I've received this [the intercostal clavicle, his precious bone], I feel good for anything. I'll wow him [Mr. Peabody], I'll knock him for a loop." / Alice Swallow: "David, no slang. Remember who and what you are."

12. Barthes, *Lover's Discourse*, 37.

13. Dialogue in *Bringing Up Baby*. Susan Vance to Constable Slocum: "Vance, Kitty Vance—that's my society moniker. But the mob all calls me Swingin' Door Susie. . . . Now ya pegged me. Come on, Toots. Open up, *open up*."

14. Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 113. Cavell continues: "In thus invoking Kant's characterization of the aesthetic experience I am thinking of his idea as providing an access to the connection of the aesthetic experience with the play of childhood" (113). *Bringing Up Baby* is also discussed as the purest example of film in the institution of the university:

> Most of the first part and about half of the second part of the following remarks were given as the opening paper of a conference entitled *Film and the University* . . . . It may strike the reader as odd that this beginning centers on a reading of Howard Hawks' *Bringing Up Baby* (1938). The choice was determined by my wish to broach this material on the occasion of the New York conference, at which *Bringing Up Baby* and Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* were the films screened for common points of reference. I hope the oddness is squared by the way in which the off-centeredness of *Bringing Up Baby* . . . isolates for examination what I wish to call reading a film. (Cavell, "Leopards in Connecticut," 233)

15. Wright, "Marina Abramović."

16. This line begins with failure: a proposal for a project that Abramović submitted to a gallery in 1969, which was ultimately rejected and is "the earliest piece in Abramović's exhibition at MoMA" (Biesenbach, *Marina Abramović*, 12). See also Biesenbach, 48, 214–17.

17. Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 3. "'Other people' is how the reenactors (whose names are also listed) are referred to on the website for *The Artist Is Present*" (Schneider,

188n7). On these reperformances from the perspectives of the "other" artists participating in the show, see Stern, "Artist Is Present"; Brawner, "Artist Is Present," 223. See also Lambert-Beatty, "Against Performance Art."

18. See Schindel, "Mockumentary Series"; Dafoe, "Artist Is Present." On her "restaging" of *The Artist Is Present* in September 2023, see Royal Academy, "Marina Abramović." On the impact of these various medial iterations on the reception of the performance, see Widrich, "Ge-Schichtete Präsenz und zeitgenössische Performance."

19. Percy, *Message in the Bottle*, 47.

20. "What is interesting about this claim is its emphasis on the wonderful quality of seeing actual objects *as if they are pictures, maps or panoramas of themselves*" (MacCannell, *Tourist*, 122).

21. Dialogue (Abramović) in *Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present* (2012). On Abramović's repeated references to purity and the irony of these repetitions, see Schneider, "Remembering Feminist Remimesis."

22. Abramović, in *Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present* (2012).

23. Abramović and Fischer-Lichte, *Marina Abramović*, 11. These performances consisted of six from the 1960s and 1970s and one newly commissioned work.

24. Abramović in Cypriano, "Performance and Reenactment."

25. Takac, "When Marina Abramović." "Abramović has become the new 'author's name' through which all of the performances she claims to be authentically returning to their artistic origins [in *Seven Easy Pieces*] are coming to mean and be valued" (Jones, "'Artist Is Present,'" 34).

26. On the museum guards as performers themselves, see Brawner, "Artist Is Present," 223.

27. Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies*, 280. "Marina obsessively preserved every email . . . . I filed them both on the computer and in the constantly expanding folders on her shelves. Marina relished her 'KGB-style' enthusiasm for filing, and she got a charge from going to Staples to buy ever more folders, dividers, trays, Post-It notes, and various other organizational paraphernalia" (Westcott, 280).

28. Burton, "Repeat Performance," 55. "One could argue that *Seven Easy Pieces* began ten years ago, maybe longer, in Abramović's 1995 monograph *Cleaning the House*. . . . The volume presented photographs of meditating monks in Thailand; turn-of-the-century photos of a female medium producing ectoplasm; documentation of some of Abramović's own work; and canonical images of performances by every artist she reprises in *Pieces* . . .—all plotted out like the branches of a carefully constructed family tree" (Burton, 55).

29. Eccles, "Outside Intervention," 10.

30. "MoMA QNS."

31. "Marcel Duchamp: *Bicycle Wheel*."

32. See Gamboni, "In the Copious Light," 58–67; Alÿs and Wehr, *Francis Alÿs*, 2–3. Eccles contextualizes the role of Smith in *The Modern Procession* differently: "The inclusion of a living artist had always featured in Alÿs's earliest plans . . . . His initial instinct . . . was to invite an artist for whom performance had provided a critical aspect of their career . . . . He then expanded his thought to seminal figures of the New York art world . . . . Kiki Smith was the outstanding choice. The daughter of the late sculptor Tony Smith . . . and sister of artist Seton Smith, Kiki represented a generational bridge" ("Outside Intervention," 14).

In this same catalogue that includes "notes for The Modern Procession," Kiki Smith is at the top of the handwritten list of other possible performance artists who could fill in this performance gap in the line of modern art, including Bruce Nauman, Merce Cunningham, and Yoko Ono. Alÿs and Wehr, *Francis Alÿs*, 8.

33. "Pablo Picasso: *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*."

34. Freedman, foreword to *Francis Alÿs*, 9; Eccles, "Outside Intervention," 10. "They [everyone at MoMA] would simply never agree to the artist's requests to use their works in the manner proposed. . . . Francis's project was simply stalled. There were also certain questions as to what exactly the project was. Was it a procession or a film of a procession? Was it a tribute to the collection or an elaborate send-up? Was it a celebration or a funeral?" (Eccles, 11).

35. Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 6. Instead of celebrating an attempt to chart "a patrilineage of 'masters'" via "a unidirectional art march toward an empiric future of preservation," Schneider emphasizes how "time plays forward and backward and sideways across the imagined community of an otherwise spatialized national plot" (6).

36. Dialogue in *Bringing Up Baby*. David: "Where is it? [. . .] My intercostal clavicle. [. . .] You took it out of the box. Where did you put it?" / Susan: "I put it back in the box." / David: "Was there somebody else in the room?" / Susan: "There was nobody else, but . . . George." / David: "Who's George?" / Susan: "The dog. Don't you see? Dog, bone." Knick knack, paddy whack.

37. Bogdanovich, *Who the Devil Made It*, 307. See also Swaab, *Bringing Up Baby*, 15.

38. Alÿs and Wehr, *Francis Alÿs*, 4.

39. Saltz, "In the End."

40. See Anelli, *Marco Anelli*; *Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present* (2012); "Marina Abramović Made Me Cry"; Yalcinkaya, "Iconic Artworks"; Allen, "And We're Done."

41. Rich, "Long Lines and Wide Smiles."

42. Fuller, "Queue Project," 4. This chapter uses "queuing" and "waiting" interchangeably. For a sociological perspective that distinguishes between the terms, see Schwartz, *Queuing and Waiting*, 6–7.

43. Abramović' in Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies*, 262. Abramović continues: "'Ten years later this work [the Abramović/Ulay archive, pieces jointly produced with Frank Uwe Laysiepen, or Ulay, her former performance partner] got the value it's supposed to have. Ulay would never wait that long'" (Westcott, 262).

44. Abramović's presentation of her body [in *The Artist Is Present*] is notably classical: in pictorializing it, in her staging, she privileges symmetry, a strong central image, and formal balance. . . . These formal layouts . . . speak of ritual and highly stylized types of interaction. . . . It seems to me like religious affect. . . . This sense of piousness is an effect of the solemn register in which the work exists, its demonstrative gravitas. . . . There's also a studied austerity in the work, a kind of quasi-monastic aesthetic . . . . It makes me think that this is art made by someone who at some level still believes in the sacred aura of the secular white cube art space. (Fox, "Ten Notes on Marina Abramović's 'The Artist is Present'")

45. "Sometimes it is useful, even crucial, to tarry in the openness of ambiguity; in the strategic vantage point available in the interstice . . . . Lingering in ambivalence, we can access multiple, even dissonant, vantages at once, before pivoting, if we finally choose to pivot, toward decisive motion" (Bruce, "Shore, Unsure," 357).

46. "While integral to the performance, its mode of access—'waiting in line'—has tended to be overlooked for the most part in the critique surrounding *The Artist is Present*. . . . Interestingly, the line was conceptualized by Abramović as a vital component not only in providing access to those who wanted to experience the piece, but also because waiting allowed individuals to slow down and become ready to sit" (Fisher, "Proprioceptive Friction," 164).

47. Barthes, *Lover's Discourse*, 40.

48. Automated text box in *The Artist Is Present* (2011). The version that is accessible online exists in a reworked form: "Released on 14 September 2011, *The Artist Is Present* was originally written in ActionScript 3 using FlashBuilder 4.5 and the excellent Flixel library. This version [desktop and mobile friendly] has been (laboriously) ported to the also excellent Phaser 3 library for JavaScript" (Barr, "Artist Is Present").

49. "I used those kinds of character models [with pixelated graphics in *The Artist Is Present*], and I was interested in the hyperconstrained idea of the art world juxtaposed with the hyperconstrained idea of Sierra games from the 1980s. They were both so rule focused and I thought that there was a kind of relationship there that made sense to me" (Barr in Juul, "Handmade Pixels," 49).

50. Text box in *The Artist Is Present*.

51. Galloway refers to setup or configuration actions as "*nondiegetic operator acts*. . . . They happen on the exterior of the *world* of the game but are still part of the game software and completely integral to the play of the game" (*Gaming*, 12).

52. Text box in *The Artist Is Present*. On the standardization of opening hours and the corresponding prevalence of idle time in the "post-industrial age" to manage supply and demand, see Schwartz, *Queuing and Waiting*, 2–3.

53. See Spiegel Online, "Kurioses Kunst-Game."

54. "The 'game designer' appears to be framed via that old discourse of 'author,' whereby one name . . . is attributed to each game on display. . . . A major concern for me is . . . an inventor/innovator-centric narrative—we are once again doused in the rhetoric of 'firsts' that has long constricted the history of electronic games" (Guins, "No Paraphernalia, No Nostalgia," 206–9).

55. "IRL ('In Real Life') is a now-antiquated falsehood, one that implies that two selves (e.g., an online self versus an offline self) operate in isolation from each other . . . . AFK signifies a more continuous progression of the self, one that does not end when a user steps away from the computer but rather moves forward out into society away from the keyboard" (Russell, *Glitch Feminism*, 30–31). See also Jurgenson, "IRL Fetish."

56. On "the premises of a particular kind of live art from the 1970s—which promoted a concept of live performance as a kind of mystical transferal of life force" and "the paradox of live art in history, or live art placed in art institutions," see Jones, "'Artist Is Present,'" 33.

57. See Whalen and Taylor, *Playing the Past*.

58. "These designed goals refer to those things that players should do (in a game)" in order to ludologically succeed and can be contrasted with player-driven, narrative, and representational goals (Debus, Zagal, and Cardona-Rivera, "Typology of Imperative Game Goals").

59. "Marina Abramović: *The Artist Is Present*."

60. See Debus, Zagal, and Cardona-Rivera, "Typology of Imperative Game Goals."

61. Text box in *The Artist Is Present*.

62. These titles can be compared with those given by MoMA, which are slightly different and include definite articles, indicating their singularity. See "Vincent van Gogh."

63. On the new paint colors for MoMA's galleries, see Lillo, "Choosing Paint Colors." See also Kwun, "Secret Paint Colors."

64. "An enormous space is cleared around her [Abramović in *The Artist Is Present*] as if she were Michelangelo's *David* or as if she were Sarah Bernhardt in Sardou's *Theodora*. The cleared space constitutes a Wagnerian 'mystic gulf' separating the iconic Abramović who appears huge and strikingly removed from her 'fans' who are lined up (many standing for hours) hoping to sit and lock eyes with her living effigy in silence" (Schneider, "Remembering Feminist Remimesis," 24).

65. Barthes, *Lover's Discourse*, 39.

66. Siegert, "Doors," 15.

67. Text boxes from museum security guards in *The Artist Is Present*.

68. Saltz, "In the End."

69. Puff and Zacka, "Architectures of Waiting," 267.

70. Fuller, "Queue Project," 1. "Unknown to each other, they [queued-up people] appear indifferent . . . and yet their bodies are synched. If someone in the queue takes a lateral step, some kind of collectively known and viscerally sensed displacement occurs. . . .The term, queue, derives from the Latin *cauda* (meaning 'tail')" (Fuller, 1–2).

71. On the nuances of glitches, hacks, and mods that can force a "rethinking [of] the concept of the game, the purpose of the game, [and] the differentials within the game between winning and losing," see Halberstam, "Queer Gaming," 189. The one hack I've exploited in this game occurs "at the level of its software technology," not its gameplay (Galloway, *Gaming*, 108). I found it after lots of waiting.

72. Text box in *The Artist Is Present*. "Queues have a decided moral dimension, where 'to jump the queue' is indexical with impoverished moral values and antisocial civil disobedience" (Fuller, "Queue Project," 1–2).

73. On the ways in which the establishment of the Film Library at MoMA in 1935 demanded a fundamental shift in spectatorial behavior and institutional codes of conduct, see Wasson: "MoMA articulated a cinema not of distraction, attraction, urban wandering, pleasure, or displeasure but, rather, one of studious attention—a notably distinct idea about what cinema was and why one would watch it. . . . [This form of spectatorship] was interwoven with a whole set of behaviors and discourses that converged at the site of the screen and in the spaces of cinema" (*Museum Movies*, 23–24).

74. Grushin, *Line*, 124.

75. Fuller, "Queue Project," 2. See also Barthes: "Waiting is an enchantment: I have received *orders not to move*. . . . For the anxiety of waiting, in its pure state, requires that I be sitting in a chair within reach of the telephone without doing anything" (*Lover's Discourse*, 38–39).

76. Barr, "Antagonist Is Present?" See also Barr, *How to Play a Video Game*, 3.

77. Barr in Böhm, "Virtuelles Schlangestehen."

78. See, for example, Jaffe, *Slow Movies*; Koepnick, *On Slowness*; Marsh, "Slow Serious Games"; Vanderhoef and Payne, "Press X to Wait"; Reed, *Slow Art*; Schneider, *What Happens When Nothing Happens*. Cf. Sharma, *In the Meantime*.

79. Roehler in Suchsland, "Langsames Leben, schöne Tage."

80. On the exploitation of contested references to the "old Europe" versus the "new Europe" that is up to the pace of time, see, for example, Baker: "[US Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld, responding to a reporter's question on 22 January [2003] about 'European' opposition to the use of force in Iraq, said the reporter meant France and Germany, which were part of 'old' Europe. He contrasted them with the vitality of the 'new' Europe—made up in large part of NATO's new, formerly communist, inductees" ("U.S.: Rumsfeld's 'Old' And 'New' Europe"). See also Levy, Pensky, and Torpey, *Old Europe, New Europe*. On the influence of Abramović's country of birth, Yugoslavia, on the reception of her work, see Rounthwaite, "Sanja Iveković, Marina Abramović"; Tumbas, "*I Am Jugoslovenka!*," 114–26.

81. "He [Biesenbach] and his friends ingratiated themselves with the local government, which offered them use of an abandoned margarine factory in the Mitte district for a cultural institution. After managing to secure some governmental support and soliciting in-kind donations, they opened the space as Kunst-Werke in 1990" (Orden, "Herr Zeitgeist").

82. Biesenbach, in *Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present* (2012).

83. Scott, "What Klaus Biesenbach Means." On Biesenbach's proximity to this performance and Abramović and how this has contributed to the success of the show and its "afterlives," see, for example, Visco, "Curator Is Present."

84. On the etymological history of "curator," from the Latin *curatus*, see Schneider:

> Somehow we move from ["curator" as] ritual caretaker (parish priest) to guardian of the unfit to arrive in the 1870s at the sense of preservation and exhibition we assume for the word at present. As more and more work engages in performance . . . perhaps the antiquated sense of "curator" as the parish priest or caretaker of lunatics has returned to some degree? . . . At recent highly publicized "live art" events, such as Marina Abramović's *The Artist is Present* . . . , the sense of worshippers at the shrine of presence (if not lunatics at the threshold of hysterical reverie) was evident everywhere. Ritual rushes in where "object" and "objectivity" are replaced by the auratic artist in the temple of High Art. ("Dead Hare, Live," 65)

85. These transatlantic clichés extend to Biesenbach himself. See, for example, his Instagram presence (Fisher, "Curators and Instagram," 116–17). On the history of how New York decentered the leading role of Paris in the discourse on modern art in the twentieth century, see Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*.

