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The Curator as the Artist's Friend:
Henry Geldzahler Negotiating Artistic Autonomy in the 1960s

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Art History

by

Jamin An

2021

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2021

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Curator as the Artist's Friend:
Henry Geldzahler Negotiating Artistic Autonomy in the 1960s

by

Jamin An

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Miwon Kwon, Chair

During his lifetime, curator Henry Geldzahler was known primarily as the Metropolitan Museum of Art's first contemporary art curator, a role he held from 1960 to 1977. From 1966 to 1969, he also served as the first Program Director of the Visual Arts Program of the newly established National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Although Geldzahler held these prominent positions—and also enjoyed outsize celebrity and notoriety—his activities have escaped substantive analysis.

This dissertation critically examines Geldzahler's roles in the 1960s in relation to the problem of artistic autonomy. In addition to offering the first monographic study of the curator's major spheres of work, this dissertation situates his activities as tactics of exchange that continually re-negotiated the artistic field's imbricated structural relationship to politics,

economy, and media. Geldzahler provides an alternative model that moves beyond capitulation, cooptation, and/or critique. Holistically speaking, these older frameworks for understanding the problem of artistic autonomy in the 1960s render that problem as a matter of either-or. A model of capitulation might mourn the loss of art's purported separation and bemoan its contamination. A model of critique or cooptation may scrutinize art's instrumentalization, and seek to reassert the independence of artistic practice through forms of so-called rejection or resistance. Yet, whether in his relationships with artists, his governmental role in arts public policy, or through his exhibition making, Geldzahler's activity seldom settled neatly inside or outside the purview of the artist or the contours of the artistic field. Instead, his negotiations variously expanded, transmuted, undid, and/or reconstituted the status of the artwork and artist through continuous exchange with different fields of non-artistic practice.

Geldzahler's negotiating yielded a simultaneous array of effects, sometimes quite contradictory. In one sense, the curator appropriated extra-artistic forces—from politics, commerce, and mass media—to redefine the artist's status and differently accommodate the place and value of their activity. Yet, in another sense, the curator's tactics also at times re-inscribed fallacies or misuses of artistic autonomy endemic to a creative field that is conceived erroneously as a hermetic zone of pure art and culture. Given such contradictions, it is important to recognize that Geldzahler's story defies easy assessment of right or wrong, critical or reactionary, conservative or progressive. Rather, his negotiations crossing various boundaries present an opportunity to more fully consider the uneven, multifaceted, and perpetually shifting structural organization of cultural production.

"Friendship" and the idea of "the artist's friend" were primary factors in Geldzahler's negotiations of cultural production and of artistic autonomy in particular. As such, this

dissertation addresses his actual friendships with artists as well as the actions and motivations attributed to friendship in general to critically assess Geldzahler's reputation as "the artist's friend" and his negotiation of the "virtues and vices" of friendship, to paraphrase philosopher C.S. Lewis. This study is interested to understand *how* friendship facilitated Geldzahler's navigation of art's structural relationship to political forces at the NEA and with economic, social, and journalistic forces at the Met. Ultimately, this dissertation surfaces "the curator as the artist's friend," interrogating Geldzahler's model to grapple with the ways artistic autonomy—in belief or in real practice—is constructed through interpersonal negotiation and, very often, according to the complex terms of mutual recognition, affection, and partiality associated with friendship.

This dissertation was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in winter 2020. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this dissertation to the furthest extent possible under the conditions of the pandemic's global lockdown.

The dissertation of Jamin An is approved.

George Thomas Baker

Julian Myers-Szupinska

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University of California, Los Angeles

2021

for my mother

Jin Soon An

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Acknowledgments

If a primary ambition of my dissertation was to discern the place of friendship in the artistic field, the underlying impetus for such a question undoubtedly came from the sustenance I have found in the love of friends and family as well as the support of mentors and colleagues. Scholarly and personal trials probably mark all dissertations, and mine was no exception. I would not enjoy the present privilege of thanking the following individuals were it not for the collective strength I drew from them, especially in the darkest of times.

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"Reconsidering *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*." Paper presented at the Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC), Birmingham, AL, 2018.

"Carol Bove," "David Hammons," "Louise Lawler," "Glenn Ligon," and "Goshka Macuga." In *Unpacking: The Marciano Collection*, edited by Jamie G. Manné. Los Angeles: The Maurice and Paul Marciano Foundation, 2017.

"New Art and New Dealing: Changing Conditions of Artistic Support, 1960s–70s." Paper presented at The Art Market, Collectors and Agents: Then and Now, Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), Paris, 2016.

"From Coal to Consumers: Machines, Art, and the Zeche Zollverein." Paper presented at Factory Building Revisited, sponsored by the Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Berliner Zentrum für Industriekultur der Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft, Berlin, 2015.

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Introduction

When Henry Geldzahler (1935–1994) passed away, his obituaries remembered a curator who stood at the top of the art world. "Art authority," "power broker," "the late art world eminence," "the most powerful and controversial curator alive," all variations on a theme to summarize his momentous life.[1] But this theme is also elusive, perhaps, softly registering an ambiguity of regard, between commendation and skepticism. Such ambiguity is unsurprising given the undefined position Geldzahler typically held in the contemporary art field—even at the very beginning, when, at age 25, he gave up writing a doctoral dissertation to become the Metropolitan Museum of Art's first contemporary art curator (Figure 0.1).[2]

On Geldzahler's first day at the Met, in July 1960, the museum's director, James Rorimer, who had recruited Geldzahler, reportedly explained to his new employee, "Henry, we don't expect to be seeing very much of you at the Museum because your job is contemporary art and we don't have any […] There's nothing for you to do here. Take your salary and learn."[3] And so

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[1] Quotations come from S.S., "H. Geldzahler Art Authority, 59," *The East Hampton Star*, August 18, 1994, Henry Geldzahler Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, box 20, folder 13.34; Jeffrey Hogrefe, "Geldzahler Memories: A Jester with Vision," *New York Observer*, August 29–September 5, 1994, Geldzahler Papers, Beinecke Library, box 20, folder 13.34; Peter Schjeldahl, "'Henry's Show'," *Village Voice,* September 20, 1994, Geldzahler Papers, Beinecke Library, box 20, folder 13.34; Paul Goldberger, "Henry Geldzahler, 59, Critic, Public Official And Contemporary Art's Champion, Is Dead," *New York Times*, August 17, 1994, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

[2] Although he did not hold the official title "Curator," at the time of his hiring, Rorimer wanted Geldzahler to be the museum's sole employee focused on contemporary art. According to his CV, Geldzahler began as a Curatorial Assistant in the Department of American Painting and Sculpture. He was later promoted to Assistant Curator in 1962 and Associate Curator in 1963. He eventually became Curator and the head of the Department of Contemporary Arts under director Thomas Hoving. In 1970, Geldzahler and the museum changed the department's name to the Department of Twentieth Century Art, as it was known for the rest of his tenure and well after. "Geldzahler Biographical Information," Geldzahler Papers, Beinecke Library, box 10, folder 397.

[3] Paul Cummings, oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 27 January 1970–23 February 1970, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 21.

Geldzahler did. "My greatest activity during those first two or three years was just endlessly going to galleries to museums, and studios," he remarked in 1970.[4] Geldzahler descended from the "ivory tower" and specifically sought out artists in a manner that was then considered unusual for a curator. Most certainly it was out of the ordinary for a curator affiliated with the Met, an institution that had consistently demonstrated its conservative disinterest in living artists and its effective rejection of the United States' postwar avant-garde.[5]

Having already witnessed his first Happening in Provincetown before joining the Met, Geldzahler first connected with artists such as Red Grooms, Allan Kaprow, and Claes Oldenburg.[6] He immersed himself in their downtown, improvisational milieu, and his enthusiastic willingness to join in—to socialize rather than study artists and artworks from a distance—enabled learning by doing. "Oldenburg liked to use people who were around in his Happenings just like familiar furniture," Geldzahler remembered, "and I guess I rapidly became a familiar fixture and was a rather natural person to use."[7] Participating in Happenings such as

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[4] Ibid, 21–22.

[5] One major exception to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's resistance to acquiring works of modern and contemporary art was Georgia O'Keefe's bequest of the Alfred Stieglitz Collection, which Geldzahler discusses in Henry Geldzahler, "Introduction," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 27, no. 8 (April 1969): 365. For more on the history of the department, see also Henry Geldzahler, "Creating a New Department," in *Making It New: Essays, Interviews, and Talks* (New York: Turtle Point Press, 1994), 81–92. In addition, Kelly Baum has recently discussed the history of the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Met. Her account expands upon conventional wisdom that considers Geldzahler as the "sole creative agent" behind the department's founding. Specifically, Baum factors in the preceding efforts of curator Robert Beverly Hale and the work of curator Lowery Stokes Sims who joined the Department of Twentieth Century Art in 1975, after her tenure in the museum's Department of Community Programs. My dissertation will primarily focus on Geldzahler's major exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture*, and less so the institutional history of the Department of Modern and Contemporary art itself; see Kelly Baum, "A Seat at the Table," *Making The Met, 1870–2020* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2020), 216–222.

[6] Calvin Tomkins, "Profiles: Moving with the Flow Henry Geldzahler," *New Yorker*, November 6, 1971, 66. Judith Stein suggests Geldzahler's memory of the first Happening may be inaccurate, see Judith Stein, *Eye of the Sixties: Richard Bellamy and the Transformation of Modern Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), 298, n27. Geldzahler also describes this first group of artists he met in his first year at the Met in Cummings, oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 36.

[7] Cummings, oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 36.

Ironworks/Fotodeath (1961) and later *Washes* (1965), Geldzahler learned that being in the studio and engaging directly with the artist offered new ways for the curator to play a role inside, rather than outside, the artist's realm (Figures 0.2–0.3). "It wasn't just the new 'young man at the Met,'" he reflected in 1970, "it was somebody with commitment enough to spend his evenings and maybe even make a little bit of a fool of himself. Which I guess they finally admired."[8] Such a commitment specifically evolved into Geldzahler's supportive efforts on behalf of artists: connecting artists with other artists; advocating for artists with dealers, collectors, and patrons; and advising in the artist's own creative process. Perhaps the most well-known example of Geldzahler's "intervention" in an artist's life and work is Andy Warhol. "Henry gave me all my ideas," Warhol famously remarked.[9] The opening salvo of Geldzahler's career amounted to an intentional and determined crossing of the functional boundary between curator and artist.

Geldzahler's upbringing and personal life offered ample preparation for the straddling of disparate worlds and incongruous responsibilities his unprecedented mandate at the museum required. At age five, in 1940, he and his Belgian-Jewish family fled Nazi Germany's perilous grip, establishing their home in exile on Manhattan's Upper West Side. The son of a diamond broker, Geldzahler enjoyed a childhood of privilege and pedigree—for example, attending elite academic institutions such as the Horace Mann School, Yale University, and Harvard. His European and Jewish identities, however, always meant he was partly a stranger amidst the "wasp" American society his class and schooling rigidly signified in the 1950s.[10] Geldzahler was

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Warhol discusses Geldzahler giving him ideas in Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol '60s* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 47. Variations of the quote appear frequently such as in Geldzahler's *New York Times* obituary, many secondary sources that discuss the pair, and on the paperback edition of Geldzahler's collected essays *Making It New*, appearing on the back with other promotional blurbs.

[10] Geldzahler talks about the challenges of his childhood in exile and confronting anti-semitism in school and at the Met in Cummings, oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler 9, 13, 19.

also a gay man, who came out while serving as New York City's first Commissioner of Cultural Affairs.[11] For much of the sixties, the straddling of his selves inside and outside the closet also marked his professional life as a curator. Altogether, from a biographical perspective, Geldzahler's life saw him constantly translating across lines of social, sexual, and professional boundary, in tandem often redrawing those very lines of difference.

In 1966, six years after he joined the Met, Geldzahler broke further new ground and defied another boundary: between art and government. Geldzahler was appointed the first Program Director of the Visual Arts Program for the newly established National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Over his three years at the Endowment, Geldzahler led the creation of the NEA's most widely recognized grantmaking programs including the NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship, the Museum Purchase Program, and Art In Public Places. Although his tenure was relatively brief, his impact was deep and wide. Geldzahler formulated enduring ideas that much of the art world—inside and outside the United States—still holds about why artists need and deserve assistance from government, as well as from corporations and other private entities.[12]

Finally, at the very end of the decade in October 1969, Geldzahler opened his most important exhibition: *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970* (*NYPS*). *NYPS* was his first full-fledged curatorial project at the Met, comprising 43 artists and over 400 works of postwar American painting and sculpture. For the chorus of detractors who summarily judged the exhibition a failure, however, *NYPS* represented a boundary crossing that could not be tolerated:

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[11] Geldzahler discussed his "official coming out" while Commissioner of Cultural Affairs with the *Washington Post*, see Paul Richard, "The Painter and His Subject," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1979, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

[12] Appointed by Mayor Ed Koch, Geldzahler became New York City's first Commissioner of Cultural Affairs in 1977, when he left the Met to take up this second governmental role. He resigned five years later in 1982, and worked primarily as independent curator in the 1980s. His activities as Commissioner and the exhibitions he organized as an independent curator fall outside the scope of this dissertation.

art and commerce. The exhibition's as well as the larger museum's welcoming stance to mass media publicity, commercialized promotion, and corporate sponsorship appeared to shatter distinctions that normally kept artistic, economic, and journalistic/publicity fields as separate zones of activity, in conception at the very least. *NYPS* also appeared to confirm something about Geldzahler that had been brewing over the course of the decade: he was not just a curator, but also a celebrity (Figure 0.4).

From his association with Warhol's Factory to his repeated appearances in mass media outlets like *Life, Newsweek, Time,* and *Harper's Bazaar*, Geldzahler increasingly enjoyed a kind of celebrity that many considered out of the norm for the artistic field (Figure 0.5). Typically photographed arm-in-arm with other luminaries of the social, business, and political elite, Geldzahler's celebrity reached a fever pitch with *NYPS* and stayed with him into the seventies, and until his passing in 1994 (Figure 0.6). In the realm of high art, however, it was easy to disparage his fame in the way historian Daniel Boorstin contemporaneously derided, "a person who is well-known for his well-knownness."[13] Geldzahler's "stardom" casted scrutinizing light over his place in contemporary art. His fame was a form of mediatized, allegedly non-artistic recognition that muddied an already uncertain understanding about his straddling and boundary-defying roles. Celebrity further mired Geldzahler somewhere between admiration, suspicion, and, in the case of *NYPS,* outright disqualification.

Yet as Geldzahler puzzled many onlookers and shuttled back and forth uptown and downtown New York, and further afield to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., there was one aspect of Geldzahler's professional and personal profile that was, in fact, beheld with certainty: his friendship with artists (Figure 0.7). In life and in memory, Geldzahler has been identified

[13] Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 57.

time and time again as “the artist’s friend.” “An omnipresent figure on the social scene,” wrote critic Paul Goldberger in 1994, “he was a close friend of many artists and his rotund, bearded figure made him a favorite subject of their work.”[14] Goldberger had in mind such artworks as: Frank Stella’s aluminum painting *Henry Garden* (1963), Warhol’s film *Henry Geldzahler* (1964), Alice Neel’s painted portrait *Henry Geldzahler* (1967), Marisol’s carved wooden sculpture *Double Portrait of Henry Geldzahler* (1967), and David Hockney’s double portrait *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott* (1969) (Figures 0.8–0.12).[15] And there are also the artworks Geldzahler participated in as an accomplice if not a subject, such as George Segal’s *The Farm Worker* (1962–63) and Claes Oldenburg’s Happenings described above (Figure 0.13). Like charms on a friendship bracelet, these artworks index one conclusion many have made about Geldzahler: the curator was the model of an artist’s friend. “Everyone thought of him as their friend,” once remarked Frank Stella. “The thing about Henry was that he lived among us.”[16] Stella further explained that Geldzahler embodied the idea that “to love art is to love artists.”[17] Unlike the ambiguities that attend his legacy in terms of authority, power, and controversy, Geldzahler’s reputation as “the artist’s friend” has not been questioned and exemplifies a valorized mode of special, intimate relationship between curator and artist (Figure 0.14). Such

[14] Goldberger, “Henry Geldzahler.”

[15] I owe thanks to Kelly Baum and Rebecca Tilghman at the Metropolitan Museum of Art who facilitated a viewing of Neel’s painting of Geldzahler in storage.

[16] Quoted in “Henry Geldzahler: Curator, influencer, cultural svengali,” Christie’s, accessed June 25, 2019, https://www.christies.com/features/Henry-Geldzahler-Curator-influencer-cultural-svengali-9694-3.aspx.

[17] Quoted in Jonathan Weinberg, “Henry Geldzahler, 1935–1994,” in *The Geldzahler Portfolio* (New York: The Estate Project for Artists with AIDS, 1998), 11, Estate Project for Artists with AIDS Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. I am grateful to curator Mary Lee Corlett at the National Gallery of Art who facilitated a print room visit to view *The Geldzahler Portfolio* (1998), a multi-artist print portfolio produced in memory of Geldzahler and in support of the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS.

friendship, defying the professional separation of roles, represents another kind of boundary crossing that defined Geldzahler's career.

Surprisingly, despite everything I have sketched thus far, little has been written about Geldzahler since his death in 1994. Neither his pioneering roles at the Met and NEA nor his fame and friendships with artists has earned Geldzahler substantive critical review or historical analysis. Although this occlusion might have been explained previously by art history's traditional privileging of the art object and artist, given the discipline's recent excavation of the figure of the curator and histories of exhibitions, it is hard to explain Geldzahler's absence. Geldzahler's peers, including Lawrence Alloway, Lucy Lippard, Seth Siegelaub, and Harald Szeemann, have thus far dominated art history's curatorial turn.[18] Perhaps Geldzahler's strong association with so-called modernist and late-modernist painting (in the 1980s, he also had a "second birth" with neo-expressionist painting) complicates how to appreciate his curatorial record, when Conceptual art, Postminimal and Process art, Land art, Performance art and other so-called critical postmodernist tendencies predominantly frame understandings of the late twentieth century artistic vanguard, and its apparent corollary rise of the curator.[19] In addition,

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[18] These figures and influential studies around their work include (among a larger bibliography in the curatorial studies and histories of exhibitions subfield): Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004); Courtney J. Martin, Rebecca Peabody, Lucy Bradnock, eds. *Lawrence Alloway: Critic and Curator* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015); Catherine Morris and Vincent Bonin, eds. *Materializing "Six Years": Lucy Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012); Glenn Phillips and Philipp Kaiser, eds. *Harald Szeemann: Museum of Obsessions* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2018). Also, it is interesting to consider how Geldzahler was actually very close in age to these and other celebrated curators; he literally shared their generational era. Geldzahler was born in 1935, Harald Szeemann in 1933, Kynaston McShine in 1935, Willoughby Sharp in 1936, Marcia Tucker in 1940, Seth Siegelaub in 1941, Lucy Lippard in 1947. In contrast, someone like Frank O'Hara, who many casually consider a closer peer of Geldzahler's, was nine years Geldzahler's elder, born in 1926.