86. "In late 1995, she [PS1's Alanna Heiss] hired him [Biesenbach] part-time while allowing him to maintain his directorship in Berlin [at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art]. For the next eight years, P.S.1 and KW essentially traded exhibitions back and forth" (Orden, "Herr Zeitgeist").

87. Rainer, "Things Fall Apart."

88. Buss, Graw, and Krümmel, "Escape to New York?"

89. Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies*, 273, 275.

90. "The museum is an instrument you have to learn to play. I think it would be wrong to have the most beautiful violin and try to play the piano" (Biesenbach in Brown, "Three Decades Ago").

91. Biesenbach, "Black Paintings"; Biesenbach, "Roth Time"; "MoMA Retrospective of the Singer, Composer, and Musician Björk." On Biesenbach's vision for the intensity of the curated Kraftwerk experience, see Biesenbach, "Klaus Biesenbach on Kraftwerk": "A few months ago I went to the Cologne Cathedral to check out Gerhard Richter's stained-glass

works. And all I could think is what it must have been like a few hundred years ago to come from some mud-hut, some tiny town with no electricity, no heating, and see this incredible thing with image and sound. That's what I imagined seeing and listening to Kraftwerk to be."

92. "Keep your doors open by any means necessary, but at least have the decency to call it like it is. 'Black Lake' isn't a 'new immersive music and film experience,' it's a music video. 'Songlines' isn't an 'experimental sound experience,' it's an audio tour. And the show is hardly a retrospective—it's starfucking, something increasingly familiar at MoMA, and a failure even at that" (Miller, "State of Emergency"). On the role of museum architecture, particularly the atrium, in facilitating such shows, see Saltz, "Saltz on Tilda Swinton in a Box."

93. Hsu, "Endless Endless." See also Pelly, "Report."

94. Lyrics in Cox, "*Kraftwerk Tickets Blues*."

95. Lyrics in Cox, "*Kraftwerk Tickets Blues*." See also Nye, "Sprockets + Autobahn," 284–91.

96. On the mediated processes of the throbber, see Soon, "Throbber."

97. Koepnick, *On Slowness*, 156.

98. Khosravi, "Weight of Waiting," 17. "It is no accident that etymologically, the word *wait* is derived from the words *to watch* and to *be awake*. . . . Wakefulness makes waiting similar to insomnia . . . . The insomniac thinks about the reasons for her insomnia and seeks relief from it. This aspect of waiting is even more palpable in the French verb *attendre*, which means *to direct one's mind toward*" (Khosravi, 17). On the need for vigilance in this game, see Barr: "*The Artist Is Present* is a really intense game to play. If you commit to the basic idea that you want to get to see Abramović, then I think the game falls into place in interesting ways. Most of all, my experience was of an almost unbearable anxiety about paying attention to the queue to make sure I didn't get shoved out and almost having a heart attack each time it moved" ("Antagonist Is Present?").

99. Koepnick, *On Slowness*, 156.

100. Koepnick, 156.

101. On the media history of swarm collectives as "infrastructures of information or, more generally, as 'social media,'" see Vehlken, "Zootechnologies," 120.

102. "Vincent van Gogh: *The Starry Night*."

103. Text box in *The Artist Is Present*.

104. "A parergon comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside. Like an accessory that one is obliged to welcome on the border, on board [*au bard, à bard*]. It is first of all the on (the) bo(a)rd(er)" (Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 54). See also Matyssek, "Death by/Life by Wall Label."

105. Schwartz, *Queuing and Waiting*, 3.

106. "'Doing' ethnography entails variegated forms of waiting—waiting for research funding to materialize; waiting for interlocutors to show up while engaging in fieldwork as 'deep hanging out' . . . ; waiting for the serendipitous—that which is valued because it cannot be predicted either in the conduct of fieldwork or in the process of writing. . . . The very

technologies that are supposed to speed things up . . . instead bring forth unpredictable and unanticipated forms of waiting" (Janeja and Bandak, "Introduction: Worth the Wait," 22–23).

107. "Waiting is not expected equally from all people. Some people's time is considered more valuable than that of others. Some people (such as those in need of refuge, or approval, or another type of actual or social capital) are expected to spend more time in waiting than are others" (Aristarkhova, *Arrested Welcome*, 29).

108. Carlson, "Artist Is Present . . . for VIPs."

109. See Schwartz, *Queuing and Waiting*, 8.

110. "The longest time a person sat there was seven hours, and then he came and sat another 21 hours" (Abramović in Blazwick, "Artist Is Present"). Barr writes that "to emulate this, the game version allocates a random amount of time each computer-generated visitor will sit" (*Stuff Games Are Made Of*, 84).

111. Jeffrey, foreword to *Ethnographies of Waiting*, xv.

112. Neilson and Rossiter, "Still Waiting, Still Moving," 63. "We are suspicious of attempts to mobilize the topology of stillness as a means of discerning the ontological and epistemological registers of an alternative politics. . . . Inertia and confusion cannot be the response to the giddying currents of global capitalism. This is why we approach stillness through the grid of logistics" (Neilson and Rossiter, 53).

113. Barr, "Antagonist Is Present?" On the distinctions and interplays between waiting *for*, waiting *with*, and waiting *to*, see Aristarkhova, *Arrested Welcome*, 43–55; Zigon, "Hope and Waiting"; Appadurai, *Future as Cultural Fact*, 127.

114. "All this means that the game is pretty plainly antagonistic from a traditional gameplay perspective" (Barr, "Antagonist Is Present?)."

115. "Abramović founded the institute in 2007, originally intending to convert a derelict theater built sometime around the 1930s nearby into a top-of-the-line Rem Koolhaas-designed performance space, archive and education center. But when the project's budget ballooned out of her control . . . and her fund-raising efforts fell short . . . , Abramović decided to turn it into something that didn't depend on a physical location" (La Force, "Being Marina Abramović"). See also Sutton, "What Happened to the $2.2M."

116. Barr, "Digital Marina Abramović Institute."

117. Barr, "Antagonist Is Present?"

118. Barthes, *Lover's Discourse*, 38 (parentheses in the original).

119. Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 135. On scriptive things, see Bernstein: "I use the term script as a theatrical practitioner might: to denote an evocative primary substance from which actors, directors, and designers build complex, variable performances that occupy real time and space. . . . That which I call a 'scriptive thing,' like a play script, broadly structures a performance while simultaneously allowing for resistance and unleashing original, live variations that may not be individually predictable" ("Dances with Things," 69). He notes that "when a thing scripts actions, it manifests the repertoire of its historical moment. . . . Scriptive things archive the repertoire—partially and richly, with a sense of openness and flux" (89). On repertoire as embodied, performative knowledge, in contrast with archival knowledge, see Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire.*

120. "For most of the history of music, pitches were fluctuating concepts" (Gribenski, "Negotiating the Pitch," 174). On the history of the extensive, international process of negotiating and standardizing the 440 Hz pitch, see Gribenski, "Negotiating the Pitch."

121. "If 'The Artist' was present, the question in each piece could become: which artist, where, when? Abramović in the documentation, or the 'other people' in the live tableaux? Or, both? Was Abramović 'present' in the documentation? And . . . was the live reenactment a document, standing as record of Abramović's acts?" (Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 29).

122. "[The figure of waiting] exists at the point where the ordering of that which passes crosses the passing of that which orders. Logistics itself, we might conclude, is an ordering technology that itself will pass or at least be remade on a temporal horizon" (Neilson and Rossiter, "Still Waiting, Still Moving," 65).

123. "A scholar understands a thing's script both by locating the gestures it cites in its historical location and by physically interacting with the evidence in the present moment. One gains performance competence not only by accruing contextualizing knowledge but also, crucially, by holding a thing, manipulating it, shaking it to see what meaningful gestures tumble forth" (Bernstein, "Dances with Things," 90).

124. Barr, "Antagonist Is Present?"

125. On "re-do rip-offs [that] may seem to threaten absolute lines of property and authorship and the legitimating mechanisms of history," as well as the related potential to "imagine a relationship to the past neither governed by melancholic mourning over 'loss' nor demanding 'preservation' through legitimization by authenticating or authorizing persons, formats, or institutions," see Schneider, "Remembering Feminist Remimesis," 22.

126. Galloway, *Gaming*, 10.

127. Galloway, 11.

128. Galloway, 126. On the "tiresome conversations" about video games as art and "monikers like 'the art of video games,'" see Guins: "The problem with a 'games as art' approach is that games are often reduced to their visual attributes (what is rendered on screen) at the expense of many other formative factors" ("No Paraphernalia, No Nostalgia," 204).

129. "If photographs are images, and films are moving images, then *video games are actions*" (Galloway, *Gaming*, 2).

130. Morgan, "Thoughts on Re-Performance," 11–12.

131. Morgan, 12. See also Guins, "No Paraphernalia, No Nostalgia," 206.

132. Grushin, *Line*, 125.

133. "Here [in video games] the 'work' is not as solid or integral as in other media" (Galloway, *Gaming*, 2).

134. Antonelli and Galloway, "Video Games."

135. See Barr, "From Hello World!"; Antonelli and Galloway, "Video Games"; Bittanti, "Event."

136. Antonelli, Burckhardt, and Galloway, "Never Alone," 16.

137. Lowry, foreword to *Never Alone*, 8.

138. Antonelli, "Why I Brought Pac-Man to MoMA."

139. Antonelli. See also Jones, "Sorry MoMA."

140. Antonelli, Burckhardt, and Galloway, "Never Alone," 20.

141. On the problems of understanding the medium specificity of video games in terms of "interaction," see, for example, Galloway: "One should resist equating gamic action with a theory of 'interactivity' . . . . Active audience theory claims that audiences always bring their own interpretations and receptions of the work. Instead I embrace the claim, rooted in cybernetics and information technology, that an active medium is one whose very

materiality moves and restructures itself—pixels turning on and off, bits shifting in hardware registers, disks spinning up and spinning down. Because of this potential confusion, I avoid the word 'interactive' and prefer instead to call the video game . . . an *action-based medium*" (*Gaming*, 3).

142. Guins, "No Paraphernalia, No Nostalgia," 204.

143. Guins, 204.

144. Antonelli, "Why I Brought Pac-Man to MoMA."

145. Guins, "No Paraphernalia, No Nostalgia," 212.

146. Vogl, "Becoming-Media," 23.

147. Guins, "No Paraphernalia, No Nostalgia," 212, 215.

148. Antonelli, Burckhardt, and Galloway, "Never Alone," 14.

149. See Guins, "No Paraphernalia, No Nostalgia," 206.

150. "As someone who sat across from Abramović in the atrium of MoMA, surrounded by a barrier like a boxing ring, itself surrounded by dozens of staring visitors, cameras, and lit by klieg lights, I can say personally I found the exchange to be anything but energizing, personal, or transformative. . . . For me this felt like an inadvertent parody of the structure of authentic expression and reception of 'true' emotional resonance that modernist art discourse (brought to its apotheosis in institutions such as MoMA) so long claimed for modernist painting and sculpture" (Jones, "'Artist Is Present,'" 18).

151. Jones, 34.

152. "'My name is like a brand, like Coca Cola,' Abramović said. 'When you say my name you think of performance'" (Wallin, "Abramović Announces"). See also Eler, "Artist Is Not Present"; "Marina Abramovic Retirement Fund." For a less apocalyptic perspective, see Michaelson:

> For some time now, the question surrounding Abramović has been, *Has she sold out?* . . . It implies that there is "high art" at MoMA, and then "low culture" at the Barclays Center, and never the twain shall meet. Never mind that Warhol guy . . . or the plethora of artists who have thrived at the intersections of popular and elite culture. For that matter, maybe Michelangelo "sold out" when he took that commission from the Medicis. . . . Would it be better for Abramović to fund her new center with government grants, if the often-erotic artist could ever score one to begin with? ("Yes, Marina Abramović")

153. See "A Different Way of Hearing"; *Marina Abramović: Die Kunst des Hörens* (2019).

154. Jones, "'Artist Is Present,'" 37.

155. Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," 338. "What is at stake here is the relation between aura and intersubjectivity . . . that turns, minimally, on the ability of another subject, in other regards just another phenomenal object *within* my world, to return my gaze as a subject . . . . As the opportunities for encountering others in this way decrease, through the increasing use of reproductive technologies, so too do our opportunities to encounter one another as persons" (Costello, "Aura, Face, Photography," 181).

156. See, for example, Stigh, "Marina Abramović"; Thurman, "Marina Abramović"; Steve Pulimood, "An Interview with Marina Abramovic."

157. See, for example, Klevjer, "Cut-Scenes"; Sorg and Eichhorn, "Playwatch"; Pearce, "Toward a Game Theory of Game"; Juul, "Introduction to Game Time."

158. Levin, "Keeping Foucault and Derrida in Sight," 450–51.

> [Jacques] Derrida maintains that "as soon as we admit the continuity of the now and the not-now, perception and nonperception, in the zone of primordiality common to primordial impression and primordial retention, we admit the other into the self-identity of the *Augenblick*; nonpresence and nonevidence are admitted into the *blink of an instant*. There is a duration to the blink, and it closes the eye. This alterity is in fact the condition for presence, presentation, and thus for *Vorstellung* in general." The domination, the mastery of the field that [Edmund] Husserl claims for his ocularcentric phenomenology, is thus subverted by something he failed to see: the blink of an instant, a closure that denies constant surveillance, abolishes continuous possession, and opens the field that the eye had vainly tried to delimit to all that is its other. (Levin, 410)

See also Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 65.

159. David and Susan, dialogue in *Bringing Up Baby*. Susan: "'He [the leopard, Baby] also likes music, particularly that song 'I Can't Give You Anything but Love, Baby.'" / David: "Oh, that's absurd! . . . What's the difference whether it adores it or not?" / Susan: "It's silly that he'd like such an old tune."

160. Furia and Patterson, *Poets of Tin Pan Alley*, 416–17. See also Burton, *Blue Book of Tin Pan Alley*, 323.

161. Decherney, "Gag Orders," 151.

162. Decherney, 151. "The well-known Chaplin imitator Billy West made over fifty films as a Chaplin-like character. . . . Neither Chaplin nor his attorney, the legendary copyright and entertainment lawyer Nathan Burkan, was happy about the massive proliferation of imitators and derivative works. . . . *Chaplin v. Amador* signaled a cultural shift from vaudeville to Hollywood, from live to recorded performance, and from local celebrity to global stardom. . . . The casualties of this change were future Bob Hopes, Stan Laurels, and Harold Lloyds, who were no longer free to learn their trade through emulation" (Decherney, 146–54).

2. TAKING DOWN PICTURES

1. Gopnik, "Supreme Court." See also Solomon, "Warhol Foundation to Pay $21,000"; Ashby, "Andy Warhol Copyright Case."

2. Totenberg, "Supreme Court."

3. Sanders, "Should a Unicorn-Poop Song."

4. See Gopnik, "Ruling Against Warhol."

5. Adler, "Supreme Court's Warhol Decision." On the enduring power of the author name in this case, see Davis, "Andy Warhol's 'Prince.'"

6. See, for example, Hurtz, "Warum das neue Urheberrecht alle angeht"; Wefing, "Geld und Ohnmacht"; "Europäischer Gerichtshof." Steyerl notes that filtering, while seemingly "automatic," depends on microworkers performing "underpaid 'microtasks' that turn digital pipelines into conveyor belts" ("Mean Images," 91). See also Knop, "Urheber im Gestrüpp." On filtering as a fundamental media historical process, see Bäcker, Kathöfer, and Schulz, "'Filter Is the Message.'"

7. See, for example, Boyle, "From Portapak to Camcorder"; Comino, "Underground Film-Making."

8. See Crimp, "Museum's Old / Library's New Subject."

9. See, for example, Phelan, *Unmarked*; Lippard, *Six Years*; Stimson, "What Was Institutional Critique?"

10. See Spigel, *TV by Design*; Newman and Levine, *Legitimating Television*; Montfort and Bogost, *Racing the Beam*.

11. Hu, *Prehistory of the Cloud*.

12. Hu, 9–10.

13. BGH, 16 May 2013, I ZR 28/12, https://openjur.de/u/626663.html.

14. On the discrepancy in the scholarship and archival records in terms of the month in which this action took place, see Schneede, *Joseph Beuys*, 82.

15. "The idea that Marcel Duchamp had given up art altogether, not just painting, came into currency around 1923. . . . As it turned out, Duchamp continued to make occasional small pieces and to work on his last major project, *Étant donnés* . . . executed during 20 years of secrecy, from 1946 to 1966" (Masheck, "Chance Is Zee Fool's Name for Fait," 19). See also von Graevenitz, "Breaking the Silence," 30–31; Szeemann, "Beuysnobsicum, Eintrag"; Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry*. Cf. Neuburger, "'Pax de deux'"; Sweet, "Erotic Paradigm"; Ursprung, *Joseph Beuys*, 78–80; Mackert, "Make a Chair!," 139–41.

16. Vollberg, "Das Vorabendmagazin 'drehscheibe,'" 61. The ZDF invitation card notes that the broadcast of this particular event was scheduled for 7 p.m. See ZDF-Landesstudio, Invitation Announcing Live Transmission.

17. Daniels, "Art and Television," 71. See also Dobbe, "Kunst und Fernsehen."

18. Vollberg, "Das Vorabendmagazin 'drehscheibe,'" 61.

19. LG Düsseldorf, 15 June 2009, 12 O 191/09, https://openjur.de/u/139474.html; OLG Düsseldorf, 30 December 2011, I-20 U 171/10, https://openjur.de/u/452714.html.

20. These words and title appear in other places of Beuys's oeuvre as well. See Neuburger, "'Pax de deux,'" 50; Korte, "Das Schweigen der Junggesellen," 26, 62–63; JBA-B-E 00001; Banz, "Joseph Beuys," 85.

21. See ZDF-Landesstudio, Invitation Announcing Live Transmission. On the importance of Duchamp to Fluxus, see, for example, Smith, "Fluxus"; Vautier, "What Is Fluxus?"; Neuburger, "'Pax de deux'"; Sweet, "Erotic Paradigm."

22. Temkin, "Joseph Beuys," 38.

23. Stiles, *Theories and Documents*, 69; Ranft, "Letter to Joseph Beuys." See also Grönert, "Fluxus."

24. Schüttpelz, "Die Akademie der Dilettanten," 56–57.

25. See Paust, "Neues aus dem Joseph Beuys Archiv," 41.

26. Paust, 41.

27. Schneede, *Joseph Beuys*, 80. The duration of the television program is cited as thirty minutes in the original letter of interest sent to Beuys by the ZDF studio (see Ranft, "Letter to Joseph Beuys") and is stated as between twenty and thirty minutes in the court proceedings (see LG Düsseldorf, 29 September 2010, 12 O 255/09, Rn. 43, https://openjur.de/u/56615.html).

28. In the 2009 exhibition *Joseph Beuys—Unveröffentlichte Fotografien von Manfred Tischer* (Joseph Beuys—Unpublished photographs by Manfred Tischer), nineteen photographs were displayed. See Paust, "Rechtsfälle," 187. In the preliminary-injunction proceedings before the Düsseldorf Regional Court (Landgericht Düsseldorf, June 2009), the plaintiff submitted eight images, of which seven were deemed to be in violation of copyright.

See LG Düsseldorf, 15 June 2009, 12 O 191/09, Rn. 7, https://openjur.de/u/139474.html. In the later main proceedings before the Düsseldorf Regional Court (Landgericht Düsseldorf, September 2010) and in the subsequent appeal before the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court (Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf, December 2011), the dispute ultimately concerned eighteen of the nineteen exhibited photographs, after one photograph was dropped from the claim during the appeal. See LG Düsseldorf, 29 September 2010, 12 O 255/09, https://openjur.de/u/56615.html; OLG Düsseldorf, 30 December 2011, I-20 U 171/10, Rn. 8, https://openjur.de/u/452714.html.

29. See Paust, "Neues aus dem Joseph Beuys Archiv," 48.

30. Paust, "Rechtsfälle," 187. The restoration of *Das Schweigen* was also part of Eva Beuys's complaint (see von Detten, "Kunstausstellung und das Urheberpersönlichkeitsrecht"; Grass, "Schokolade für den Geist"). Opponents of Eva Beuys's copyright lawsuits, including Ute Klophaus, the most well-known photographer of Beuys's works, emphasized during the trial that Beuys had largely opposed VG Bild-Kunst in his lifetime, withdrawing his membership after just fourteen days (see Klophaus in Schröer, "Parallel-Prozesse"). A few months after Beuys's death, Eva Beuys, then in charge of his estate, entered into a rights-management agreement with the artists' rights society (see BGH, 16 May 2013, I ZR 28/12, Rn. 6, https://openjur.de/u/626663.html). It has frequently been noted that Gerhard Pfennig, VG Bild-Kunst managing director until 2011 and representative of Eva Beuys in the Museum Schloss Moyland trials, was also the family's private lawyer (see Bayer, "Urteil mit Folgen"; Hahn, "Beuys' Filz-&-Margarine-Aktion"; Deutsche Presse-Agentur, "Bizarrer Streit mit Folgen").

31. See LG Düsseldorf, 29 September 2010, 12 O 255/09, https://openjur.de/u/56615.html; OLG Düsseldorf, 30 December 2011, I-20 U 171/10, https://openjur.de/u/452714.html.

32. Zeit Online, "Aufruf"; "Wir sind die Urheber!" See also Zeit Online, "Serie: Künstler und Urheberrecht" and "Wir sind die Urheber."

33. Stipp, "Piraten zum Urheberrecht"; Freisfeld, "Urheberrechtsdebatte." On the shifting positions of political parties regarding copyright during this time, see Lagershausen, "Netzpolitik-Check."

34. See Leistner and Metzger, "Recht und Realität im Netz"; Hanfeld, "Youtube zahlt Gema."

35. Derrida, "Declarations of Independence," 10.

36. For the US context, see, for example, Spigel, *TV by Design*, 145–47, 284–86. For the West German context, see, for example, Shattuc, *Television, Tabloids, and Tears*, 45–53; Hickethier, "Television and Social Transformation."

37. Crimp, "Museum's Old / Library's New Subject," 6.

38. See, for example, Abramović, Bonvicini, and Heiser, "Do It Again." More recently, see Czychowski, Paust, and Schierholz, "Das Problem Beuys."

39. See, for example, Phelan, "Ontology of Performance." See also Auslander, *Liveness*, 44–48; Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 91–92, 200n18.

40. BGH, 16 May 2013, I ZR 28/12, Rn. 43, https://openjur.de/u/626663.html.

41. See Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions."

42. On recent contributions exploring this problem in the context of specific, detailed cases in visual culture and art history, see, for example, Buskirk, *Is It Ours*; Goldsmith, *Duchamp Is My Lawyer*; Cooper, *Art and Modern Copyright*; Iljadica, *Copyright Beyond Law*.

43. See Copyright Law of the United States, 17 U.S.C. § 107, "Limitations on Exclusive Rights: Fair Use," https://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html#107.

44. Galloway, *Interface Effect*, 18, 24.

45. Galloway, 18.

46. Steyerl, "Mean Images," 82–97.

47. Volmar, "Gefährliches Halbwissen?" See also Latour, *Pandora's Hope*.

48. Latour, 69.

49. Council of the European Union, "Legislative Acts." See also European Commission, "United States. EU trade relations." On the details of the round of talks concerning the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), see García Bercero, "Final Press Conference." Digitization is frequently cited in copyright literature as providing the impetus for the approximation of rights regulation across the Atlantic over the last few decades (see, for example, Baldwin, *Copyright Wars*). See also Berger, "Photography Distinguishes Itself"; Blaschke, *Banking on Images*; Decherney, *Hollywood's Copyright Wars*; Dommann, *Autoren und Apparate*; Lessig, *Remix*; McCauley, "Merely Mechanical"; Steinhauer, *Bildregeln*; Stokes, *Art and Copyright*.

50. Baldwin, *Copyright Wars*, 113.

51. Baldwin, 113.

52. Sundara Rajan, *Moral Rights*, 33.

53. Wedgeworth, *World Encyclopedia*, 228. See §§ 12–14 UrhG, under "Urheberpersönlichkeitsrechte" (literally translated as the "personality rights of the original creator," commonly referred to as "moral rights"). These rights are listed as the right of publication, the recognition of authorship, and the distortion of the work. Dommann notes that the etymology of *Urheber*, "which is central to authors' rights, initially points to God, the primary creator, maker of the world, the one 'who first creates a thing, and from whom it certainly originates, either wholly or to a large extent'" (*Authors and Apparatus*, 22). Unless otherwise noted, all references to specific sections of the Urheberrechtsgesetz (UrhG) refer to versions of the statute in force prior to the 2021 reform. See Urheberrechtsgesetz, version in force 14 December 2012, https://www.urheberrecht.org/law/normen/urhg/2012-12-14/text/; Urheberrechtsgesetz, version in force 7 May 2013, https://www.urheberrecht.org/law/normen/urhg/2013-05-07/text/.

54. See §§ 12–14 UrhG. On the historical contextualization of these legal terms and concepts, see Bosse, *Autorschaft ist Werkherrschaft*; Plumpe, "Eigentum Eigentümlichkeit." Plumpe's text excavates the relationship between "German" notions of property (*Eigentum*) and its necessary trait of uniqueness (*Eigentümlichkeit*) in order to be legally protected as intellectual property during this time, suggesting that such romantic concepts of the artist-genius greatly influenced and even provided the structural basis for legal policies that are still, in some form or another, valid at present.

55. In a comparative analysis of German versus US fair use measures, Geller argues, however, that the German "freie Benutzung," at least in terms of its application in parody and citation cases, is gradually approaching the US "fair use" measure ("German Approach to Fair Use," 906).

56. See §§ 23–24 UrhG.

57. Augsberg, "Review of *Bildregeln*," 491.

58. For an understanding of juridical decisions as complex compilations of text, image, and speech, see Steinhauer, "Bildkontakt."

59. Böhm, "Bearbeitung und Benutzung von Werken." "In contrast, the free use of a work pursuant to Section 24 of the German Copyright Act [UrhG] is permitted without the author's consent. The distinction between Section 23 of the UrhG and Section 24 of the UrhG can be difficult in individual cases" (Böhm).

60. Foucault, "What Is an Author?," 207.

61. Cage, *Silence*, 8.

62. See Cage, *John Cage*, 166.

63. Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry*, 51. Such an interpretation of *Das Schweigen* seems to presume that Beuys was directly speaking on/to Duchamp in the performance, rather than offering a commentary on discourse, such as the discourse on Duchamp and the enigma of the artist who is exceptional even if he does nothing. See also Mieszkowski, "Ready, Set, Made!"

64. Beuys in Adriani, Konnertz, and Thomas, *Joseph Beuys*, 138. It appears in English ("This statement on Duchamp is highly ambivalent") in Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry*, 51, and Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys*, 92.

65. Banz, "Joseph Beuys," 94–95n7. Cf. Adriani, Konnertz, and Thomas, *Joseph Beuys*, 138–39, 374n16; Beuys, "Krawall in Aachen," 95–97.

66. LG Düsseldorf, 15 June 2009, 12 O 191/09, Rn. 32, https://openjur.de/u/139474.html. Cf. Mieszkowski, "Ready, Set, Made!," 75–76. Schneede's catalogue raisonné cites Beuys as having written the sentence himself (*Joseph Beuys*, 80).

67. Personal interview with Dr. Bettina Paust, then artistic director of the Museum Schloss Moyland, September 18, 2013.

68. "Works of Art," Norbert Tadeusz Estate.

69. Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology*, 228.

70. Cf. Mieszkowski, "Ready, Set, Made!," 75–76.

71. Thompson, *Felt*, 86–90.

72. For a critical perspective on the arrangement and preservation strategies for Beuys's work in Museum Schloss Moyland, see Bastian, "Der Gefangene von Moyland."

73. Spigel, *TV by Design*, 182–83. See also Slouka, "Listening for Silence."

74. Briggs, "Silent Television."

75. See Brock in Jung, "Umstrittenes Erbe."

76. Maaßen, "Fluxus, Fotografie und Urheberrecht," 14.

77. See Schneede's catalogue raisonné, which relied on both archival materials and testimonials for its summary of the work (*Joseph Beuys*, 82).

78. According to Paust's research, there were no spectators present at the ZDF studio who were there primarily to watch the action unfold; only the television team and the artists themselves were on site (Paust, personal interview).

79. Paust in Schürmann, "Erneute Niederlage."

80. Geimer, "Image as Trace," 22. On the origins of the relationship between the religious notion of the "creator" (*Urheber*) and the banning of images (*Bilderverbot*, aniconism), see Boehm, "Die Bilderfrage."

81. "The photographs capture essential elements of the staged performance, which constitute an individual intellectual creation. The photographic series is not an unaltered reproduction of the Beuys action, but rather a transformation of it. By abbreviating and accentuating the event, it deeply intervenes in the individual intellectual creation" (BGH, 16 May 2013, I ZR 28/12, Rn. 17, https://openjur.de/u/657558.html), summarizing the reasoning of the *Berufungsgericht*.

82. LG Düsseldorf, 29 September 2010, 12 O 255/09, Rn. 51, https://openjur.de/u/56615.html.

83. LG Düsseldorf, 29 September 2010, 12 O 255/09, Rn. 47, https://openjur.de/u/56615.html.

84. LG Düsseldorf, 29 September 2010, 12 O 255/09, Rn. 48, https://openjur.de/u/56615.html.

85. BGH, 16 May 2013, I ZR 28/12, Rn. 17, https://openjur.de/u/657558.html. "However, these changes did not go so far as to create with this image series an independent work based on the free use of the Beuys action" (Rn. 17).

86. See Crimp on these binaries that so frequently accompanied the historical prejudice against exhibiting photography in museums, a bias that acts "as if Duchamp's ready-mades had never occurred . . . . The ready-mades propose that the artist cannot *make*, but can only *take* what is already there. It is precisely upon this distinction—the distinction between making and taking—that the ontological difference between painting and photography is said to rest" ("Museum's Old / Library's New Subject," 6).

87. Green and Lowry, "Splitting the Index," 151–52.

88. Elmenhorst and von Brühl, "Auf der Drehscheibe."

89. Geimer, "Image as Trace," 18.

90. See Geimer; Barthes, *Camera Lucida*; Sontag, *On Photography*.

91. Jue, *Wild Blue Media*, 97. See also Jue, 96–107.

92. Schneider, "Small History (of) Still Passing," 257.

93. See also Willing, "Beuys in der Fotografie."

94. See Kort, "Joseph Beuys's *Arena*," 19.

95. See *Lebenslauf/Werklauf* (Life Course/Work Course) in Meyer, *Joseph Beuys*, 4–5. Kort notes that, over the course of *Life Course*, additions and supplements have been made to this quasi-fictional biography by Heiner Bastian, per Eva Beuys, and possibly others: "I have been unable to determine whether Beuys 'authorized' one additional expansion in 1984" ("Joseph Beuys's *Arena*," 31n17).

96. See Cooke, "Installing *Arena*," 13.

97. Kort, "Joseph Beuys's *Arena*," 18.

98. Cooke, "Installing *Arena*," 14.

99. "*Arena* can also be a square. . . . The spirit of *Arena* is in the title but not necessarily in the installation" (Amelio and Kort, "Neapolitan Trilogy," 41).

100. Kort, "Joseph Beuys's *Arena*," 28. See also Kort, 33n80.

101. Beuys in Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys*, 105.

102. Schneider, "Dead Hare, Live," 64. "If we acknowledge that the 'live' is an open category, a contested category, a category most exciting because its limits flow, are sticky, not entirely containable, and are as yet porous and undefined, then we can not so easily dismiss the radical suggestion Beuys made in *How to Explain*: the live may not be entirely live any more than the dead may be entirely dead. . . . For Beuys, liveness is contained rather in an attitude to mystery than in a physical attribute" (Schneider, 63).