[19] Geldzahler, "The Sixties: As They Were," in *Making It New: Essays, Interviews, and Talks* (New York: Turtle Point Press, 1994), 353. For a discussion and complication of the conventional discursive prominence given to artistic practices of the late 1960s by thinkers in history of exhibition and curatorial studies, see Julian Myers, "On the Value of a History of Exhibitions," *The Exhibitionist* 4 (June 2011): 24–28. Myers reminds that there is a much longer history of exhibitions prior to its perceived prevalence in the late twentieth century.

Geldzahler's art historical occlusion is impacted by the fact that he left no widely-appreciated writings, unlike Alloway or Lippard for instance. As critic Peter Scheljdahl wryly observed in the curator's obituary: "As an essayist he was remarkably unpersuasive, not for want of intelligence but because his exalted model of the essay was a coat too big for him. It can be touching in a way: Henry martyring himself in prose for his artist of the moment."[20] Yet the significance of Geldzahler's contributions to the art history of the 1960s—especially the particular emphasis of activities he cultivated in specific relation to the artists—demands a serious reevaluation and an angle of inquiry that looks differently at the total comprehensive character of his work and life, not just selective exhibitions and writings.

Beyond these formal, evidentiary, or discursive cracks through which Geldzahler has fallen is the fact that the very crux of what he found himself doing in the 1960s likely has contributed to his absence in art historical discourse. That is, while art history could be characterized as a record of successive breaks or challenges to existing conventions, sometimes breaking too many conventions and repeatedly defying structural boundaries that organize the field overall can write oneself out. This seems to have been the case with Geldzahler. He scrambled the norms that conventionally defined the artistic field and the positions and figures that circulate within it. Each of Geldzahler's major activities and accomplishments entailed a crossing and revising of art historical distinctions: (tres)passes between artist and curator, curator and celebrity, museum and studio, art and government, art and commerce, and art and mass media. In doing so, at its core, Geldzahler's story makes visible changing conditions of artistic autonomy in the postwar period, revealing the breakdown of an entrenched belief that maintains the inherited distinctions noted above.

[20] Scheljdahl, "Henry's Show."

Following this recognition, this dissertation critically examines Geldzahler's roles in the 1960s in relation to the problem of artistic autonomy. In addition to offering the first monographic study of the curator's major spheres of work as introduced already, this dissertation situates his activities as tactics of exchange that continually re-negotiated the artistic field's imbricated structural relationship to politics, economy, and media. Geldzahler provides an alternative model that moves beyond capitulation, cooptation, and/or critique. Holistically speaking, these older frameworks for understanding the problem of artistic autonomy in the 1960s render that problem as a matter of either-or. A model of capitulation might mourn the loss of art's purported separation and bemoan its contamination. A model of critique or cooptation may scrutinize art's instrumentalization, and seek to reassert the independence of artistic practice through forms of so-called rejection or resistance. Yet, whether in his relationships with artists, his governmental role in arts public policy, or through his exhibition making, Geldzahler's activity seldom settled neatly inside or outside the purview of the artist or the contours of the artistic field. Instead, his negotiations variously expanded, transmuted, undid, and/or reconstituted the status of the artwork and artist through continuous exchange with different fields of non-artistic practice.

Geldzahler's negotiations yielded a simultaneous array of effects, sometimes quite contradictory. In one sense, he utilized extra-artistic forces—from politics, commerce, and mass media—to redefine the artist's status and to differently accommodate the place and value of their activity. Yet, in another sense, the curator's tactics also at times re-inscribed fallacies or misuses of artistic autonomy endemic to a creative field that is conceived erroneously as a hermetic zone of pure art and culture. Given such contradictions, it is important to recognize that Geldzahler's story defies easy assessment of right or wrong, critical or reactionary, conservative or

progressive. Rather, his negotiations crossing various boundaries present an opportunity to more fully consider the uneven, multifaceted, and perpetually shifting structural organization of cultural production.

"Friendship" and the idea of "the artist's friend" were primary factors in Geldzahler's negotiations of cultural production and of artistic autonomy in particular. As such, this dissertation addresses his actual friendships with artists as well as the actions and motivations attributed to friendship in general to critically assess Geldzahler's reputation as "the artist's friend" and his negotiation of the "virtues and vices" of friendship, to paraphrase philosopher and theologian C.S. Lewis. This study is interested to understand *how* friendship facilitated Geldzahler's navigation of art's structural relationship to political forces at the NEA and with economic, social, and journalistic forces at the Met.[21] Ultimately, this dissertation surfaces "the curator as the artist's friend," interrogating Geldzahler's model to grapple with the ways artistic autonomy—in belief or in real practice—is constructed through interpersonal negotiation and, very often, according to the complex terms of mutual recognition, affection, and partiality associated with friendship. Before reviewing this dissertation's organization, how this project orients itself to "artistic autonomy" and how it engages "friendship" requires some further elaboration.

Artistic Autonomy

This dissertation specifically tackles what artist Andrea Fraser has called the "social dimension" of artistic autonomy.[22] Drawing directly from Pierre Bourdieu's foundational

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[21] C.S. Lewis, "Friendship," in *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960), 94–95.

[22] Fraser names four interrelated dimensions of artistic autonomy: aesthetic, economic, social, and political. See Andrea Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II,"

insights on cultural autonomy, the social dimension of artistic autonomy speaks to how the artistic field is constituted as a distinct and autonomous field "capable of imposing its own norms on both the production and consumption of its products," in the French sociologist's words.[23] Regarding her own status and activity as an artist, Fraser has reflected, "The autonomy of my field of activity and its specialization within divisions of cultural labor—that is, my distance from the class whose culture I produce—are the conditions of its possibility."[24] This dissertation analyzes how Geldzahler's negotiation between the artistic, political, economic, social, and journalistic fields exchanged figures, statuses, norms, and processes across fields, and, in so doing, changed the artist's status and "the conditions of possibility"— in other words, the conditions of artistic production, consumption, and reception.

This dissertation joins Bourdieu's broader project of reflexive sociology and his work on cultural and intellectual labor's structural relationship to political, economic, and social capital. But it departs from baseline assumptions that Bourdieu's legacy of artistic autonomy has typically entailed. Namely, rather than conceiving of an autonomous artistic field as an ideally separate sphere constituted by the artist's and the larger field's negation of political, social, and economic capital, this dissertation moves beyond Bourdieu's effective dismissal of the artistic field's heteronomy and his resistance to seeing the field in its so-called "penetrated" state.

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in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 56. This "Part II" essay followed an initial essay in which Fraser discusses the project *Services*, begun in 1994. See Andrea Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere?," in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 47–54.

[23] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 3.

[24] Andrea Fraser, "An Artist's Statement," in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 5.

Assumptions that prioritize a quest for autonomy obscure the artistic field's always already imbricated condition.[25] That quest often looks like a negation or refusal of non-artistic influences in order to privilege the artistic field and its independence from political and economic power. Yet, such an ideal, exemplified by the prophetic-subversive artist or intellectual, has precipitously waning relevance for a time in which artistic or cultural activity has lost prior positions of critique and resistance—when it is nearly impossible to imagine there even being a choice of refusing political and socioeconomic influence. My project's theoretical orientation to artistic autonomy derives especially from Fraser's insights on the critique of artistic autonomy in the 1960s and literary scholar James English's more recent retooling of Bourdieu's oeuvre around "exchange" and "tactics"—what English calls an "economics of cultural prestige."[26] While Fraser and English consciously inherit Bourdieu's legacy, their respective findings provide key, alternative frameworks for engaging the problem of artistic autonomy.

In her 1997 essay, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," Fraser interrogated how artist-activist groups such as the Art Workers Coalition (AWC) and practices such as conceptualism, post-studio, and institutional critique mounted a critique of artistic autonomy.[27] With AWC and conceptual art's initial critique of the autonomy of the art object specifically, Fraser delineates how their critique was "less a rejection of artistic autonomy than a critique of the *uses* to which artworks are put: the

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[25] Hal Foster makes a helpful point about the diacritical status of the term "autonomy" when he discusses aesthetic autonomy in art history's disciplinary evolution. See Hal Foster, "The Archive without Museums," *October* 77 (Summer 1996): 117.

[26] English presents his "economics of cultural prestige" in James F. English, *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); see also James English, "Winning the Culture Game: Prizes, Awards, and the Rules of Art," *New Literary History* 33, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 109–135.

[27] Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," 56–61.

economic and political interests they *serve*."[28] While invoking the term "artistic autonomy" can commonly connote the fallacy of art's separation from political or socioeconomic conditions—the very separation that enables the *misuse* and domination of an artistic field by economic and political power—Fraser's delineation between critique *versus* rejection of artistic autonomy clarifies upon a common conceptual slippage.

Firstly, her account reminds us that the problem of artistic autonomy concerns the constitutive conditions for the artistic field *as a field*. Secondly, the critique of artistic autonomy mounted by AWC and artists of the 1960s did not target this former, constitutive notion of autonomy. Rather, they targeted the ideological establishment of art as a hermetic zone of literally autonomous activity, in which artworks are conceived as nomadic and ahistorical and the artist as a central, transcendent, universal subject. As Fraser ultimately concludes:

> Far from functioning only as ideology critique, they [activists and artists that make up her genealogy] have aimed to construct a less ideological form of autonomy, conditioned not by the abstraction of relations of consumption in the commodity form, but by the conscious and critical determination, in each particular and immediate instance, of the uses to which artistic activity is put and the interests it serves. And it is in this sense that the substitution of literally heteronomous service relations for ideologically autonomous relations of commodity production and consumption can be seen, not as the final erosion of the traditionally separate sphere of art but as the first step in an effort to move beyond the perpetual replay of the dialectic of negation and institutionalization to which the critique of ideological use is consigned so long as the artistic positions that artists take are considered in isolation from the social and material conditions of the art they make.[29]

In slight contrast with Bourdieu, Fraser's sensitivity to the ways conceptualism sought to reconceive the economic relations at stake in the transactions around a (dematerialized) artwork or the ways post-studio practices engaged the "social conditions of artistic activity" underscores

[28] Ibid, 57.

[29] Ibid, 78.

that it is not heteronomy or imbrication, *tout court*, that must be avoided.[30] Instead, the problem of artistic autonomy demands attention to the exact nature of the artistic field's imbrication, what effects that imbrication has on the field's functioning as a relatively autonomous professional field, and how the persistence of ideological manifestations of a wrongly conceived literal autonomous sphere could be ameliorated.[31]

In what he terms an "economics of cultural prestige," English takes a similar starting point as Fraser regarding the imbrication of the cultural field. For English, the problem of artistic autonomy must substitute Bourdieu's privileging of refusal with exchange and move away from a spatially organized model towards a practice- or tactically-based model. Regarding exchange, English proposes a rethinking of Bourdieu's general framework of capital—broadly construed as the statuses, norms, and processes specific to a given field—and defines capital "not only in relation to one particular field, but in varying relations to all other fields and all other types of capital."[32] In this sense, the conditions of artistic production and reception—the status of the artist as an artist or their activity as artistic—is produced by the exchange of figures, statuses, norms, and processes from inside *and* outside the artistic field. English explains:

> The different forms of capital are actually caught up in the process of intraconversion, of exchange or translation from form to form, *at every point of the field simultaneously* and at variable rates whose negotiation is always part of this process, being carried out by every player in every position.[33]

As Geldzahler crossed the artistic field's conventional boundaries of autonomy—interfacing with government, commerce, media, and in friendship—the curator negotiated exchanges of capital

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[30] Ibid, 64.

[31] My dissertation will primarily use the word imbrication instead of heteronomy, partly inspired by Foster's terminology in "The Archive without Museums."

[32] English, *The Economy of Prestige*, 10.

[33] English, "Winning the Culture Game," 126.

across fields that reconstituted the traditional status of the artist and artistic activity. The task of this dissertation is to interrogate the exchanges at play in Geldzahler's negotiation and to track their effects on the structuring of the artistic field.

Unlike Bourdieu's spatialized or geographic understanding of artistic autonomy, English's shift towards tactics elevates the "fluid and improvisational practices of intraconversion that defy any reduction to simple laws of opposition between properly commercial and properly cultural interests."[34] Put another way, whether or not an artist or other figure in the artistic field (like a curator) can be said to be "properly cultural" based on their proximity or distance from a boundary dividing art from its exterior is an evaluative assumption English challenges. "There is no question of perfect autonomy or segregation of the various sorts of capital, much that one might occupy a zone or margin of 'pure' culture," English argues, "It is rather a matter of differing rates of exchange and principles of negotiation, both of these being among the most important stakes in the whole economy of practices."[35] While Bourdieu's model of artistic autonomy framed the structural relationship between the artistic field and other fields according to degrees of spatial distance, and privileged farther distance as the measure or the guaranteeing integrity of one's artistic status, English's model of exchange gives up such privileging.

Arguably, this older spatialized model is another way to understand why Geldzahler's activities in the 1960s have been hard to appreciate. His close proximity to economic and social power (especially his celebrity) defied not just the expectation that we refuse non-artistic fields (which he never did), but also that we create distance from political, economic, and social forces

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[34] Ibid, 128.

[35] English, *The Economy of Prestige*, 10.

(which he usually bucked). While we may conventionally desire the artistic field be a "world apart," as Bourdieu described it, conditions of contemporary cultural practice establish the autonomy of the artistic field in a manner that is far more provisional and contingent than Bourdieu's legacy has typically allowed.[36] As English helpfully reiterates:

> One pursues an interest in autonomy today not by seeking out some ever-narrower margin of the field that remains uncolored by money, by politics, by ethnic or geographic favoritism, but by seizing and managing as advantageously as one can the various and spatially scattered cultural instruments whose primary purpose is the negotiation of capital conversions.[37]

Insofar as Geldzahler pursued his own "seizing and managing" of "cultural instruments," such as the NEA Visual Arts Program or the contemporary art exhibition, an economics of cultural prestige accepts the complex imbrication of contemporary cultural practice since Geldzahler's time, and its focus on exchange and tactics offers tools that unlock Geldzahler's particular kind of negotiating activity at the edge of the artistic field's autonomy. Interrogating Geldzahler in relation to the problem of artistic autonomy ultimately requires that we contend with the points of convergence and divergence he negotiated between artistic and non-artistic fields and considers how *negotiations across fields*—artistic, political, economic, and social—*constitute the artistic field itself*.

Friendship

First and foremost, friendship is a primary point of departure for this project on Geldzahler and the problem of artistic autonomy because, after his being a curator and a celebrity, being the artist's friend was a defining aspect of Geldzahler's identity. In addition, when we look

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[36] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 59

[37] English, "Winning the Culture Game," 126.

more broadly and carefully, friendship with artists actually reappears as a significant if not ubiquitous attribute of many other contemporary art curators. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from a 2019 obituary published by *Artforum* for the art historian and curator Peter Selz:

> He served in the US military and studied at the University of Chicago and the École du Louvre in Paris before he joined the Museum of Modern Art in New York as curator of painting and sculpture in 1958. During his tenure at the institution, Selz organized major exhibitions, including midcareer surveys of Jean Dubuffet and Alberto Giacometti, thematic shows such as "New Images of Man," and Auguste Rodin's first US retrospective; developed close friendships with artists such as Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning; and commissioned important works such as Swiss artist Jean Tinguely's *Homage to New York*, 1960.[38]

Notice how the obituary seamlessly names Selz's "close friendships with artists such as Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning" alongside other achievements. If you give it more than a passing glance, one might ask what does friendship share, or have to do, with scholastic, curatorial, and professional accomplishments?

"Friendship" does not always have to be explicitly invoked either. Ideas of friendship are also often encoded inside other characterizations and associations, such as "relationship" or "care." For instance, regarding the recently-passed curator Okwui Enwezor's influence on his own self-conception of the curator's role, Thomas Lax has shared the following reflection:

> […] [Okwui Enwezor] and Glenn [Ligon] had a twenty-year plus relationship, and I think that affirmed the things that I learned through other mentorships. In other words, this academic approach to scholarship and institution-making was made good through real relationships with living artists. I think Okwui embodied those two things: a real care for living artists, and a deep and rigorous attention to historical scholarship.[39]

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[38] "Peter Selz (1919–2019)," Artforum, accessed March 20, 2020, https://www.artforum.com/news/peter-selz-1919-2019-80152.

[39] Terrence Trouillot, "'We Are Always Speaking to a Mass Audience': MoMA Curator Thomas Lax on the Advantages—and Challenges—of Art in the Digital Age," *Artnet News*, accessed March 20, 2020, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/thomas-lax-1550668.

This appreciation makes several small but important moves worth isolating point by point in terms of friendship, or relationship of care, posed as a requisite for a successful curator of contemporary art.

Firstly, Lax's overall formulation draws a working distinction between an "academic approach to scholarship and institution-making" and "real relationships with living artists." Secondly, it is the latter "real relationships with living artists" that "made good" the former "scholarship and institution-making." Thirdly, what constitutes a "real relationship with living artists" may include, according to Lax, "a twenty-year plus" relational timespan and "a real care." In other words, for Lax, an extended duration and concern for the artist's well-being that could be defined as "friendship" is what makes the traditional functions of a curator whole and right. These circlings around friendship by Lax and *Artforum*'s obituary on Selz are not isolated instances in betraying deeply held beliefs and values about artist friendship in the artistic field: friendship with artists is a professional achievement for a curator that promises good relations with living artists. It indicates a kind of legitimation even, and further serves as a ground for the art world's proper institutional functioning.