103. LG Düsseldorf, 29 September 2010, 12 O 255/09, https://openjur.de/u/56615.html.

104. Ranft, "Letter to Joseph Beuys."

105. On the history of German televisual cultural magazines, see Borer, "Re-marking of Differences."

106. See Daniels, "Art and Television," 69. See also Dobbe, "Kunst und Fernsehen"; Keilbach and Stauff, "When Old Media Never Stopped."

107. Daniels, "Art and Television," 68. See also Hickethier, "Television and Social Transformation," 132.

108. See, for example, Stauff, "Taming Distraction"; Hassoun, "Tracing Attentions."

109. On the concept of flow in television, see Williams, *Television*; Engell, *Das Schaltbild*; Wulff, "Flow." On liveness, see, for example, Feuer, "Concept of Live Television"; Auslander, *Liveness*; Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*.

110. See Stauff, "Taming Distraction."

111. Stauff, 189.

112. Stauff, 186.

113. See Hickethier, "Television and Social Transformation," 134. See also McCarthy, *Ambient Television*.

114. Television in such cases "is not reporting an event, but actively performing it. . . . [It is] bringing it into existence. . . . Television here is not simply an observer or a producer" (Dayan and Katz, *Media Events*, 91).

115. According to Paust, the ZDF broadcast relied on three cameras in total (Paust, personal interview).

116. "The multiple-camera set-up deploying three to five cameras simultaneously, still the standard way in which television studio productions are shot, evolved specifically out of a desire to replicate the visual discourse of the spectator's experience of theatre" (Auslander, *Liveness*, 19–20). See also Caldwell, "Television," 617.

117. Auslander, *Liveness*, 20.

118. The "transparency" and "immediacy" typically ascribed to the televisual medium also seemed to be presumed in the judicial decisions here. "Whether transparent or hypermediated, all television programs present the experience of watching television as itself authentic and immediate. Even when television acknowledges itself as a medium, it is committed to the pursuit of the immediate to a degree that film and earlier technologies are not" (Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 187).

119. Stauff, "Taming Distraction," 187. See also Altman, "Television/Sound."

120. Briggs, "Silent Television." See also Spigel, *TV by Design*, 178–212. On the ways in which "the televisual handling of artworks . . . can illustrate how images are transformed into screen images, and what impact this transformation has on contemporary visual cultures," see Borer, "Re-marking of Differences," 198.

121. The photograph in this multiple is taken by Michael Ruetz. See Schellmann and Klüser, *Joseph Beuys*, nr. 67.

122. On the use of felt in Beuys's work, see, for example, Temkin, "Joseph Beuys," 15; van Loyen, "Kulturhelden wie wir," 165–68; Nowald, "Realität/Beuys/Realität"; Mesch, *Joseph Beuys*, 18–36. See also Thompson: "[Felt] is a nonwoven fabric, a body without axes, created through the multiple, random interlockings of spiral strands. The material owes its structural integrity to the chance bindings among its irregular spiral fibers. Felt is arrived at through the leaving-to-chance" (*Felt*, 22).

123. As noted in Paust, personal interview.

124. Vismann, *Medien der Rechtsprechung*, 186.

125. Vismann, 187.

126. LG Düsseldorf, 29 September 2010, 12 O 255/09, Rn. 44, https://openjur.de/u/56615.html.

127. On *Le Grand Verre* in this context, see Bachmann and Banz, "Gerichtsurteil, Duchamp, Beuys." Another piece in the installation, *Ohne Titel (Ein Eklat)* (Untitled [A Commotion]), encompasses an enlarged, painted version of one of Tischer's photographs, which could almost seem pixelated, in which Beuys's figure is obscured by the presence of a black square in the top right-hand corner (see Korte, "Das Schweigen der Junggesellen," 23; Stiftung Museum Schloss Moyland, *Das Schweigen der Junggesellen*, 36–37).

128. "Caroline Bachmann / Stefan Banz: The Silence of the Bachelors," February 16–April 27, 2014, texts for visitors, Museum Schloss Moyland, accessed May 8, 2023, https://stefanbanz.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/caroline-bachmann-stefan-banz-a-commotion-dt-engl.pdf.

129. See Harris, "Ruling in Germany's Supreme Court"; Stiftung Museum Schloss Moyland, *Das Schweigen der Junggesellen*, 101. As reasoning for its reversal, the Bundesgerichtshof held that it could not ascertain whether *Das Schweigen* even constituted "a work." The lower courts had assumed that "on the basis of surviving recollections and the photographs at issue here, and through a careful interpretation of the material and an art-historical analysis," one could determine that the action constituted "a personal intellectual creation" and that "the ephemeral nature of the action did not stand in the way of copyright protection." In contrast, the Bundesgerichtshof determined that copyright protection in this case "does depend on assigning it to a work category" and that "the absence of a physical fixation of the design" indeed poses a problem for this. BGH, 16 May 2013, I ZR 28/12, Rn. 31–33, 35, https://openjur.de/u/657558.html.

130. On the tendency to reduce the medial complexity of this "relic" of *Das Schweigen*, see, for example, de Duve, *Sewn in the Sweatshops*, 57 ("a board from the action").

131. Referring to John R. Searle's text published in *Glyph* in 1977, a reply to his own reading of J. L. Austin in *Signature Event Context*, Derrida remarks on the manuscript he received from Searle before it went to print, particularly the "proper place" of the copyright symbol: "And handwritten above the ©, the date: 1977. I received the manuscript shortly before Christmas, 1976. The use of this mention (which I rediscovered in the text published by *Glyph*, this time in its proper place at the bottom of the first page) would have lost all value in 1976 (no one abused it then) or in another place, or between quotation marks, as is here the case, in the middle of a page that no normal person (except, perhaps, myself) would dream of attributing to the hand of John R. Searle" (*Limited Inc*, 30).

132. There are at least three other objects that are "remainders" of this event, also worked on "after" the fact: *Fettecke aus: "Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird überbewertet," mit Fett verlängerter Spazierstock II*, and *Filzdecke* (Neuburger, "'Pax de deux,'" 50; Sweet, "Erotic Paradigm," 268n9).

133. Derrida, *Limited Inc*, 32.

134. Derrida, 32.

135. Bachmann and Banz also implicitly raise this question as to whether Beuys, in *Das Schweigen* in 1964, could also have been accused of reproducing "Duchamp," a proper name and, by that point, a kind of intellectual property of sorts, without authorization ("Gerichtsurteil, Duchamp, Beuys," 15–16).

136. Derrida, *Limited Inc*, 31. This "problem of the artist's signature—the singular name of the 'great' artist"—can also be described by reference to our previous case study: "What if those hired to reenact Marina Abramović's pieces . . . in *The Artist Is Present* . . . had legally

changed their names to Marina Abramović?" (Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 187n3). See also Peters: "A signature is . . . not simply linguistic, as legibility is not required, it is a name, icon, gesture, act, and utterance all at once, a work of the hand backed by the entire body" (*Marvelous Clouds*, 272).

137. Manfred Tischer, letter to Joseph Beuys.

138. See also Neuburger, "'Pax de deux,'" 49.

139. This photograph is now on Wikipedia with Tischer's copyright as a watermark placed over "DUCHAMP" (see "Manfred Tischer").

140. See Beuys and Wolleh, *Das Unterwasserbuch Projekt*; Melissen, *Von zwei Männern*. On the unrealized "underwater book" format, see Holzhey, "Measuring the World."

141. "Might *How to Explain* be ongoing? Is it ongoing not only in object remains such as photographs, but in Hamilton's *privation and excesses* which is not a reenactment of Beuys but perhaps a riff, or a body part, or an echo, or even the stray forgotten memory of a passerby? . . . And are both of these works ongoing in my (or your) articulation of our experiences of these events, even after the facts of their so-called liveness, however faulty or deadly or rational or errant those articulations, as explanations, may be?" (Schneider, "Dead Hare, Live," 64).

3. THREE (-PLUS) WAYS OF SPILLING INK

1. Many thanks to Haegue Yang for her insights on this artistic process.

2. One of the earliest recordings of Broodthaers's *La Pluie* was uploaded to YouTube in 2010 ("La Pluie MARCEL BROODTHAERS"). Since then, recordings of *La Pluie* have been uploaded in several versions to YouTube, totaling over fifty thousand views. See, for example, "The Rain"; "S.M.A.K."

3. Many thanks to David Kim for helping to identify the characters written on paper in this video.

4. See, for example, Olivier Foulon, *Untitled (Painting Beside Itself)* (2010), and Thierry Geoffroy / Colonel, *La Pluie n'abollira pas les questions* (The rain will not abolish the questions, 2015). See also Müller and Jansen, preface and acknowledgments; Mišković, *Emergency Will Replace*, 41–42. For more on chance operations in *La Pluie* and *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (A throw of the dice will never abolish chance, Stéphane Mallarmé, [1897] 1914), see Chesher, "Denounced Tautology"; Viart, "Happy Failure."

5. *La Pluie* (1969) could be seen as delivering on the ultimate, never-give-up MoMA promise in 2016: "This exhibition—the first Broodthaers retrospective organized in New York—will reunite key works from all aspects of his art making to underscore the complex trajectory of his career, which despite its brief duration proved enormously influential to future generations of artists" ("Marcel Broodthaers: A Retrospective").

6. Hayles, *Writing Machines*, 61.

7. In comparing certain forms of handwriting with typewriting, Ingold references Paul Klee's idea of a line "free to go where it will, for movement's sake," contrasting this with typed text where each letter is isolated and "remains confined to its point of origin" (*Lines*, 75, 96). See also Klee, *Notebooks*, vol. 1.

8. Freud, "Note upon the Mystic Writing-Pad," 227.

9. Purdy, *Chinese Sympathies*, 49. Purdy is writing about the function of delay in Franz Kafka's short version of *Eine kaiserliche Botschaft* (An imperial message, 1919), noting that while "true to Claude Shannon's model of communication, the actual content of the emperor's message remains unknown" in this parable, "within the logic of both [Marco] Polo's late medieval and Kafka's modern communication circuit, the delay of a message becomes just as important to its recipient as its arrival" (*Chinese Sympathies*, 47–48). See also Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 337–38.

10. See, for example, Sundén, "Queer Disconnections."

11. Vismann, *Files*, 26–27. Vismann notes that "in cultural memory, however, these technologies of effacement have themselves been effaced" (27).

12. The retrospective at MoMA in 2016 was Broodthaers's "first American exhibition in twenty-five years," and it's been noted that his oeuvre "has remained notoriously difficult for an American reception" (Buchloh, Borja-Villel, Cherix, Haidu, and Stark, "Moment of Marcel Broodthaers?," 111).

13. On the theoretical problems of "new" media, see, for example, Chun, "Introduction: Did Somebody Say New Media?"; Hu, *Prehistory of the Cloud*; Sterne, "Out with the Trash."

14. Peters, *Marvelous Clouds*, 265.

15. On the *Gegenstand* as an object that can "stand against" or resist formalized states of change via storage technology, see Winkler, "Geometry of Time," 8.

16. Purdy, *Chinese Sympathies*, 48.

17. Peters, *Marvelous Clouds*, 279. "Poststructuralist writers like to point out [that the German verb "to write,"] *schreiben*, contains *Schrei* (scream), just as the French noun *l'écrit* suggests *le cri* (the cry). . . . Signatures can send some to their deaths, and a few well-placed zeroes can make others enormously rich" (Peters, 279).

18. Peters, *Marvelous Clouds*, 265. Peters also notes that writing should not always or immediately be associated with some notion of the poetic: "Writing, the ur-medium, might have been developed to store poetry in the exceptional case of the Greek alphabet, but much of the history of scripts has been managerial, executive, and computational" (foreword to *Assembly Codes*, viii).

19. "In print books words are obviously inscriptions because they take the form of ink marks impressed on paper. . . . *To count as an inscription technology, a device must initiate material changes that can be read as marks*" (Hayles, *Writing Machines*, 24).

20. "Derrida provides a crucial opening for media theory in showing that writing's distance from speech and presence is a gift, not a curse . . . . Absence is writing's genius, and *all media to one degree or another trade in absence*. (Think of ships, fire, and clocks.) By criticizing the dream of immediacy, Derrida makes room for the medium of writing and also invites us to see media as variations on writing's logics" (Peters, *Marvelous Clouds*, 286). See, for example, Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing"; Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

21. "Marcel Broodthaers: Belgian."

22. Broodthaers in Buchloh, "Open Letters, Industrial Poems," 71–72. On the somewhat different translation of this "statement" in the 2016 MoMA exhibition catalogue, see Borja-Villel and Cherix, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 81. See also Schultz, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 55.

23. Buchloh, "Open Letters, Industrial Poems," 72n9.

24. See "Marcel Broodthaers: 22 Invitations"; Ceuleers, "Corneille Hannoset, Constantin Brodzki," 190; Haidu, *Absence of Work*, 1.

25. Haidu, *Absence of Work*, 274. See also Robbe-Grillet, *For a New Novel*.

26. Knapp, "Parisian Theatrical Scene," 372. "Portrait of Agnes Sorel." See also Bourget-Pailleron: "The title *Bonheur, Impair et Passe* has an old-fashioned look that calls to mind the theater of the period between the two wars. One imagines it . . . under the signature of Alfred Savoir" ("REVUE DRAMATIQUE," 607).

27. Buchloh, "Open Letters, Industrial Poems," 71–72.

28. Borja-Villel and Cherix, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 80.

29. Borja-Villel and Cherix, 80.

30. If this is a kind of inadvertent apostrophizing of Broodthaers's relationship with "some objects," it might serve to reinforce his subjectivity as a poet, as the apostrophe "is the pure embodiment of poetic pretension: of the subject's claim that in his verse he is not merely an empirical poet, a writer of verse, but the embodiment of poetic tradition and of the spirit of poesy. Apostrophe is perhaps always an indirect invocation of the muse. Devoid of semantic reference, the O of apostrophe refers to other apostrophes and thus to the lineage and conventions of sublime poetry" (Culler, *Pursuit of Signs*, 158).

31. "Corneille Hannoset is someone I had never heard about before, and his work has been a real discovery. He designed Marcel Broodthaers' famous invitation card, which is overprinted onto existing magazine pages; it is a highly collectible object in the contemporary art world, but up until now Hannoset was almost forgotten about" (De Bondt in Filmer-Court, "Off the Grid Explores"). See also De Bondt, *Off the Grid*; Ceuleers, "Corneille Hannoset, Constantin Brodzki."

32. Peters, "Calendar, Clock, Tower," 41.

33. On the history of Letraset, from a wet-transfer process to the dry-transfer process of rubdown lettering taken up in the punk scene in the 1970s, see Shaughnessy, *Letraset*.

34. See, for example, "Metropolitan Museum of Art Press Kits."

35. On the media history of the private view card, see Houghton, "RSVP," 27.

36. See, for example, Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 200.

37. "Vernissage has its roots in the old practice of setting aside a day before an exhibition's opening for artists to varnish and put finishing touches to their paintings—a tradition that reportedly dates to at least 1809, when it was instituted by England's Royal Academy of Arts. . . . English speakers originally referred to this day of finishing touches simply as 'varnishing day,' but sometime around 1912 we also began using the French term *vernissage* (literally, 'varnishing')." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "vernissage (n.)," accessed March 29, 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vernissage.

38. Instead of understanding media obsolescence as something that occurs as a result of rapid technological progress, it's often the other way around: This supposed "progress" can, in fact, result from planned media obsolescence, as evident in the early example of the General Motors (GM) initiation, in 1923, of its "yearly model change." As Sterne shows, "the scheduled redesign allowed GM to rationalize its own innovation process with stylistic changes every year and technological changes every three years. . . . Technological obsolescence was supposed to represent genuine innovation, utility, and, to some degree, necessity" ("Out with the Trash," 21).