In the sub-fields of histories of exhibitions and curatorial studies, for further example, friendship is repeatedly evoked along similar terms and has attracted some informal inquiry. Like the anecdotes above, however, there is still a mostly unremarked treatment of what precisely is meant by friendship between curator and artist, as well as similar assumptions about friendship's virtuous value for the artistic field. In the 2018 exhibition *Harald Szeemann: Museum of Obsessions* at the Getty Research Institute, personal letters from artists to Szeemann prominently appeared throughout the exhibition about the famed curator. On the wall at the entrance of the exhibition, in particular, handwritten letters to Szeemann, primarily from artists, greeted the

viewing public. Given no contextualization other than being the first archival documents one saw upon entering the exhibition, the letters—their messages of thanks, of mutual care and interest, and even the evocative handwritings and signatures of their artist writers—all variously signified intimacies of a kind that made Szeemann's relationship with artists distinct, that established him as a friend of the artist.[40]

Consider further, a set of conversations initiated by the journal *The Exhibitionist* in 2016 between curators and artists who have enjoyed long-term relationships. These conversations all, in fact, name friendship, or ideas of friendship, as the dynamic between curator and artist. "We had a relationship that had been established over time, through conversation and friendship," reflected curator Anthony Huberman about his working relationship with artist Fia Backström.[41] Artist Claire Fontaine in conversation with curator Jens Hoffmann surmised, "Generally speaking, though, it is essential for us to be complicit with the people we work with […] if there isn't a strong sense of reciprocal recognition and explicit feeling of wanting to go in the same direction, things inevitably go wrong."[42] Curator Anne Ellegood and artist Kerry Tribe perhaps get closest to describing how friendship intersects with the problem of artistic autonomy.

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[40] grupa o.k. (J. Myers & J. Szupinska) offer an important evaluation of the exhibition in their review of *Harald Szeemann: Museum of Obsessions*, as well as the three other projects (an installation and two publications) that coincided with the exhibition. In particular, they question the "GRI's reverence" toward Szeemann, arguing the exhibition had such effects as "neutering new research and scholarship" and "severing from social and political context the obsessions that drove Szeemann's exhibitions." They also discuss the many letters presented in the exhibition and point out the inauguration wall. Remarking on letters related to *Documenta V*, grupa o.k. write, "We came away with little more than a sense of Szeemann as pen pal to artists […]" registering the exhibition's lack of contextualization for such letters. In agreement with grupa o.k., one gambit of this dissertation is that being a "pen pal to artists" has more meaning and effect than has been fully appreciated. See grupa o.k., "Goodbye, Auteur," *Art Journal* 78, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 107–113.

[41] Fia Backström and Anthony Huberman, "Re: Family Dynamics," in *The Exhibitionist: Journal on Exhibition Making—The First Six Years*, ed. Jens Hoffmann (New York: The Exhibitionist, 2017), 909. According to the publication, their conversation "center[ed] on a project commissioned for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis in 2008."

[42] Claire Fontaine and Jens Hoffmann, "Artistic Bitches and Curatorial Bastards," in *The Exhibitionist: Journal on Exhibition Making—The First Six Years*, ed. Jens Hoffmann (New York: The Exhibitionist, 2017), 924. At the time of this publication, Jens Hoffmann served as Founding Editor of *The Exhibitionist*.

Discussing a performance of Tribe's that Ellegood supported at an early inchoate stage, the curator (AE) and artist (KT) recalled:

> AE: From my perspective, you had to do this [the performance work *Critical Mass*]. It had to happen. And you needed support. It's wonderful when you're at an institution where you can actually find that support and offer a context for the work. I wanted to give you an opportunity to push your work in a new direction.
>
> KT: I had never done anything live before *Critical Mass.* What curators can do is provide these opportunities to think outside of one's comfort zone. And trust is important and critical to that. When you work with someone again and again over the years, you can take more risks. Because I know that you'll stop me if I'm about to do something really dumb. And I also know that if there is some pragmatic constraint, I can trust your judgment. You know best what will and won't work in the institution you deal with every day.[43]

Ciphers of friendship such as "support" and "trust" were crucial to the way curator and artist interacted in order to produce structural and literal parameters for the artist's activity.

"Reciprocal" or mutual recognition, "complicity," and a "trust" that the curator holds the best interests of their artist friends are additional ideas of friendship these conversations from *The Exhibitionist* add. They reiterate the notion of friendship as a kind of capacity that hovers between the interpersonal and professional and give additional examples of what might qualify as "real care" or even love for the artist. They also raise the notion that being the artist's friend gives the curator a kind of self-disclosing access to the artist. Friendship allegedly enables the curator to hold a special knowledge about the artist in question: "I know that you'll stop me if I'm about to do something really dumb […] I can trust your judgment," the artist said about her friend the curator.

What all these disparate anecdotes suggest is that for many actors of the artistic field friendship is a latent, powerful, though mostly undefined mode of relation that governs how

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[43] Anne Ellegood and Kerry Tribe, "Long Term Relationship," in *The Exhibitionist: Journal on Exhibition Making—The First Six Years*, ed. Jens Hoffmann (New York: The Exhibitionist, 2017), 922. At the time of this publication, Anne Ellegood served as a curator with the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

artists and non-artist others should interact with one another. According to its colloquial usage, friendship with the artist signifies virtuous ideals like mutual recognition, durational commitment, insider if not intimate knowledge, and well-wishing. Friendship is typically invoked to describe a point of convergence or interaction between curator and artist, and between artistic and non-artistic fields, or what most of these anecdotes broadly construe as the artist's imbrication within an "institutional" realm. Finally, in its presumed goodness, friendship is meant to give some degree of rightness—"makes good"—the exchanges inside and outside of the artist's own autonomous functioning.

Hewing closely to Geldzahler's historical example, and the ways friendship functioned in his negotiations of artistic autonomy and in his own life, this dissertation will resist judgment on the merits of friendship as a mode of relation between curators and artists. However, unlike the commonplace assumption that often presumes friendship has a positive value only, this dissertation will contend with the ways any inquiry into friendship must also address the social relation's potentially deleterious effect, its "school of vice," as Lewis famously put it:

> Friendship (as the ancients saw) can be a school of virtue; but also (as they did not see) a school of vice. It is ambivalent. It makes good men better and bad men worse. It would be a waste of time to elaborate the point. What concerns us is not to expatiate on the badness of bad Friendships but to become aware of the possible danger in good ones. This love, like the other natural loves, has its congenital liability to a particular disease.[44]

In concert with Lewis and other philosophers on friendship, such as Alexander Nehamas, this dissertation critically discerns a broader and ambivalent picture of how the defining features of friendship, and its virtues and vices, organize the social dimension of artistic autonomy, both in Geldzahler's imbricated social relations with the artists of his generation and his negotiations of the artistic field's autonomy.

[44] Lewis, "Friendship," 94–95.

Indeed, in its intersection with the problem of artistic autonomy, friendship can elaborate upon invocations of "the social" that are commonly made in discussions of artistic autonomy but have escaped concerted analysis. For instance, Fraser named "the social conditions of artistic activity" but does not quite specify what precisely about the social condition gets realized (or how) in the late 1960s critique of artistic autonomy.[45] Similarly, the social has been called out in disciplinary discussions around the histories of exhibitions and curatorial studies but mainly to the extent that exhibition-making and curating are endeavors involving many people. In this instance, for example, art historian Julian Myers-Szupinska has declared: "Exhibitions are a social and collective form […] Whether they include the products of a single artist or of a group, exhibitions gather together artworks (or objects, projects, residues) and construct from them a representation of a social field."[46] Myers-Szupinska names not only curators and artists but also the "expansive network" that often goes unnamed, whose contributions and labors are harder, but still critical, to appreciate. This dissertation follows Myers-Szupinska's broad guidance to analyze the "social field" curators inhabit but demarcates its inquiry around the relationship between the curator and the artist foremost. My findings regarding artistic autonomy and friendship can only provide implications for the wider expansive network Myers-Szupinska has named.

Closer to my point, this dissertation raises a curator's friendship with the artist as a specific interaction and mode of relation that can elaborate upon the social conditions of artistic autonomy, which Fraser has only partially tackled. In the analytical sense, Fraser's examination into post-studio practices' reconceptualization of the social condition stops at the point where

[45] Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," 64.

[46] Julian Myers-Szupinska, "Exhibitions as Apparatus," in *The Exhibitionist: Journal on Exhibition Making—The First Six Years*, ed. Jens Hoffmann (New York: The Exhibitionist, 2017), 16.

multiple actors beyond the artist make artistic activity heteronomously social. In so doing, little has been said about what kind of social relations are actually taking place. For example, examining Robert Smithson's essay "Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site" (1967), in which Smithson reflected on his turn as an "artist consultant" for the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport project, Fraser argued post-studio practices mounted a critique on the "autonomy of artistic practice itself" through an intervention into the "social conditions of artistic activity":

> Remarkable in this description is not only that Smithson describes himself as an "artist consultant" but that he describes his client and the individuals he is working with so specifically. It reveals that a specific site, even when engaged only in its physical aspects, always also implies a specific set of relations, whether social, economic, or subjective. Those relations are not only relations within a site engaged or thematized by a site-specific work, but also the relations an artist constructs or enters into as a condition of working in that site.[47]

By "so specifically," Fraser means the part of Smithson's description when the artist named and contrasted himself from the architect and engineer: "I meet with Walter Prokosch, John Gardner, and Ernest Schweibert in order to discuss the overall plan. I have engaged in these discussions not as an architect or engineer, but simply as an artist."[48] Yet, what is arguably not so specific is the terms of their socializing, the nature of relation that Smithson and his collaborators forged with one another. Job categories and their respective functions keep appreciation of the social condition at a transactional or functional register. What motivates artists and other figures in and out of the artistic field to engage one another, how they exchange their respective field's norms and values, and the effects these negotiations have on the artist's "condition of working" have yet to be fully elaborated. Defining ideas and characteristics of friendship, such as mutual

[47] Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," 64–65.

[48] Quoted in Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," 64.

recognition, shared activity, affection, trust, and co-creative self-formation, promise to fill this lacuna regarding the social dimension of artistic autonomy.

Notwithstanding this analytical horizon that Fraser's analysis has not yet met, her observations about a "return of the patron" and "new curatorial practices" that emerged in the wake of conceptualism and post-studio practices offers an important baseline for theorizing friendship as a prevailing dynamic in the social dimension of artistic autonomy. In her discussion about Lippard, Joseph Kosuth, and Douglas Huebler, Fraser sketched what she calls a "return of the patron" that their related activities instantiated. She notes:

> The 'return of the patron' their work implied had less to do with the disappearance of objects with specifically artistic value than with the emergence of a specific relation: the 'conspiracy' that Huebler describes in his statement and inscribes in his contractual works.[49]

Whether it was Huebler's notion that a collector "enters into a conspiracy with the artist," or what Kosuth, in a discussion about Dan Flavin, described as a collector "subsidizing Flavin's activity," this dissertation hypothesizes that friendship is the "specific relation" at play in "the return of relations of patronage."[50] Lastly, this project's focus upon a curator takes up Fraser's additional observation that "new curatorial practices" emerged in tandem with the critique of artistic autonomy in the 1960s. According to Fraser, in such practices there was a "new level of identification among artist, critics, and museum professionals."[51] This dissertation looks to Geldzahler and the importance of friendship in his story to interrogate this unprecedented identification.

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Quoted in Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," 63.

[51] Ibid, 69.

Organization of the Dissertation

Broadly speaking, the dissertation moves in roughly chronological order from Geldzahler's arrival in New York as a curator in 1960 to the opening of his exhibition *NYPS* in October 1969. Each chapter of this dissertation takes as its premise a different negotiation. Whether between artist and friend, art and government, or art and commerce, I interpret the exchanges at play in Geldzahler's negotiation and analyze what effects they had on the structuring of the artist's status and the artistic field more broadly.

Chapter 1 analyzes what made Geldzahler a model friend by examining his well-known and documented friendships with artists Andy Warhol and David Hockney. Warhol's written memories and Hockney's depictions of Geldzahler in painting and drawing provide representations of Geldzahler as their friend, and from this body of evidence I argue Geldzahler represented critical features of friendship such as: shared activity, affection or a motivating concern for the artist's welfare and happiness, and the co-creative self-formation forged in friendship. Warhol and Hockney's friendships with Geldzahler also bear critical implications for how we understand the artist's own autonomy and imbrication. These artist's various representations of their friend re-organize key terms regarding the artist's primacy as an author, as well as how we conceive of artist's identity and self-representation. Chapter 1 closes with a look at Geldzahler's remarks at the December 1962 Symposium on Pop Art, organized by Peter Selz at The Museum of Modern Art. Geldzahler was the symposium panel's lone advocate for Pop artists, and his defense betrayed inchoate translations of his experience as an artist's friend to the wider functioning of the art world. As a chapter that foregrounds the major thrusts of his professional activities later in the decade, my analysis of Geldzahler's representation as a friend also forecast aspects of friendship that emerge as terms for his negotiations at the NEA and Met.

Chapter 2 examines Geldzahler's activities at the NEA and his negotiation between art and government. I first make a historiographic intervention, interrogating the ways prevailing accounts of the NEA have not paid enough attention to its originary context: Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. Insofar as Geldzahler, from the very beginning, named "the artist" as his angle of policy attack, my intervention proposes we re-contextualize the NEA within the conditions and tenets of the larger era of liberal social reform. I go on to assess public rhetoric and private policy discussions, in tandem with the initial structure of the Visual Arts Program itself, describing how Geldzahler negotiated the artist's status with the terms of the political field. Specifically, I argue that Geldzahler appropriated concepts of "the poor," their need, and their so-diagnosed "powerlessness" to align actions for "the artist" and their own powerlessness within the parameters of federal government action.

While the first half of Chapter 2 shows that Geldzahler and the NEA were able to appropriate ideas of the poor and powerlessness for the artist rather seamlessly, the latter half examines the more complex maneuvering Geldzahler orchestrated to execute his specific initiatives. Two programs—the NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship and the Museum Purchase Program—and two expert studies—*Federal Support for the Arts: The New Deal and Now* and *Legal Protection for the Artist: A Series of Case Studies for the National Endowment for the Arts*—are the focus. Across them, I draw out points of convergence between the arts and government-sponsored social reform, points of divergence between the artist and the poor, as well as critical gaps between Geldzahler's own self-articulated rhetoric about his programs versus their actual nature.

In total, I propose that Geldzahler's negotiation of artistic autonomy at the level of NEA practice reconstituted ideas of the artist's self-determination and sovereign mastery in the

language of artist support and artist empowerment. Further, by considering broader disciplinary misrecognitions of the nature of artist empowerment that I argue have an origin in Geldzahler's actions and this period as a whole, I explore how artist empowerment can entail the perpetuation of the ideological effects of conceiving the artist as primary or sole authority. Finally, the conclusion of Chapter 2 considers how Geldzahler's turn as a professional reformer in arts public policy reinscribed friendship as a basis of expertise about artists, within the rubric of the professional political reformers' expert knowledge of the poor.

Chapter 3 brings Geldzahler's story to the end of the decade focusing on his exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*. Like its curator, *NYPS* has received little to no substantive art historical analysis. The first section recovers the essential facts of this underexamined exhibition and situates *NYPS* inside the larger museum's Centennial Celebration, a multi-million dollar project organized to mark the Met's 100-year anniversary in 1970. Rather than seeing *NYPS* in isolation, the economic and publicity agenda driving the Centennial Celebration demonstrates how an advanced integration of art and commerce touched not only "Henry's Show," but all aspects of the museum.

The second section of Chapter 3 breaks down the terms of the scandal that fixated on Geldzahler, including debate over which artists he included and excluded, the exhibition's transparent friendliness to economic and media power, and the star treatment of America's avant-garde. Across these flashpoints, charges of bias and objectionable partiality armed Geldzahler's trial by fire, and detractors alleged, in various ways, the vices of friendship as the root of the curator's failures. Reading against the grain of the Geldzahler-targeted scandal, however, I also draw out a deeper contestation over the autonomy of the artistic field. Many detractors feared that the traditional beliefs, values and stakes invested in the artistic game—

what Bourdieu calls the *illusio* of cultural practice—had broken down with *NYPS*, replaced by the rules of commerce and celebrity. In response to these destabilizing visions, I argue that the scandal posed Geldzahler as a celebrity, having him personify the artistic field in decline or crisis and holding him responsible for the alleged errors or shortcomings of the exhibition.

I close Chapter 3 by looking more broadly, asking what did Geldzahler share with his generation of curatorial peers, such as Lucy Lippard, Seth Siegelaub, and Harald Szeemann. Although the scandal over *NYPS* cast Geldzahler as an aberration representing extra-artistic norms and values, when comparing *NYPS* with other exhibitions from the same year, Geldzahler actually functioned more like his peers than prevailing discourses have allowed. In conversation with the work of English, I show how Geldzahler and his curator peers were all "agents of intraconversion," facilitating the exchange of artistic and non-artistic capital in order to realize their work. Chapter 3 ultimately argues that the scandal over *NYPS* made Geldzahler a scapegoat for strategic reasons. In so doing, desire for or belief in the artistic field as a separate and special domain of activity could be protected, when nothing else—like avant-gardist "shock" or the curator as creative author, conventionally attributed to his valorized peers—could sublimate its transparent breakdown.

Finally, the Conclusion looks back upon Geldzahler's negotiation of artistic autonomy, tracking the ways friendship determined the rules, opportunities, and barriers for his exchanges across the artistic field. I focus in particular on a 1965 essay Geldzahler wrote, entitled "The Art Audience and the Critic." In this relatively little-known piece about the place and role of the critic, Geldzahler, in fact, argued being "the artist's friend," was the best way to fulfill the critic's role. Geldzahler believed that only as a friend or by belonging in the artist's "coterie" could the critic, curator, or historian serve as a proper intermediary between the artist and the audience.

While he professed a strong faith in friendship as the ideal form of relation to the artist, and in turn, art, I raise potential pitfalls and closing questions about his proposition. The Conclusion especially grapples with key claims from the preceding chapters, illuminating anecdotes from the present, and philosophical discussions that interrogate not only the goodness of friendship, but the relation's moral dilemmas. Ultimately, as this dissertation endeavors to show, Geldzahler was "the curator as the artist's friend." And his model will bring to light a heretofore underappreciated configuration of artistic autonomy and friendship, wherein friendship organizes terms of efficacy, legitimacy and authority governing the critical negotiations that constitute the structural organization of the artistic field since Geldzahler's time.