39. Gibbons, "Only Abandoned." See also "Marcel Broodthaers: *La Pluie (projet pour un texte)*."

40. Pallant and Price, *Storyboarding*, 7. See also Millard, "Screenplay as Prototype."

41. Boime, *Academy and French Painting*, 128.

42. Hayles, "Transformation of Narrative," 31. See also Stjernfelt: "The sketch can not claim neither more nor less prominence than the finished work of art—the polished, overworked

piece and the raw, unfinished fragment now appear as parallel possibilities, and there is hardly any point in attacking one of them on behalf of the other" (*Diagrammatology*, 321).

43. Verevis, *Film Remakes*, 129–30. See also Altman, *Film/Genre*.

44. Jones, "La Pluie." The question by the YouTube viewer has since been deleted, but Jones's response remains in the comment thread.

45. Haidu, *Absence of Work*, 110. See also McEvilley, "Another Alphabet," 107; Buchloh, "Museum Fictions."

46. Borgemeister, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 326 (caption for figure 72).

47. Rattemeyer, "Musée-Museum," 166–67. See also Boudier, "Marcel Broodthaers." For the 1969 interview in French, see Broodthaers, "Entretien de Freddy De Vree."

48. Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 207. See also Haidu, *Absence of Work*, 114–15.

49. Haidu, *Absence of Work*, 117. See also Pelzer, "Recourse to the Letter."

50. Broodthaers, "Chers Amis / Paris, le 29 novembre 1968," open letter in Borja-Villel and Cherix, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 180.

51. "After a year, I packed up all this material, and the Museum grew. In fact, I was establishing a relationship between the emptiness . . . of painting, between the absence of signification and the emptiness of the crates, the emptiness of reproductions" (Broodthaers in Moure, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 228).

52. See Rattemeyer, "Musée-Museum."

53. For me, an idea of response-ability is embedded in gestural engagements that function as call and response. Gestures caught in or as documents such as film and video or composed of paint on surfaces or in sculptural form are taken up by other bodies, things, or surfaces and passed along, body to body, as call meets response becomes call again. . . . A photograph itself, regardless of whether it depicts a literal gesture in an image form, can be said to gesture toward a future viewer: "Hey, you there, look at me!" Rather than approaching an image simply as representation, trace, documentation, art, or evidence of the bygone (a conventional approach to photography as trace document), might we think of it as resonance, reverberation, or ongoing call? (Schneider, "That the Past May Yet Have Another Future," 299)

    See also Schneider and Ruprecht, "In Our Hands," 118–22.

54. See Broodthaers in De Vree, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 12.

55. See Borgemeister, "'Section des Figures,'" 139; Borja-Villel and Cherix, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 202–9; Haidu, *Absence of Work*, 163–224.

56. Oppitz, "Eagle/Pipe/Urinal," 155. See also Lütticken, "Feathers of the Eagle."

57. Broodthaers, *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute*, vol. 2, 18. See also Oppitz, "Adler Pfeife Urinoir," 20–21; Oppitz, *Interfunktionen*, 177–80; Borgemeister, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 166–92; Borgemeister, "'Section des Figures,'" 135–54.

58. "Marcel Broodthaers, Musée d'Art Moderne."

59. "In 1968 Broodthaers was two decades older than the rioting students of 1968 . . . . And '1968' was hardly the most momentous political or historical event in his life . . ." (Haidu, *Absence of Work*, 115).

60. Lundemo, "In the Kingdom of Shadows," 317.

61. Lundemo, 317.

62. Metz, "On the Impression of Reality," 9.

63. "Video shot in Lyon in the courtyard of the École des Beaux Arts: it's also a way of decontextualizing the message, without necessarily linking it to Japan" (Galerie Cortex Athletico, presentation of *Bureau Belge*). Document provided by Sophia Girabancas Pérez, personal correspondence, May 23, 2011.

64. Takata, "Building Column 6."

65. See "Former Hiroshima Branch."

66. Otani, "Bureau Belge," 236.

67. Pellegrino, "Gojira's Egg," 28–29. See also Ibuse's novel *Kuroi Ame* [Black Rain], based on the diary entries of survivors of the atom bomb: "'The rain from [the thundery black clouds] had fallen in streaks the thickness of a fountain pen. . . . However many times I went to the ornamental spring to wash myself, the stains from the black rain wouldn't come off. As a dye, I thought, it would be an unqualified success'" (Yasuko in *Black Rain*, 34–35). Exhibitions of *Bureau Belge* have since made its reference to *Black Rain* explicit, noting the diary entries as the video's "point of departure" (Blanchet, "Japon").

68. Misek, *Chromatic Cinema*, 170. Misek contrasts what he suggests is "perhaps the most significant characteristic of digital color"—namely, "its partiality to transformation"—with the possibilities for color in the medium of painting: "Painting carries material limitations—oil paints, for example, cannot escape the physical properties of their oil base. By contrast, digital color is immaterial. . . . [Digital color's protean nature] manifests itself in color attributes . . . freed from environmental limitations. . . . Virtually any color change carried out in post-production can also be keyframed, so that it occurs over time, in front of our eyes" (170).

69. On the relationship between the writing, speaking, and foreignization of "Hiroshima," Otani writes: "The video found its form through documents, some explicit, some implicit, on what took place in this town in 1945 . . . It seems to me that this documentation echoes the word 'ヒロシマ' which appeared after 1945, 'Hiroshima' written in Katakana, one of the three types of Japanese alphabets grammatically referring to foreign letters, that only exists in the written form. How could one fully grasp 'ヒロシマ', a stranger in its own language, using only its written/document form?" ("Bureau Belge," 236–37).

70. Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*, 143.

71. Kotz, 98.

72. Nornes, *Brushed in Light*, 27–28.

73. Ingold, *Lines*, 88. See also Belyea, "Inland Journeys."

74. Ingold, *Lines*, 77.

75. Ingold, 78–82. See also Weiner, *Empty Place*.

76. See Ingold on Klee's description of a kind of line that is free to go "out for a walk": "Whereas the active line on a walk is dynamic, the line that connects adjacent points in series is, according to Klee, 'the quintessence of the static' . . . . If the former takes us on a journey that has no obvious beginning or end, the latter presents us with an array of interconnected destinations that can, as on a route-map, be viewed all at once" (*Lines*, 75). See also Klee, *Notebooks*.

77. Other potential referents of this abbreviation that appears repeatedly throughout *Quasi MB* could include, for example, Modified By, Megabyte, and Myung-bak, whose initials were closely associated with South Korean politics of the period through terms such as MBnomics and the MB Doctrine.

78. "Yang's rejoinder . . . becomes an instance of coming to terms with what the artist perceives as . . . a struggle of subjectivity with regard to her own positionality of inserting and inscribing herself, as a non-Westerner and as a woman, in the history and tradition of the Western avant-garde. . . . She finds no space for herself in the dominant discourses without being exoticized and without feeling a 'sense of shame'" (Chong, "Small Dictionary," 153–54). Many thanks to Hiju Kim for helping with the translation of one of these plates.

79. See Broodthaers, *Magie: Art et politique*.

80. Broodthaers in Schultz, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 264. See also Freud, "A Note upon the Mystic Writing-Pad," 227–32.

81. Freud, "A Note upon the Mystic Writing-Pad," 228. See also Elsaesser: "Between perception (and immediate erasure) and the Unconscious (unlimited storage), Freud comes close to specifying the machine requirements for an input/processing/output system" ("Freud as Media Theorist," 108).

82. Freud points out that the mystic writing pad simultaneously erases and inscribes: "It solves the problem of combining the two functions by dividing them between two separate but interrelated component parts or systems" ("A Note upon the Mystic Writing-Pad," 230). *Quasi MB* takes a similar approach by separating a means of endless inscriptions—the computer and its printed writing—from another means by which one obtains, as Freud remarks, "a 'permanent memory-trace'": ink on paper ("a sheet of paper which I can write upon in ink") (227).

83. Latour, "Technology Is Society," 111–20.

84. Schüttpelz, "Moderne Medien," 242.

85. Schüttpelz, 242–43.

86. Yang, *Quasi MB—In the Middle of Its Story*, 2006–7 (from figure 18 in the panel series).

87. Austin, "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," 428.

88. Austin, 438. This is because the plan and the result need not tally: "Of course, all that is to follow, or to be done thereafter, is not what I am intending to do, but perhaps consequences or results or effects thereof" (Austin, 438).

89. Austin, 436.

90. Austin, 432.

91. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "precipitate, (adj.)," sense I.1.a., accessed June 15, 2025, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/precipitate_adj?tab=meaning_and_use#28818848; "precipitate, (n.)," sense 2.b., accessed June 15, 2025, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/precipitate_n?tab=meaning_and_use#28818486; and "precipitate (v.)," sense I.2.b, accessed June 15, 2025. https://www.oed.com/dictionary/precipitate_v?tab=meaning_and_use#28819270.

92. Felman, *Scandal of the Speaking Body*, 85.

93. Felman, 90.

94. Austin, "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," 438.

95. Austin asks and answers playfully: "Finally, can a thing be done on purpose, but yet not intentionally? . . . The expression 'accidentally on purpose' hints, at least ironically, that something of the sort may be possible; for, if done accidentally, it is not done intentionally. But how ironical is this expression?" ("Three Ways of Spilling Ink," 433).

96. Yang, *Quasi MB—In the Middle of Its Story*, 2006–7 (from figure 26 in the panel series).

97. Felman also points out that Austin's text does not claim to offer a response to the spilling: "It only enumerates, inventories the variety of possible questions—a list that one might be tempted to prolong" (*Scandal of the Speaking Body*, 91).

98. Lynd W. Forguson in Austin, "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," 440n7.

99. See Jonasson, "'Sport qua science,'" 1526n1.

100. Serres, *Parasite*, 225–27.

101. "This quasi-object, when being passed, makes the collective . . . . A ball is not an ordinary object, for it is what it is only if a subject holds it. Over there, on the ground, it is nothing" (Serres, *Parasite*, 225).

102. See also Latour: "'Construction' [in an experiment] is in no way the mere recombination of already existing elements. In the course of the experiment [Louis] Pasteur and the ferment [the experimenter and the "subject" of the experiment] *mutually exchange and enhance their properties*" (*Pandora's Hope*, 124).

103. This corresponds to what Latour might call a third possibility via detour or interruption: "The myth of the Neutral Tool under complete human control and the myth of the Autonomous Destiny that no human can master are symmetrical. But a third possibility is more commonly realized: the creation of a new goal that corresponds to neither agent's program of action" (*Pandora's Hope*, 178).

104. "*Medium* means middle and in the middle, mediation and mediator; it calls for a closer questioning of the role, workings, and materials of this 'in between.'" (Vogl, "Becoming-Media," 15).

105. "There is no such thing as a simple representation of a scientific object in the sense of an adequation or approximation of something out there, either conceptually or materially. Upon closer inspection, any representation 'of' turns out to be always already a representation 'as'" (Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*, 104).

106. Rheinberger, 32–33.

107. Rheinberger, 28. He also compares the function and value of the epistemic thing to a xenotext, in that their reference potential to point entirely beyond themselves and beyond expectation remains unexhausted (see Rheinberger, *Split and Splice*, 141).

108. Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*, 28. "Experimental systems, in fact, do not and cannot tell their story in advance" (36). The refusal to present a finalized project with one simplified, easily digestible meaning could also relate to Yang's experience with the institutional requirements of the "professional," nomadic artist who relies on ever-changing site-specific residencies and is not only often asked in such contexts to produce simplified, easily marketable messages, but must do so in order to advance professionally and, sometimes, to financially survive (see Chong, "Small Dictionary," 154). See also Kwon, *One Place After Another*.

109. Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*, 80.

110. Rheinberger, 25.

111. See Galison, "Image of Self," 266, 270–71.

112. Rodolphe Töpffer in Gamboni, *Potential Images*, 54.

113. Gabriel Séailles in Gamboni, 181.

4. UNBOXING MAGAZINES

1. Martina Weiß, archivist (then *Diplombibliothekarin*), Klingspor Museum for Modern International Book Art, Typography and Calligraphy, Offenbach, Germany, personal

interview, February 26, 2015. The archivist made this remark while showing me an issue of *S.M.S.*, another boxed magazine from the late 1960s, and her observation is helpful for opening up *Aspen* as well. The cover image of this book, König's *My Country 'Tis of Thee*, was found during this unboxing of *S.M.S.* See *S.M.S.*

2. On the table of contents as a form of paratext that encourages various paths of navigating the text, see Genette's subsection on "The order in which to read" (*Paratexts*, 218).

3. Allen, *Artists' Magazines*, 54. In response to an inquiry about the production of the *Aspen* 5+6 boxes, Mark Orange, who works with Barbara Novak and the O'Doherty Estate and was replying on her behalf, noted that "unfortunately there is no memory of the specifics of the production process on the [*Aspen*] boxes. It was probably made to Brian's [O'Doherty's] specifications by Roaring Fork Press, and there is an outside chance there may be correspondence at the studio relating to it, but Brian's archives are as yet uncatalogued, so it is impossible to say for sure." Personal email correspondence, December 8, 2025. Lynn Letterman, guest art director for this double issue together with David Dalton, confirmed that O'Doherty had likely "prearranged" the box so that all of the items would fit inside it, also remarking on the rather unusual way of accessing it ("it's strange for a box to open like that"). She recalled that "Brian was very good about explaining all of his ideas about it" and that, as with the advertisement for *Aspen* featuring the Madisons (figure 32), "he showed me all this [his ideas and designs] in my living room." Personal telephone communication, December 15, 2025. With thanks to Barbara Novak and Lynn Letterman for this information.

4. O'Doherty introduces his work on *Aspen* like this: "[David Dalton] approached me and he said, I'd like you to meet this woman because she publishes this magazine in a box. And her name is Phyllis Johnson. And there is tremendous interest in that box, by the way. It keeps going on and on and on for some reason." O'Doherty, oral history interview. Boxes recur throughout the interview, from his first thinking about *Art Since 1945* (1975) in terms of a "tin box" to the "great interest in boxes" at the time.

5. See Allen, 54. "*Aspen* 5+6 featured work by well-known minimalist artists including Sol LeWitt, Mel Bochner, Tony Smith, and Robert Morris. With its square white box cover and its reductive sans serif font, the magazine stylistically embodied the geometric forms of this work" (54).

6. Contents, *Aspen* 5+6, item 2.

7. O'Doherty, "Brian O'Doherty with Phong Bui." On the importance of philosophical questions to the emergence of set theory as a novel, foundational syntax of nineteenth-century European mathematics, see Ferreirós, *Labyrinth of Thought*, 4, 7.

8. See Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 130–53; Nussbaum, "Nelson Goodman," 125. While Goodman's criteria aim to precisely identify and differentiate notational schemes from systems, notation is understood here more broadly as a means to archive, abstract, and reduce data and to potentially establish a basis upon which the set for this box compilation could be reshuffled, expanded or reduced, and reproduced with different elements at a later time while maintaining its structure.

9. Peters, *Marvelous Clouds*, 11.

10. See introduction, endnote 25.

11. "The ephemerality of the magazine was central to its radical possibilities as an alternative form of distribution that might replace the privileged space of the museum with a more direct and democratic experience. . . . The prospect of the disappearance of the art

object carried with it the utopian promise that art might escape its status as commodity and circumvent the gallery to become a truly accessible and democratic form of expression" (Allen, *Artists' Magazines*, 1, 15).

12. On the court ruling that made the circulation of *Aspen* no longer financially possible, therein leading to its abrupt cancellation since it was no longer considered "print" but rather a package, see United States Postal Service, "'Aspen'—Denial"; Allen, *Artists' Magazines*, 49.

13. Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions," 281. "It's not a question of being against the institution: We are the institution. It's a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we institutionalize, what forms of practice we reward, and what kinds of rewards we aspire to" (283).

14. On the ways in which "lists teach us about the way data become culturally inscribed as knowledge" as well as "the systems of order that surround and enframe us," see Young, *List Cultures*, 15.

15. Allen, *Artists' Magazines*, 52.

16. See "U B U W E B :: presents." For recent discussions on the role of UbuWeb in the contemporary distribution of audiovisual media, see King and Simon, "Before and After UbuWeb"; Balsom, *After Uniqueness*, 85–93; Snelson, *Little Database*; Snelson, "Live Vinyl MP3."

17. See Richter, *Rhythm 21* (1921). On low screen resolutions in the experience of moving image work, see Sauter, *3g, 4g and Beyond*, 260.

18. Goldsmith, *Duchamp Is My Lawyer*, 1–3. On the history of digitizing *Aspen* for UbuWeb, see Goldsmith, 195–213.

19. "Box. Two-piece box, 8-¼ by 8-¼ by 2-⅛ inches. White box of two nearly identical halves, title on side in inconspicuous type. Contains sections 2 through 28" ("U B U W E B :: presents").

20. See Te Heesen, *World in a Box*. See also Bowry, "Thinking Inside the Box."

21. See Te Heesen, *World in a Box*, 135–62. Fehr, "Text und Kontext"; te Heesen and Michels, *auf \zu*.

22. Te Heesen, *World in a Box*, 148, 152.

23. See Te Heesen, 152.

24. See, for example, Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*; Douglas, *How Institutions Think*; Wallenstein, "Institutional Desires."

25. The exhibition *Secret Compartments* in 2015 at the Museum of Applied Arts in Frankfurt is another example in this context, which underscored the influence of different container types on the positionality of objects. In this exhibition, the compartment was not just a static object to be contemplated, but something that gives rise to a distinctive temporality that serves to heighten the experience of the act of unveiling, to dramatize it, or it can elide and undermine this expectation altogether (see Koch and Wagner K, "Secret Compartments").

26. See Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*.

27. See Museum of Jurassic Technology, *Museum of Jurassic Technology*.

28. Fehr, "Text und Kontext," 41.

29. Fehr, 41.

30. The meaning of "box" comes from the Latin *buxus*, which is a transliteration of the Greek *pyxis* (πυξίς, plural *pyxides*). . . . In the Classical world, *pyxis* was

> associated with cosmetic and jewellery boxes. The *pyxides* often contained make-up powder, hair accessories, and ornaments, and were used almost exclusively by women. . . . Mythology . . . provides a glimpse of what I call the *epistemology of the familiar*: the attempt to show how mundane objects that occupy our everyday lives are linked to the emergence of new structures of knowledge . . . . An epistemology of the familiar is the study of the ordinary, the ephemeral, and the often unnoticed, such as a box. (Rentetzi, "Epistemology of the Familiar," 37–38)

31. Mowlabocus, "'Let's Get This Thing Open,'" 566.

32. "Magic Behind Unboxing"; McAvoy, "Guilty Pleasures," 201–2; Prince, "Toddlers Mesmerized." On the reference to the 2006 'ur-unboxing' video of a Nokia E61 phone, see O'Connell, "Cult of Unboxing"; "Unbox.IT: Unboxing Ceremony." On the ways in which packaging itself has adapted and transformed in response to the growing influence of unboxing videos, see Owczarek, "Anatomy of a Killer Unboxing."

33. Warzel, "I Can't Stop Watching."

34. See Vogl, "Becoming-Media," 16.

35. "What's the Deal."

36. "If I use a refrigerator to refrigerate, it is a practical mediation: it is not an object but a refrigerator" (Baudrillard, *System of Objects*, 91).

37. Voice-over (IntellivisionDude) in "The Wizard of OZ Ultimate." Unless otherwise noted, all quotes about this edition are from the voice-over in this unboxing video.

38. Voice-over reading of printed text on the back of the *Wizard of Oz Ultimate Collector's Edition 70th Anniversary DVD* box.

39. On the issue of *Aspen* that did make the medium of film one of its primary topics, see the second issue, with seventeen "excerpts" from the Aspen Film Conference: The Young Outs vs The Establishment, *Aspen* 2, item 7. Allen notes that "many issues of *Aspen* 5+6 were missing the films because money ran out to produce enough copies of it, according to O'Doherty" (*Artists' Magazines*, 322n24). For an interpretation of texts by László Moholy-Nagy, whose film is one of the four included in *Aspen* 5+6, as a precursor to theories on the dematerialization of film and the importance of theorizing film intermedially, see Walley, "Material of Film."

40. Klose, *Container Principle*, 151. Distribution, particularly twentieth-century intermodal distribution, has also been a key factor in the rise of the modern shipping box: "This development, the decision against the ['light, nimble'] vehicle and for the box [as a large container corresponding to global loading units], indicates another obvious way to bring the container from the depths of history: as a history of the box. On the one hand, it is a mobile carriage, a body separated from the vehicle's frame, and on the other hand, it is a box brought to the dimensions of railcars and streetcars" (Klose, 146). See also Twede, Selke, Kamdem, and Shires, *Cartons, Crates and Corrugated Board*; Sofoulis, "Containers, Retrospectively."

41. See Richter, *Rhythm 21* (1921); Burroughs, *Nova Express* (1965); and Smith, *Drawings for "The Maze."*

42. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xv.

> This book first arose out of a passage in Borges . . . as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought—*our* thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age

> and our geography—breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other. . . . In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*. (Foucault, *Order of Things*, xv)

43. "The marvelous implies that we are plunged into a world whose laws are totally different from what they are in our own and in consequence that the supernatural events which occur are in no way disturbing" (Todorov, "Fantastic," 140).

44. Foucault, *Order of Things*, xvii.

45. Foucault, xvii.

46. Foucault, xvii–xviii.

47. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "magazine (n.)," accessed January 15, 2015. https://www.oed.com/dictionary/magazine_n. In his contemporary review of *Aspen* and another boxed magazine from this time, *S.M.S.* (1968), founded by William Copley, Yalkut extends the etymological significance of *magazine* and discusses the meaning of the term in military contexts: "It 'feeds' cartridges into a gun. There are 'magazines' for film, recording tape, videotape, and other recording mediums. When the printing press actualized the possibility of reproducing words and images, a magazine became 'a periodical publication containing articles by various writers,' a series of 'reports' from individual psyches like the explosive bursts of bullets" ("Towards an Intermedia Magazine," 12).

48. Peters in "Book Launch."

49. Peters.

50. *Time*, "Hear It, Feel It."

51. Text in figure 32.

52. Clarke, *Tupperware*, 106. See also Tupperware US, *Tupperware Sparks*; McCollum, *Tupperware Party*; Eschner, "Story of Brownie Wise."

53. "Women were encouraged to touch and handle products. . . . The structure of the party plan system blurred the theoretical boundaries of several identifying categories such as domesticity and commerce, work and leisure, friend and colleague, consumer and employee" (Clarke, *Tupperware*, 108).

54. Quoted in Clarke, 79.

55. Time, "Hear It, Feel It."

56. Allen, *Artists' Magazines*, 52. O'Doherty's later text, *Inside the White Cube*, was published as a series of three essays in *Artforum* in 1976, almost ten years after this issue of *Aspen* was distributed (see "Inside the White Cube: Context as Content"; "Inside the White Cube: Notes on the Gallery Space"; "Inside the White Cube: Eye and the Spectator"). On the cube versus the box in this context, see O'Doherty, oral history interview.

57. O'Doherty's working notes for *Aspen* 5+6 (in the artist's possession) quoted in Allen, *Artists' Magazines*, 49. For a theory of the "expanded [mobile] museum" from the perspective of early portable film equipment in the 1930s, see Wasson, "Every Home an Art Museum," 163–71.

58. See Smith, *Drawings for "The Maze."*

59. Johnson, *Letter from Phyllis Johnson*.

60. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 13.

61. Kwon, 24.

62. After the successful Goethe Bicentennial Convocation held in Aspen in 1949, several other arts and cultural programs began to flourish in the former mining town. "Through Paepcke's encouragement and benefactions in the early fifties, musicians established there a permanent home for the Aspen Music Festival and Music School; photographers gathered for a unique conference on their fledgling art; industrial designers and graphic artists founded the annual International Design Conference; and only death kept Paepcke from building there a museum of modern architecture" (Allen, *Romance of Commerce and Culture*, 268). See also Allen, 119–21; Sobel, *One Hour Ahead*, 13–14.

63. Allen, *Romance of Commerce and Culture*, 268–69. See also Sobel, *One Hour Ahead*, 35–59.

64. Sobel, *One Hour Ahead*, 16.

65. Allen, *Romance of Commerce and Culture*, 75.

66. Bogart, *Artists, Advertising*, 260.

67. Text in 1936 print advertisement for CCA designed by "W.C.": "To the farthest corners of the world today go the myriad accoutrements of civilization. Aspirin to Alaska, radios to Australia, whiskey to Cape Town, electric alarm-clocks to Peru . . . whether perishable or fragile or delicate . . . man's necessities now can follow man" (eBay, "1936 vintage print ad"). See also Lynch: "The themes of infrastructure, technology, and media . . . play prominent roles in the later works produced for the early black-and-white series [of CCA advertisements commissioned in 1937]. . . . These motifs are tied together with an emphasis on the smooth circulation of production that the CCA embodies, solidifying the idea of containers as a frictionless mobile medium" ("Packaging Environments," 105). See also Allen, *Romance of Commerce and Culture*, 27–36; Harris and Norelli, *Art, Design, and the Modern Corporation*; Mattern, "World in a Box."

68. "Boxes [in CCA's designs] assume a reduced, abstract visual form . . . . In this way, the carton aspires to a kind of geometric universality, and suggests the box's spatio-temporal ambition to be everywhere, to contain anything" (Nieland, "Container Culture").

69. Vogl, "Becoming-Media," 16.

70. On the ways in which CCA incorporated the principles of vertical integration central to its corporate framework into its visual design strategy, as exemplified in a reading of the role of the eye in a CCA advertisement by Toni Zepf that oversees this process, see Gordon-Fogelson, "Vertical and Visual Integration," 75–76; Zepf, *Under One Control.*

71. Allen, *Romance of Commerce and Culture*, 29.

72. See, for example, Leibowitz, advertisement.

73. Aspen, advertisement for *Aspen* magazine no. 3. See also Warhol and Dalton, *Aspen* 3 (Pop Art issue).

74. See eBay, "1938 A M Casandre print ad"; Aspen, advertisement for *Aspen* magazine no. 5+6.

75. See, for example, Cecire, *Experimental*, 197–200, which focuses on Martin's *Life in a Box*; Widmer, "Boxes, Infrastructure."

76. Dimakopoulou, "Nostalgia, Reconciliation and Critique," 214–15. In this same volume, Mildenberg opens a section of her text with Stein's poem "A Box" to underscore the rediscovery of rudimentary perceptual experiences and a similar notion of hidden affinities afforded by the form of the box in Cornell's work: "What we are presented with, then, is not the idea of

enclosure but that of uncovering the latent and connected patterns of perception, not entrapment but opening up" ("Through the Wrong End," 141). See also Stein, *Tender Buttons*, 11.

77. We have to recognize that the qualities objects have are conferred upon them by society itself . . . . The operation of this control mechanism would seem inevitably to give rise to a self-perpetuating system. Briefly: it is decidedly advantageous to own durable objects (since they increase in value over time whilst transient objects decrease in value). Those people near the top have the power to make things durable and to make things transient, so they can ensure that their own objects are always durable and that those of others are always transient. They are like a football team whose centre-forward also happens to be the referee; they cannot lose. (Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, 26)

Even though this is a system fraught with asymmetrical power dynamics, as Thompson illustrates, objects can slide between decreasing and increasing value in the boundary space of the covert category of "rubbish," making it a highly generative area of investigation through which to cast light on how value is continually in flux rather than inherent.

78. Wiedemeyer, "Marshall McLuhan Understanding Books," 43. Wiedemeyer is referring here to the way in which *The Medium Is the Massage*, a book that relies and reflects on its own material conditions in the process of outlining its arguments, circulated as a library book that was altered, both in its material appearance and concepts, by the conditions of preservation set forth by such institutions. See also McLuhan, Fiore, and Agel, *The Medium Is the Massage*.

79. Logie, "1967," 511n7. "The University of Minnesota's copy of *Aspen* 5+6 was treated like any other 'magazine,' meaning the box's clean white surface is now covered in various stickers and stamps, including—at the time of my arrival—a large manila pocket for the card recording the names of those who checked out the magazine when it was part of the circulating collection. Worse yet, the booklet containing the Barthes essay had been filched" (511n7).

80. Barthes to O'Doherty quoted in Allen, *Artists' Magazines*, 57. On this source, see Allen, *Artists' Magazines*, 323n37. See also Alberro, "Inside the White Box," 172–73.

81. Barthes, "Death of the Author." These passages describe flipping through "The Death of the Author" text in the physical *Aspen* box; citations refer to the UbuWeb version, so readers may follow along.

82. Barthes.

83. Barthes.

84. Barthes.

85. See O'Doherty, *Structural Play #3*. See also Gallope, Harren, and Hicks, *Scores Project*; Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*, 153–72.

86. Barthes, "Death of the Author."

87. Barthes.

88. Barthes.

89. See Beckett, *Text for Nothing #8*.

90. This older format was likely used by *Aspen* staff for the purpose of capturing the canonical texts on literature, art, and architecture in full (Andreas Kozlik, media

documentation consultant, Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, personal interview, May 27, 2015). See also Rubery, *Untold Story*, 136; Gelatt, *Fabulous Phonograph*, 223–34.

91. Gabo and Pevsner, "Realistic Manifesto," 10. See also Gabo, *Realistic Manifesto* (1920).

92. Hammer and Lodder, *Constructing Modernity*, 62. The *Text for Nothing* recording took place shortly after MacGowran had started to engage in readings of Beckett for other venues (see Young, *Beckett Actor*, 106).

93. On the work of gathering up all these recordings for the issue, this medial process of reanimation, see O'Doherty, oral history interview: "I'd track down the manifesto . . . and track down this—that and the other. . . . I took my little tape recorder, a lot like this one, and I went around and got—everybody I can find. . . . It brings it to life in a way that moves it beyond the text on the page. . . . I was on to something there . . . going around with my tape recorder."

94. Ashton, "Book," 272.

95. Casetti, "Cinema Lost and Found." Casetti understands this relocation as occurring on two fronts: in the form of a relocated object, such as a DVD, and in the form of a relocated setting, such as the rise of home theaters: For him, "these are not only two different strategies through which to relocate the filmic experience, but also two different modes of referencing the cinema."

96. "[*Aspen* 5+6] must, in physical fact, be seen in irregular time masses" (Ashton, "Book," 272). On the roles of "excess and reduction" in the issue, see O'Doherty, oral history interview.

97. See Cage, *Fontana Mix*, accessed on UbuWeb. In the version of *Aspen* 5+6 that I viewed at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, this object consisted of a folio containing two sheets and one translucent sheet: one drawing with curved lines, one translucent sheet with points, and one graph with coordinates. Cage's description of the piece printed on the verso of the folio describes this piece as "ten transparencies with points, ten drawings having . . . curved lines, a graph . . . and a straight line, the last two on transparent material" (Cage, *Fontana Mix*, in *Aspen* 5+6). The editor's note on the recto of the folio states that *Aspen*, sampling the scoring process, distributed "one each of the ten different drawings, transparent sheets and graphs" (see editor's note in Cage, *Fontana Mix*).

98. Holmes, *Electronic and Experimental Music*, 89.

99. "The score was created using a system for making chance decisions about notes, duration, amplitude, timbre, and other possible dynamics, but the outcome was determined once the score was being followed" (Holmes, *Electronic and Experimental Music*, 87). See also Gallope, "Sylvano Bussotti," 101–4.

100. See Altman, "The Evolution of Sound Technology," 48. Although *Fontana Mix* is often cited as an example of Cage's growing interest in tape music (see, for example, Pritchett, *Music of John Cage*, 130–34), Iddon notes that "arguably the score of *Fontana Mix* is better conceived of as a compositional tool for the creation of music; the tape piece, *Fontana Mix*, is only one instantiation of this, confusing though it then becomes that they share the same name, when other pieces in which the score of *Fontana Mix* was also used as a tool . . . do not" (*John Cage and David Tudor*, 98). Cage's notes on the piece in *Aspen* explain that "the use of this material is not limited to tape music but may be used freely for instrumental, vocal and theatrical purposes" (Cage, *Fontana Mix*).

101. Holmes, *Electronic and Experimental Music*, 90; Cage, quoted in interview with Holmes, April 1981, *Electronic and Experimental Music*, 90.