Chapter 1

Becoming an Artist's Friend: Representations of Henry Geldzahler's Friendship with Andy Warhol and David Hockney

Introduction

Among the many artist friends Henry Geldzahler cultivated, two were at the center of both his private life and public persona from the beginning of the 1960s: Andy Warhol and David Hockney. Geldzahler met Warhol first in 1960, during the beginning months of the curator's arrival onto the New York scene. Hockney and Geldzahler met later, in 1963, at Warhol's Factory. Although the three met through one another, historical evidence and anecdotal commentary bear little indication that they were close as a trio. Instead, Henry was simply Andy's own and David's own. Geldzahler's separate, if somewhat interrelated, friendships with Warhol and Hockney make a 1975 photograph of them together surprising (Figure 1.1).[1]

By then, they could have been called "old friends." Although titled *Andy Warhol + Henry Geldzahler New York,* Hockney's photograph captures all three men: Warhol and Geldzahler sit side-by-side chatting, with the artist listening while the curator does all the talking. Hockney's reflection, which shows him holding the camera, appears in the mirror behind the seated pair. Concentrating on one another, neither Warhol nor Geldzahler betray any obvious awareness of Hockney. The mirror that reflects Hockney standing before them also reveals another mirror on the other side of the room, behind our own imaginary position in front of the photograph.

The facing mirrors duplicate the interior scene to infinity. Yet while Warhol's image

[1] From David Hockney, *David Hockney Photographs* (London: Petersburg Press, 1982), fig. 53.

ricochets back and forth into the depths of the still photograph, Geldzahler's potentially infinite reflection meets Hockney's standing figure in the middle of the *mise-en-abyme*. Instead of seeing Geldzahler, Hockney's reflection replaces Geldzahler's replicative trajectory. Through the mirror's function, the dark eye of Hockney's camera trains upon the title scene of two friends, it looks out at us, and it also transubstantiates Geldzahler's reflected self.

Altogether, *Andy Warhol + Henry Geldzahler New York* captures multiple forms of reciprocity in motion. First, Warhol and Geldzahler talk, fixed upon one another in shared conversation. Second, the dynamic play between camera lens and mirror forms a reciprocal exchange of selves between Geldzahler and Hockney. And, third, as Hockney's camera-eye looks out upon us as well, we encounter these reciprocities amongst two pairs of friends as points of entry for our own reciprocity with the photograph and its three historical figures.[2]

I raise this photograph as a guiding object for Chapter 1 and its inquiry into how Geldzahler embodied friendship with these artists. Although Geldzahler's respective friendships with Warhol and Hockney are widely acknowledged, what made Geldzahler a friend, in particular, has not been explored in great depth.[3] This chapter analyzes two main bodies of

[2] Admittedly, I have left out "man's best friend:" Warhol's taxidermy Great Dane "Cecil," who stands at the artist's side. Warhol purchased Cecil in the late 1960s and he was considered the Factory's "guard dog" and "mascot" in the 1970s and 80s. Originally named Ador Tipp Topp, the dog was preserved in the 1930s after his life as a dog show champion in the 1920s; see "Artistic License," Carnegie Magazine, accessed February 29, 2020, https://carnegiemuseums.org/magazine-archive/2008/spring/article-78.html. Thank you to Sarah Cooper for first alerting me to Cecil.

[3] It is worth noting that Geldzahler had a third very close artist friend in the 1960s, among the many in general, and he was Frank Stella. Geldzahler has mentioned talking about artworks and exhibition ideas with Stella and also credited the artist with many positions he had taken on major art issues of the day. For example, in a 1991 lecture, "The Sixties: As They Were," Geldzahler remarked, "…my two immediate mentors were Clement Greenberg and, surprisingly, perhaps depending on how well you know me and the period, Frank Stella, who was a very dear friend and whom I saw every day in the decade of the Sixties, as I did Andy Warhol," see Henry Geldzahler, "The Sixties: As They Were," in *Making It New: Essays, Interviews, and Talks* (New York: Turtle Point Press, 1994), 344. I bracket Stella out in this chapter for circumstantial reasons, however. Firstly, the publicity of Geldzahler and Stella's friendship was relatively minor in Geldzahler's reputation as a whole, especially relative to Warhol and Hockney. Secondly, to the extent that I am aware at present, the archival record does not offer much information beyond stated declarations of their friendship, unlike the textual and visual evidence this chapter examines.

evidence: Warhol's written remembrances of Geldzahler from his memoir, *POPism: The Warhol '60s* (1980), and Hockney's depiction of Geldzahler in the painting *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* (1977).[4] In conversation with philosophical discussions of friendship, I argue Geldzahler represented for Warhol and Hockney such salient features of friendship as: shared activity, affection, and the co-creative role friends serve in the formation of the self or one's identity.

Their representations of Geldzahler also bear critical implications for the traditional ideology of the artist's literal autonomy, and the undoing of that autonomy. If the conventional notion of autonomy imagines an artist defined by their primacy and centrality—a mythologized transcendent, universal subject, who exercises their sovereign self-determination and thus constitutes a privileged source of originality over the artwork's production and meaning—friendship's forging of an intimate bond between two people undercuts that vision. Warhol and Hockney's various representations acknowledge Geldzahler's imbrication in their lives as artists. Yet at the same time their representations also speak to the ways the essential partiality of friendship—whereby our friends enjoy a privileged position in comparison to others, and a friend's standpoint guides the actions and motivations of how we engage them in friendship—actually may re-assert the fallacies of artist autonomy that friendship appears at first to undo.

The first section of Chapter 1 focuses on Warhol's account of Geldzahler from *POPism.* I contextualize the major elements of his memories of their friendship—what he and Geldzahler did together, how Warhol felt about Geldzahler and their friendship—with philosopher Elizabeth Telfer's claim that friendship forms through a "shared activity condition" motivated by "passions of friendship," namely affection, which Telfer defines as "a desire for another's welfare and

[4] Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol '60s* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983).

happiness as a particular individual."[5] The twinned importance of shared activity and a concern for the artist's welfare and happiness diverts critical emphasis away from the given reputation of Warhol and Geldzahler's friendship, which conventionally focuses on Warhol's apparent surrendering of authorship or the idea that Geldzahler supplied the artist with ideas. Instead, my interpretation proposes we place greater focus on the motivations that drove Geldzahler's actions, motivations based on the artist's welfare and happiness as the defining force of their friendship and the role he played in Warhol's life and work.

Although it looks simply like a monumental portrait of his friend, Hockney's *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*, I argue, was more than a picture of Geldzahler, but a picture about friendship (Figure 1.2). In the second section of Chapter 1, I forge a visual-conceptual link between *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* and another of Hockney's paintings completed at nearly the same time: *My Parents* (1977) (Figure 1.3). Examining them in tandem, I argue Hockney replaced his mirrored self-reflection, which he originally experimented with but abandoned in *My Parents,* with his depiction of Geldzahler in the subsequent painting *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*.

In so doing, I interpret Hockney's strategy as one that substituted his literal self-representation with a representation (and knowledge) of the self he gained through Geldzahler, in friendship. Such an alternative self-representational strategy parallels what C.S. Lewis has called the "common quest" that unite friends, and through which friends find their "mutual love and knowledge," realizing one's self-formation.[6] *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* shows how Hockney based his self-representation on the co-creative self-formation one experiences through a friend, and such an alternative mode also raises an intersubjective circuit of formation and

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[5] Elizabeth Telfer, "Friendship," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 71 (1970–1971): 223–241.

[6] C.S. Lewis, "Friendship," in *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960), 69–105.

knowledge of the self that brooks the conventional autonomy of the artist.

The conclusion at the end of the chapter turns to the "Symposium on Pop Art," organized by Peter Selz at The Museum of Modern Art in December 1962.[7] Geldzahler served as the symposium's lone defender of the then-emerging and controversial works by Pop artists such as his friend Warhol, among others. The conclusion highlights, in particular, the major proposition Geldzahler made before the symposium's audience: "to stay sensitive and alert to what the artist is doing, not to tell him what he should be doing."[8] Geldzahler's overall position and his particular call for critics and other ancillary figures "to stay sensitive and alert to what the artist is doing," betrayed an inchoate translation of his private experiences as an artist's friend into an ethical dictum for the broader functioning of the art world.

The conclusion reflects on the equivocal nature of Geldzahler's proposition, especially in light of his representations as a friend by Warhol and Hockney. On one hand, Geldzahler's role and experiences as a friend deeply integrated the curator with the standpoint and experiences of the artist. On the other hand, "to stay sensitive and alert to what the artist is doing" calls to mind the primacy of the artist's standpoint and a prioritization of their will that prizes their autonomy and diminishes the nature of their imbrication. The equivocality of his call speaks to the dynamics of exchange at stake in Geldzahler's negotiations of artistic autonomy, whether in relation to the artist themselves or to non-artistic fields. As a whole, this chapter also provides an opportunity to forecast how the features of friendship—shared activity, affection or motivations of friendship, and co-creative self-formation—organized Geldzhaler's negotiations with government and politics or commerce and media, which Chapters 2 and 3 will go on to tackle.