102. See Cunningham, *Further Thoughts*.

103. "I will take, say, a dance sequence, and then proceed to find out how long it's going to be or what its divisions in time are, and so on, without any reference to the space. Then I will take that same working dance phrase, or whatever it happens to be, over here, and work it with the space. Then I put the two together. But because of this division, they do come out as separate things" (Cunningham, *Further Thoughts*).

104. Cunningham. See also Ruhsam, "I Want to Work with You."

105. See Schüttpelz and Gießmann, "Medien der Kooperation."

106. Schüttpelz and Gießmann, 21. See also Serres, *Parasite*.

107. Klose would argue that, from the perspective of containerization, there are functioning and nonfunctioning disturbances in such systems, and the rise of the container is a response to the need to smooth out nonfunctioning disturbances in logistical chains of transport. "One looks for a way to eliminate this disturbance, a bonding agent that makes the change in cargo more fluid. The container is this agent" (*Container Principle*, 181).

108. Hamilton Faris, "Toward Infrastructure Art," 235. See also Burnham, "Systems Esthetics." On the definition of infrastructure "as the materials or technologies that create the grounds on which other materials or technologies run," she references Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, 238. On the relationship between software logistics and infrastructure, see Rossiter: "If infrastructure makes worlds, then software coordinates them. . . . In addition to storage, processing, and transmission systems, the study of logistical media also includes attention to . . . the aesthetic qualities peculiar to the banality of spreadsheets, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, and software applications" (*Software, Infrastructure, Labor*, xv–xvi).

109. Hamilton Faris, "Toward Infrastructure Art," 246. In her discussion of Klose's *The Container Principle* that outlines this parasitical infrastructural relationship, she draws attention to Jorn's 1960 essay "End of the Economy and the Realization of Art," which includes a section titled "The Container Principle and the Concept of Form."

110. Hamilton Faris, "Toward Infrastructure Art," 258n38. For an understanding of Warhol's *Time Capsules* (beginning in 1974, 610 boxes in total) through the lens of container theory, see Klose, *Container Principle*, 10–15.

111. Levinson notes that "at the start of 1966, container shipping had been an infant industry. . . . Fast-forward three years and the world had changed. The equivalent of 3,400 20-foot containers of commercial imports or exports passed through U.S. ports each week during 1968, up from zero in 1965" (*Box*, 285–86). Klose aligns the period of the 1970s to today with the most advanced phase of containerization, since only then "did container transport consistently expand as a sea-land network . . . to become the dominant form of (general) cargo shipping, with the relevant effects on and participation in the organization of production in the process of globalization" (*Container Principle*, 126).

112. See Levinson, *Box*, 225–29.

113. Klose, *Container Principle*, 152. Pias understands the moving box as an explicit attempt to experiment with the arrangement of history, "because to a certain extent it is their [boxes'] nature to form ahistorical spatial configurations. In the moving box, the

transitory seems to have come into its own and come to the end of history" ("Wer sein Leben im Griff hat," 57).

114. Weiß, "Archival Visit."

115. See the catalogue for *Cubism and Abstract Art*, organized by Alfred H. Barr Jr. On the front of the dust jacket is a diagram designed by Barr charting the sources and evolution of modern art (Barr, *Diagram on Front-Cover Dust Jacket*, offset, printed in color, 10⅛ × 21⅞ in. [25.7 × 55.6 cm]).

116. Sutton, *Experience Machine*, 2. See also Schmidt-Burkhardt, *Maciunas' Learning Machines*, 45–64.

117. Sutton, 2.

118. Maciunas, "Introduction to Diagram," 7. See also Schmidt-Burkhardt, *Maciunas' Learning Machines*, 45–64.

119. Von Foerster, *Understanding Understanding*, 208.

120. Schüttpelz, "Eine Umschrift der Störung," 236.

121. Schüttpelz, 237. It should be noted that "flowchart" is referring here to the German *Flußdiagramm* instead of using "flow diagram," the literal translation: "On the other side of the Atlantic [in the 1940s], Herman H. Goldstine and John von Neumann were wrestling with the same sort of problem that [Konrad] Zuse had faced: How should algorithms be represented in a precise way, at a higher level than the machine's language? Their answer . . . : They proposed pictorial representation involving boxes joined by arrows, and they called it a 'flow diagram.' . . . The term 'flow diagram' became shortened to 'flow chart' and eventually it even became 'flowchart'—a word that has entered our language as both noun and verb" (Knuth and Trabb Pardo, "Early Development," 208).

122. See Schüttpelz, "Eine Umschrift der Störung," 238.

123. Clarke, *Voice Across the Sea*, 159. "But it [the 'Ultimate Machine'] was not simply invented, not even by Claude Shannon. He adapted the mechanism from his colleagues who used exactly the same machines in presentations" (Roch, *Claude E. Shannon*, 28).

5. FILM PITCHES

1. Quito, "US Artists."

2. See Heilbrun and Gray, *Economics of Art and Culture*, 254. See also Schuster, *Supporting the Arts*; McCaughey, *Comparisons of Arts Funding*; National Endowment for the Arts, "International Data"; Grantmakers in the Arts, "Culture Funding."

3. Brunette and Wills, *Screen/Play*, 69.

4. See Nessel, "Das Andere denken," 51; Ames, *Carl Hagenbeck's Empire of Entertainments*.

5. Brunette and Wills, *Screen/Play*, 72.

6. Barnette and Barrett, "Dog and Pony Show."

7. Text in figure 39, "Prof. Gentry's Famous Dog and Pony Show."

8. See Włodarczyk, *Genealogy of Obedience*, 32.

9. On the history of the dog and pony show being used as a "front" business for illicit activities, see Barnette and Barrett, "Dog and Pony Show." On the relationship between bureaucratic measures of audit culture, see Strathern: "Checking only becomes necessary in situations of mistrust. Checking up on people can thus carry sinister overtones" (*Audit Cultures*, 4).

10. On paperwork circulation practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, see Peet, "IMLS, CDC"; Tahir, "Virus Hunters Rely on Faxes"; Saks, Kornfeld, Castelli, and Luptak, "E-Signatures and the Coronavirus."

11. See Brody, *Everything Is Cinema*, 31–39.

12. Intertitles in *Opération Béton*.

13. "Why should those who watch a film be interested in contract negotiations between actors, agents, and production companies as well as the union agreements on which these negotiations are based? But it is exactly this, dealing with this tension, responding to it, that is the task of the title sequence. Beyond this, one could say that it is exactly the dysfunctionality of the economic/legal title sequence function . . . which calls for and enables the depth of meaning carried by the title sequence, even imposes it: economics motivate aesthetics" (Stanitzek, "Reading the Title Sequence," 49). On credits and their relationship with bureaucracy, in particular the billing sheet, see Harris, "Extra Credits," 98–109. See also Gass: "*Der kleine Godard* is one of the most important films ever made in Germany because it transforms the question of the film's conditions of production into the very form of the film" (foreword to *Hellmuth Costard*, 13).

14. See Ebert, "Das geschichtliche Interesse am Film," 642.

15. See Prinzler, "Der kleine Godard." As Dawson describes, the Kuratorium's initial 1965 working capital of 5 million Deutsche Mark (DM) had decreased to DM 750,000 by 1970, stemming from a range of interconnected issues that concerned its initial institutional funding rationale and economically shortsighted repayment strategies, competition with the commercial film industry, and the establishment of the Filmförderungsgesetz (Film Subsidy Law) in 1967, which restructured film funding along more commercial lines, privileging box office success over cultural or aesthetic values ("A Labyrinth of Subsidies," 16–20). See also Kluge, "Das Filmförderungsgesetz vom 1. Dezember 1967." By 1974, just a few years before Costard applies to the Kuratorium for funding, its annual budget for the production of first feature films had shrunk to DM 500,000, with "a ceiling of 120,000 DM on any single award" (Dawson, 20). On the history of the Kuratorium specifically, see Gerber, "Mehr als 25 Jahre"; Gerber, *Kuratorium junger deutscher Film*; Kückelmann, *Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film*.

16. On the source of this footage, see Dawson, introduction to *Films of Hellmuth Costard*, 5–8; Harris, "Taking Time Seriously," 146–47.

17. Text on screen and voice-over ("the applicant," as Costard is listed in the credits) in *Der kleine Godard*.

18. See Töteberg, *Filmstadt Hamburg*, 189. On "the almost obsessive fixation on Oberhausen as the wellspring of a rejuvenated German cinema [that] has problematic implications for questions of periodization and canonization," such as the reductive portrayal of German cinema through the 1970s as a teleological march toward international recognition, see von Moltke, "Between the Young," 258.

19. Text on screen and voice-over (the applicant) in *Der kleine Godard*.

20. "If you look at Kluge's first short films, for example *Brutalität in Stein* . . . , they are German industrial films in terms of their whole style" (Helmut Herbst, in Conley and Gramann, "Die Hamburger wollten den Film," 150).

21. Kluge, *Die Universitäts-Selbstverwaltung*; Becker and Kluge, *Kulturpolitik und Ausgabenkontrolle*. See Hüser, "Schriften zur Ästhetik des Films."

22. Kluge, *Die Utopie Film*, 1138–39.

23. Costard (dialogue) in *Der Warme Punkt*.

24. Struck (dialogue) in *Der Warme Punkt*. Struck: "That's the stupid thing—you put in so much effort into it, think about it all so much, and then afterwards, something like *that* comes out, right? That's really bad—that's what people will say afterwards. . . ." Costard, laughing: "I already like the film a little more now."

25. Text on screen and voice-over (the applicant) in *Der kleine Godard*. See also Prinzler, "Der kleine Godard," 255–56. On this dream of automation, see, for example, Johnston, "Technology," 199.

26. Voice-over (the applicant) in *Der kleine Godard*.

27. Shattuc, *Television, Tabloids, and Tears*, 51.

28. Graeber, *Utopia of Rules*, 5.

29. See Graeber, 3–5. "It was right around 1970 when the increase in the number of scientific papers published in the world—a figure that had been doubling every fifteen years since roughly 1685—began leveling off. The same is true of the number of books and patents. . . . The amount of really innovative research being done in the private sector has actually declined since the heyday of Bell Labs and similar corporate research divisions in the fifties and sixties" (Graeber, 115–16, 127).

30. Graeber, 133–34; Katz in Graeber, 135. See also Katz, "Don't Become a Scientist!"

31. See Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*, 28.

32. See Clark, *Academic Charisma*, 6–8; Colomina, "24/7 Bed." See also Giacobbe, "What We Lose."

33. Dialogue (the applicant).

34. Clark, *Academic Charisma*, 359.

35. See Latour, *Making of Law*, 76–77. On the privileging of clarity and brevity as opposed to rhetorical excess in histories of paper correspondence, see Kafka, "Paperwork," 350; Guillory, "Memo and Modernity"; Clark, *Academic Charisma*, 339–72.

36. "The ethnographer merely recalls here . . . what we can find in every manual of administrative procedure: to *proceed step by step*, that is what Law is, namely *procedure*! The power of the Law, like that of a chain, is exactly as strong as its weakest link and we can only detect this link by following the chain link after link, without omitting a single one" (Latour, *Making of Law*, 90).

37. See Zons, "Das Geschäft mit den Projekten," 294–95. See also Mayer, *Below the Line*, 4–17.

38. Litwak in Zons, "Das Geschäft mit den Projekten," 301n34. See also Litwak, *Reel Power*.

39. Dialogue (the applicant).

40. Graeber, *Utopia of Rules*, 141. It is not "merely a matter of bureaucratic . . . sensibilities having choked off all forms of technical vision and creativity. . . . What it has really brought about is a kind of bizarre inversion of ends and means . . . . Administrative imperatives have become not the means, but the end of technological development" (Graeber, 141–42).

41. Kafka, "Paperwork," 341.

42. See, for example, Kafka, "Paperwork"; Hull, "Documents and Bureaucracy."

43. Brenneis, "Reforming Promise," 42. See also Harper, *Inside the IMF*.

44. On some helpful exceptions to this, see, for example, Powdermaker, *Hollywood*; Mayer, *Below the Line*; Zons, "Das Geschäft mit den Projekten"; Skvirsky, *Process Genre*; Farocki, *On the History of Labor*; Bayer-Wermuth, *Harun Farocki*.

45. Hull, "Documents and Bureaucracy," 253; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 39, in Hull.

46. See, for example, Lovejoy, *Army Film and the Avant Garde*.

47. See Hediger and Vonderau, *Films that Work*, 10–12.

48. On the shared authorship of documents, see Brenneis, "Reforming Promise," 42–43.

49. Kafka, "Paperwork," 350.

50. Hull, "Documents and Bureaucracy," 252. See also Riles, "[Deadlines]: Removing the Brackets," 79–80.

51. Marcus, in Riles, "Introduction: In Response," 7. See also Marcus, "Critical Anthropology Now," 9. "Academics are also reluctant bureaucrats, in the sense that even when 'admin,' as it's called, ends up becoming most of what a professor actually does, it is always treated as something tacked on . . . . You might think that an academic's reaction would be to research, analyze, and interpret this very phenomenon: . . . What is the meaning of paperwork anyway? What are the social dynamics behind it? Yet for some reason, this never happens" (Graeber, *Utopia of Rules*, 54).

52. See, for example, Hüser, "Dreitagebart (II)," 44–47. See also Bode, *Annotated Charts*, 30; Avanessian and Vogl, "Universität und Intellektualität." On the rise of third-party pathway programs, see Choudaha, *Landscape of Third-Party Pathway Partnerships*; Redden, "Perceptions of Pathway Programs"; Redden, "Lay of the Land."

53. Kafka, "Paperwork," 349. See also Agar, *Government Machine*.

54. Dialogue (the applicant) in *Der Kleine Godard*.

55. "One always does the opposite of what one says, yet it turns out the same way. I am for classical montage and I've done the most unorthodox montage" (Godard in Brody, *Everything Is Cinema*, 86).

56. See, for example, Kristl, "Für kaputte Leute," 629. On the relationship between the "intimacy" associated with the Super 8 format and its intended site of exhibition, see Chin, "Super-8 Films."

57. These specific descriptions are from a review of a Jarmusch documentary focusing on the director's interest in the format (Rudolph, "Jarmusch Gets Crazy about Super 8"). See also Williams, "Transforming Super-8"; Hoberman, "Homemade Movies."

58. Voice-over (the applicant).

59. Trinh, "Totalizing Quest of Meaning," 95.

60. The text presents the title in French while quoting Bruno's voice-over in English, and it dates the film to 1960, when production was completed, rather than to 1963, when the ban on the film was lifted after the Algerian War and it was released.

61. Voice-over (the applicant) in *Der Kleine Godard*. The applicant appears to be reading a text he is writing out loud, but his mouth and the audio are not in sync. This segment of the voice-over is also included in Ebert, "Das geschichtliche Interesse am Film," 646–47.

62. Text in figure 39, "Prof. Gentry's Famous Dog and Pony Show."

63. Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*, 8.

64. Voice-over ("the foreigner," as Kristl is listed in the credits).

65. Harris, "Taking Time Seriously," 152.

66. "There are . . . no a priori reasons for supposing that . . . [the experts'] practice is any more rational than that of outsiders" (Latour and Woolgar, *Laboratory Life*, 29–30).

67. Schüttpelz, *Die Moderne im Spiegel des Primitiven*, 355.

68. Latour and Woolgar, *Laboratory Life*, 29.

69. Text and voice-over (the foreigner) in *Der kleine Godard*.

70. Gitelman argues that it is especially in the rhetoric of emergent technologies, in all of their excitement, apprehension, and ambivalence, that one is able to trace and consider how "technology constitutes a form of knowledge. . . . [And, if it does], then it can be conflicted with doubt and contradiction, with assumptions and anxieties, just like other forms of knowledge" (*Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*, 6–7).

71. Harris, "Taking Time Seriously," 130.

72. Costard, cover image, *Filmkritik*.

73. Harris, "Taking Time Seriously," 101.

74. Reitz, "Fast alles über Super acht," 632.

75. There is a history of this pose in donor paintings that secularized the prayer-response ritual by substituting it with the gift-countergift model, a model potentially referenced in this cover image drawn by Costard in which he presents a gift, his technology, presumably with the hope of receiving something in return (see Brubaker, "Gifts and Prayers," 37).

76. Costard, in Costard and Ebert, "Der Film hat sich auf die Seite des Tatsächlichen geschlagen," 665. Or: "'Each time the coast was clear, no witness . . . I hesitated a few seconds . . . and once again it was too late'" (text on-screen in *Der kleine Godard*).

77. Müller, "Synchronization as a Sound-Image Relationship," 406.

78. Voice-over (the applicant), reading a written text aloud (asynchronous with the image); nested quotation marks reflect this staging of reading unless otherwise noted. Harris further describes the incompatibility of a then-standard synchronization method for film material—namely, edge numbers—for the format of Super 8. Harris, "Taking Time Seriously," 116.

79. See Harris, 117–18. "'The timecode process was developed by the Institute for Broadcasting Technology to speed up the television production process in order to process 16 mm films faster and more efficiently'" (voice-over [the applicant]).

80. "The first non-linear editing systems in the 1970s were analog-digital hybrids: access to analog image and sound material was controlled by a computer" (Müller, "Synchronization as a Sound-Image Relationship," 407).

81. Müller, 407.

82. "'But films are conceivable that consider the image-sound event as a unit during the recording, in other words, that leave the synchronicity untouched and make deviations from this principle recognizable'" (voice-over [the applicant]).

83. Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*, 28.

84. Costard, "Der Film hat sich auf die Seite des Tatsächlichen geschlagen," 610–11.

85. Costard, "Fragments from Costard Interviews," 22.

86. Through the 1974 Film-Fernseh-Abkommen (Film and Television Agreement), "the socially critical and personal-expression television films of the independent *Autoren* filmmakers were now going to get the financial boost they needed. . . . Under this agreement, WDR [Westdeutscher Rundfunk] coproduced Fassbinder's *Despair* (1977) and *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978)—two of his internationally recognized films" (Shattuc,

Television, Tabloids, and Tears, 52–53). See also Elsaesser, *European Cinema*, 212–18; Dawson, "Labyrinth of Subsidies"; Jäschke, *Der Deutsche Film und das Fernsehen*.

87. Voice-over (the foreigner) in *Der kleine Godard*.

88. *Despair* was Fassbinder's most expensive film to date and entailed various international collaborations. See Watson, *Understanding Rainer Werner Fassbinder*, 189; Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 73.

89. In these scenes of application writing, Costard could also be referencing the various application requirements he needed to fulfill in his other proposals, such as to the Zweite Deutsche Fernsehen (ZDF, Second German Television). See Harris, "Taking Time Seriously," 126–28; Costard, "Der Film hat sich auf die Seite des Tatsächlichen geschlagen," 610.

90. "There are various possibilities for synchronization and its conceptualization, which in turn correspond with different concepts of time: is there such a thing as absolute time, a center with which *local* times are synchronized? Or the other way around: are there actually heterogeneous, distinct times that, when they meet, generate something like an in-between or overlapping time where they join?" (Müller, "Synchronization as a Sound-Image Relationship," 401).

91. Latour, *Science in Action*, 88. "The etymology of 'definition' will help us here since defining something means providing it with limits or edges (*finis*), giving it a shape" (Latour, 87). See also Young, *List Cultures*.

92. As Schüttpelz and Gießmann describe in 2015, the understanding of media as subject to common and collaborative use is still something that is very much needed in media theoretical research:

> Sixty years later [after Marshall McLuhan's critique of the concept of "mass media"], the media-theoretical postulate . . . remains as topical and viable as ever for the study of cooperative media: to lift the blindness that prevents us from considering "communication as participation in a common situation" and from characterizing it by the respective mode of the "basic art situation," as well as by the "collective effort in the use of the medium." . . . As far as the "materiality of communication" is concerned, research into media "infrastructures" has not only produced a broad scholarly literature, but also an insightful terminological discussion that makes it possible to explore mass media and digital media, bureaucratic and scientific media, as well as domestic and personalized media as a continuously developing "cooperative materiality." ("Medien der Kooperation," 19–20)

See also McLuhan, "Notes on the Media as Art Forms".

93. Hüser, "Agent im Kreis," 280.

94. On the tendency in scholarship on digital cinema to privilege analyses of postproduction methods, see Vishnevetsky, "What Is the 21st Century?"; Sperb, *Flickers of Film*, 18–23.

95. Pallant and Price make a similar argument about the necessity of a nonlinear understanding of preproduction methods and the shooting of a film, drawing on the example of the misconception of the storyboard as a mere "blueprint" for film production (*Storyboarding*, 7). See also Hayles, "Transformation of Narrative," 31. On the myth of the artist-genius who can linearly manifest their idea into medial form, almost immediately, see Kris and Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic*, 126.

96. Dialogue (Godard, appearing "as guest" in the credits) in *Der kleine Godard*. See also Witt, *Jean-Luc Godard's Unmade and Abandoned Projects*, 84–85.

97. See Witt, "Shapeshifter," 77; Pantenburg, "Moi / Je / JLG," 268–69.

98. Harris, "Taking Time Seriously," 129. See also Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 8–35.

99. Dialogue (Fassbinder, "second director" in the credits) in *Der kleine Godard*.

100. See Shattuc, *Television, Tabloids, and Tears*, 52–53.

101. Closing credits in *Der kleine Godard*.

102. Kelleter, "From Recursive Progression," 101.

103. Stanitzek, "Texts and Paratexts in Media," 33. See also Adorno, "Titles."

104. Diegetic voice (the friend) in *Der kleine Godard*.

105. Diegetic voice (the friend) in *Der kleine Godard*.

106. Diegetic voices/dialogue in *Der kleine Godard*.

107. Dialogue (the friend) in *Der kleine Godard*.

108. Dialogue (guest) and German subtitles in *Der kleine Godard*.

109. This voice-over is cited as having taken place in a café at Hamburg airport in Godard, *Jean-Luc Godard: Documents*, 294.

110. Dialogue (guest) and German subtitles in *Der kleine Godard*.

111. Witt refers to this project as *Est-il possible de faire des films en Allemagne aujourd'hui?* (Is it possible to make films in Germany today?) (*Jean-Luc Godard's Unmade and Abandoned Projects*, 85).

112. Dialogue (guest) and German subtitles in *Der kleine Godard*.

113. Dialogue (guest) and German subtitles in *Der kleine Godard*.

114. See MacCabe, *Godard*, 23–24; Brody, *Everything Is Cinema*, 398–99.

115. On political self-reflection during this Sonimage stage, see Witt, "On and Under Communication," 319–22.

116. See Pantenburg, "Moi / Je / JLG," 269; Sheikh, "Number One and Number Two," 155.

117. MacCabe, *Godard*, 23.

118. "In March 1975, Godard . . . broke his silence in the French press to discuss this new venture [*Numéro deux*]: '. . . I am not doing a remake, but I am posing a reflection on the basis of *Breathless*'" (Brody, *Everything Is Cinema*, 379).

119. Silverman in Silverman and Farocki, *Speaking about Godard*, 141. Cf. Farocki on *Numéro deux* in this same chapter: "Video editing is usually done while sitting in front of two monitors. One monitor shows the already edited material, and the other monitor raw material, which the videomaker may or may not add to the work-in-progress. He or she becomes accustomed to thinking of two images at the same time, rather than sequentially" (141). See also Witt, "On and Under Communication," 325.

120. See Pantenburg: "Godard is the subject and object of the image production; in a staggered arrangement of different image types, he is an image within the image" ("Moi / Je / JLG," 265).

121. English subtitles in *Numéro deux*.

122. Pantenburg, "Moi / Je / JLG," 265.

123. See Temple, "Inventer un film," 189–94; Godard, *Jean-Luc Godard*, 195–243.

124. See Creton and Jäckel, "Business 1960–2004," 212–13; Lanzoni, *French Cinema*, 246–52.

125. "The text amalgamates literary quotations ([William] Burroughs, [Samuel] Beckett, [Arthur] Rimbaud) with cybernetic models, anthropological set pieces (André Leroi-Gourhan) and Maoist-political text fragments" (Pantenburg, "Moi / Je / JLG," 268). On an analysis of the text-image relationships in *Moi Je* in terms of theories of the storyboard, see Hüser, "Rahmenhandlungen," 102–6.

126. Godard in Brody, *Everything Is Cinema*, 382. See also Even, "Rencontre avec Godard." "The deceit of *Numéro Deux*—the failure to deliver anything that resembled a remake of *Breathless*—had left Godard stranded in the industry. After *Comment ça va* (How is it going?, 1976), Beauregard's support came to an end, and other movie producers (at least, those with the money to finance a film) kept their distance" (Brody, 384).

127. Witt refers to these *scénarios* as "preparatory sketchbook[s]," Fox as "rough draft[s] made on video," and Murphy as "video essay[s]" (Witt, "Shapeshifter," 76; Fox, "Constructing Voices," 20; Murphy, "'To See a Script,'" 10). See also Dubois, "Video Thinks What Cinema Creates," 178; Harcourt, "Analogical Thinking."

128. Witt, "Shapeshifter," 80. On the complexity of these *scénarios*, see Murphy, "'To see a script,'" 14–17. See also Godard in Ranvaud and Farassino, "An Interview with Jean-Luc Godard," 8; Godard in Brody, *Everything Is Cinema*, 435.

129. Pantenburg, "Moi / Je / JLG," 268n22.

130. Schüttpelz, "Die Akademie der Dilettanten," 53.

131. A "glance at a filmography [of Godard] is sufficient to complicate straightforward identification of Godard with cinema, at least in the sense of feature films shot on celluloid and projected in darkened theatres. In the past three decades, he has made nearly twice as many works on video as on film" (Witt, "Shapeshifter," 76). In this same text, however, these extremely diverse periods of production are situated once again within the cinematic medium, discussed as an illustration of a large body of work that is "best considered an expression of cinema, in the expanded Eisensteinian sense of creative thought through montage, in materials other than celluloid" (80).

132. Witt, "Shapeshifter," 87. See also Witt: "Between 1973 and 1979, Godard and Miéville completed almost 19 hours of material for television broadcast or cinema release: three films . . . , a short video clip based on a song by Patrick Juvet (1977), and two monumental 12-part television series . . . . In spite of the quantity of critical writing devoted to Godard, the Sonimage work (again, the television series in particular) still remains comparatively understudied and in my view underrated" ("On and Under Communication," 318–19).

133. Witt notes that "television" was also included as part of this intended title elsewhere: "The most important early document to have come to light . . . is a twenty-page English-language collage . . . under the title 'Histoire(s) du cinéma et de la télévision/Studies in Motion Pictures and Television' . . ." ("Archaeology of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*," 21). See also Godard, *Introduction to a True History of Cinema and Television*, 421–42.

134. Witt, "Archaeology of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*," 20–21.

135. Godard, *Jean-Luc Godard*, 238. Many thanks to Joia Duskic for helping with this translation.

136. Television and video are also mentioned earlier on in this pitch: "Having, in the preceding pages . . . given a glimpse, such as it can be perceived at present, of the second part of the film, I can now better show why it seems to me interesting, and even necessary, to shoot this second part . . . using techniques involving video material. It is necessary, first, to

separate here the two principal social sites of projection and diffusion of images and sounds . . . which today are television and cinema" (Godard, *Jean-Luc Godard*, 236).

137. Godard in Witt, "Shapeshifter," 75. See also Godard, *Godard on Godard*, 171.

138. See Witt, *Jean-Luc Godard's Unmade and Abandoned Projects*, published shortly before this book went to press.

CONCLUSION: DUNNAGE DEAL

1. Center for Land Use Interpretation, "Going with the Flow."

2. See Aratani, "Books Overboard!"

3. See Holt, "Los Angeles/Long Beach Ports": "According to the Port of Los Angeles, there were 8,392 containers dwelling at the port for nine to 12 days as of Nov. 15 [2021], and 20,857 boxes that have been dwelling in terminals for 13 or more days."

4. See Harris, "'Beginning of the Snowball.'" "Mills have cut back on producing paper for books and magazines, instead using pulp to make more cardboard, packing and other types of papers that are more lucrative. . . . The shortage of paper has, in some cases, visibly changed the size of books. Different grades of paper will determine the thickness of a book" (Aratani, "Books Overboard!").

5. "Almost comically, the Center, which states its mission as a '[dedication] to the increase and diffusion of information about how the nation's lands are apportioned, utilized and perceived', is located at the somewhat contested border of Culver City and the city of Los Angeles—slightly complicating municipal funding opportunities, among other inconveniences" (Holte, "Administrative Sublime," 19).

6. Wasson, "Every Home an Art Museum," 162. "Helping the art museum maintain relevance and also assert influence, the mediated museum is a salient stage on which debates about cultural value have long been played out. This dispersed sometimes ethereal and sometimes material museum reshaped objects old and new, of high and low status" (Wasson, 163). See also McTavish, "'Shopping in the Museum?'"; Duncan, "Museums and Department Stores."

7. See Rentetzi, "Cardboard Box."

8. The kind of corporate ancillary products on display here is not coincidental, but likely reflects long-term logistical feats and competitive strategies, despite the company's claim that these products are meant to complement existing offerings rather than replace them. As Khan notes in 2022: "Most recently, Amazon has also expanded into trucking. Last December, it announced it plans to roll out thousands of branded semi-trucks. . . . Amazon now owns four thousand truck trailers and has also signed contracts for container ships, planes, and drones. As of October 2016, Amazon had leased at least forty jets" ("Amazon's Anti-Trust Paradox," 41).

9. See Wittmann, "Outlining Species."

10. "Packages from Amazon show their provenance on their labels" ("Reading the Box" caption card in *Going with the Flow*). On the ways in which "the material culture and the sign systems inherent in storage and shipping practices" for art objects offer key insights into not only logistical control and preservation mechanisms but also conventions of concealment and discretion essential to sustaining the value of art, see Dommann, "Handle with Special Care," 26.

11. "Anything from a trailer park to a strip mine, the Salton Sea to the Erie Canal, a building shaped like a picnic basket to a replica of ground zero for the Oliver Stone film falls within the group's [CLUI's] purview. The approach [of CLUI] is a mash-up of geography, geology, environmental studies, art, architecture and history" (Strausbaugh, "Take Nature, Add Humans"). See also Lippard, "Imagine Being Here Now": "I'd still like to see artists getting further and further out into the world, like CLUI and many others. . . . The ultimate frame we need to address is the limitations imposed by society itself and by exhausted notions of art and its functions. Leave it open. I like Tim Collins' alternative: 'Consider the term interface as an analogy for art . . . a common boundary, the interconnection between systems, concepts, environment, and people.'" See also Collins, "Art Ecology and Planning," 112; Collins and Goto, "Landscape, Ecology, Art and Change," 134–44.

12. Coolidge, "True Beauty," 286–87.

13. Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, 26. "The way we act towards an object relates directly to its category membership. For instance, we treasure, display, insure, and perhaps even mortgage the antique vase, but we detest and probably destroy its secondhand mate . . . . But when we look at the two vases we find that the way we act towards them, that is whether we treat them as antique or secondhand, determines their category membership" (Thompson, 25).

14. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "dunnage (n.)," accessed July 15, 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/dunnage_n?tab=meaning_and_use. "Some have pointed out the similarity of the word [dunnage] to *dünne twige*, a Low German term meaning 'brushwood,' but no one has ever proven the two are related . . . . Truth be told, though *dunnage* has been with us since the 15th century, its etymological history remains a mystery" (*Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "dunnage [n.]," accessed July 15, 2024, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dunnage).

15. Reusable Packaging Association, "What Is Reusable Dunnage."

16. Martin, *Shipping Container*, 9–10. See also Lefebvre, *Production of Space*. Martin notes the similar tendency that both the commodity and the container have to conceal the production and circulation networks that are essential to them, although "this was not the case in the time of the great maritime cities of the past, where the fraught lives of individuals, the cacophony of the port, and the multitude of commodities being shipped to and fro, made the transportation of goods often a thing of excitement, even occasional wonderment. The blank face of a shipping container or a distribution warehouse doesn't hold quite the same romance. But again, this is precisely why they are such important objects of study" (10).

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