[7] "A Symposium on Pop Art," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 7, April 1963, 36-45.

[8] Ibid, 37.

Andy Warhol's "five-hours-a-day-on-the-phone-see-you-for-lunch-quick-turn-on-the-'Tonight Show'" Friend

Warhol invokes Geldzahler's voice on the very first page of *POPism*:

> My friend Henry Geldzahler, curator of twentieth-century art at the Metropolitan Museum before he was appointed official culture czar of New York, once described the beginning of Pop this way: "It was like a science fiction movie—you Pop artists in different parts of the city, unknown to each other, rising up out of the muck and staggering forward with your paintings in front of you."[9]

That Warhol left the task of describing the beginning of Pop art to a friend is characteristic of the artist's typical relinquishing of his sole authorship. For many commentators, such deferral to or quotation of others is a signature strategy that made Warhol a paradigmatic postmodernist artist.[10]

Yet, what else could it mean that Geldzahler is among a selection of Warhol's Factory friends who enjoy a central place in the *mise-en-scène* that *POPism* presents? Their presence in the memoir perhaps can tell us something more than claims of "the destruction of the author and the aura, of aesthetic substance and artistic skill," which friends of Warhol usually, and simply, buttress.[11] In fact, Warhol self-interjects into the memoir's narrative flow early on to pose the following meta-reflective question about the task he had at hand:

> One of the things that happens when you write about your life is that you educate yourself. When you actually sit down and ask yourself, "What *was* that all about?" you begin to think hard about the most obvious things. For instance, I've

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[9] Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 3.

[10] Consider, for example, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh's assessment that instances like these are kinds of "*blagues*" that play with the oppositions between high/low, fine art/mass media, artist/others; see "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art, 1956–1966," in *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 464–465. Consider also Douglas Crimp's analysis of Warhol and Ronald Tavel's collaboration in film, in which Crimp observes and initially questions Warhol's "uncanny ability always to secure for himself the author-function" through such apparent yielding to others; "Coming Together to Stay Apart," in *"Our Kind of Movie" The Films of Andy Warhol* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 48.

[11] Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art," 513.

> often thought, “What is a friend? Somebody you *know*? Somebody you talk to for some reason over a period of time, or what?”[12]

Like so many of his dangling utterances, Warhol’s query, “What *was* that all about?” does not find any resolution, but his immediate response, in the form of another unanswered rhetorical question, “What is a friend?” suggests that his friends are part of the answer.

More than foils or “extras” who facilitate the artist’s postmodernist strategies, Warhol’s friends play a sustained role in the artist’s experience and memory of the decade. The pages of *POPism* flow in chronological order, like a literal datebook from the period, as Warhol reflected upon how and with whom he spent his time. Friends make up a crucial subset of all his social relations, and Warhol gave his friendship with Geldzahler a prominent place in his remembrance.

Warhol describes the first time he met Geldzahler as a moment of immediate mutual recognition. Geldzahler’s ability to scan things in the artist’s studio and quickly extrapolate a point of shared concern excited the artist:

> When Henry [Geldzahler] and Ivan [Karp] came in, I could see Henry doing an instant appraisal of every single thing in the room. He scanned all the things I collected—from the American folk pieces to the Carmen Miranda platform shoe (four inches long with a five-inch heel) that I’d bought at an auction of her effects. Almost as quickly as a computer could put the information together, he said, “We have paintings by Florine Stettheimer in storage at the Met. If you want to come over there tomorrow, I’ll show them to you.” I was thrilled. Anyone who’d know just from glancing around that one room of mine that I loved Florine Stettheimer had to be brilliant. I could see that Henry was going to be a lot of fun.[13]

Stettheimer, a relatively under-recognized artist at the time, was the object through which Geldzahler and Warhol saw one another, experiencing a moment of mutual recognition that instantiated their friendship. Warhol’s “thrilled” astonishment about this moment recalls C.S. Lewis’s observations regarding the opening of friendship. According to Lewis:

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[12] Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 46.

[13] Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 15-16.

> Friendship arises out of mere Companionship where two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste which the others do not share and which, till that moment each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden). The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, "What? You too? I thought I was the only one."[14]

Instead of feeling like the "only one," Warhol met a friend who shared "in common some insight." What's crucial about this pivotal origin scene of Warhol and Geldzahler's friendship is that the former commercial artist who struggled in the world of fine art—and whose devoted interest ("or burden") in an unfashionable artist, "low culture," or "kitsch objects," exasperated the situation—found reprieve from his isolation in Geldzahler's recognition.

Talking and doing things together, over countless hours and days, fills the budding picture of Warhol's friendship with Geldzahler. After meeting Geldzahler, Warhol recalled, "[r]ight away we became five-hours-a-day-on-the-phone-see-you-for-lunch-quick-turn-on-the-'Tonight Show' friends," articulating a concatenation of contact that he emphasizes over and over.[15] Both relative newcomers to the New York art world, Warhol and Geldzahler also considered each other peers with similar desires. "In the last half of '60 Henry and I were both, in our very different ways, coming fresh into and up against the intrigues and strategies of the New York art scene," Warhol reflects, "so that was good for at least four hours a day on the phone right there." He continues:

> Henry liked all the rock and roll I kept playing while I painted. He told me once, "I picked up a new attitude toward the media from you—not being selective, just letting everything in at once." And over the years I picked up a lot from Henry; I often asked him for advice. He liked to compare our relationship to ones between the Renaissance painters and the scholars of mythology or antiquity or Christian

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[14] Lewis, "Friendship," 77.

[15] Warhol introduces the hyphenated term by saying, "Henry was a scholar who understood the past, but he also understood how to use the past to look at the future. Right away we became five-hours-a-day-on-the-phone-see-you-for-lunch-quick-turn-on-the-"Tonight-Show" friends," see Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 16.

history who doled out the ideas for their subjects.[16]

Plotting their own plans amidst "intrigues and strategies of the New York art scene," they helped one another and supported each other's individual yet shared paths. "I picked up a new attitude toward the media from you," Geldzahler indicated, revealing how he learned "not being selective, just letting everything in at once." In kind, Warhol says he "picked up a lot from Henry," asking for Geldzahler's advice, especially concerning ideas for artworks. Geldzahler's own remembrances of his friendship with Warhol echo these representations of exchange and time spent in each other's company.

According to Geldzahler, and repeated in accounts written by others about the curator, talking typified his friendship with Warhol as with artists in general. Regarding Warhol, Geldzahler particularly noted once: "I knew most of these [Pop] artists well but it was Warhol with whom I was closest. We spoke every day on the phone, often for hours,"[17] Many phone calls taken at the museum distinguished the sociality Geldzahler enjoyed and the different kind of working relationship he cultivated (Figure 1.4). The novelty and frequency of this talking mode once required the curator to defend himself against a frustrated switchboard operator at the Met. Calvin Tomkins reported in an article in *The New Yorker* in 1971 that "Geldzahler had so many people calling him up at work that the Museum's telephone operator told him it would have to stop. […] Geldzahler said he couldn't help it if he was the only curator whose artists were still alive."[18]

A potentially apocryphal tale Geldzahler shared multiple times potently demonstrated his

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[16] Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 16.

[17] Geldzahler, "Andy Warhol: A Memoir," in *Making It New*, 44.

[18] Calvin Tomkins, "Profiles: Moving with the Flow Henry Geldzahler," *New Yorker*, November 6, 1971. The story of the frustrated switchboard operator was one Geldzahler and his commentators have repeated. For instance, see Paul Richard, "The Painter and his Subject," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1979.

devotion to spending time with Warhol—to truly being Warhol's "five-hours-a-day-on-the-phone-see-you-for-lunch-quick-turn-on-the-'Tonight Show' friend." Geldzahler recounted in a 1970 interview with Paul Cummings that:

> Four or five years ago he [Warhol] called me up one night and said, "You have got to meet me. We've got to talk. It's very important." I said, "Andy, it's two in the morning. Leave me alone." He said, "No, no. It's very important." I said, "Okay, I'll be there at two-thirty." And so I got there at two-thirty. He was there. We sat down at a table. And I sort of made a gesture as if to say what are we here for? And he said. "Say something." And I realized after that that that's what it's all about. We talked for hours. At the end of it I found out that I hadn't learned anything but I'd spilled the beans about everything I knew about.[19]

Commentators stretching back to Aristotle have discussed the importance of sustained duration in friendship. In the *Nichomachean Ethics* Aristotle noted, for example, "For though the wish for friendship arises quickly, friendship does not."[20] Both Warhol and Geldzahler instinctively and repeatedly evoked durations of time spent together in and of itself as a critical measure of their friendship.

Creating artworks together similarly ranks high as a paradigmatic representation of Warhol and Geldzahler's friendship. In *POPism*, Warhol elaborated upon his insistence that "Henry gave me all my ideas," chronicling, in particular, the creation of his *Death and Disaster* series (Figure 1.5). As the story goes, a meal they shared was the origin point for the series:

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[19] Paul Cummings, oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 27 January 1970–23 February 1970, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 47. A slightly different version of this story is repeated in Geldzahler, "Andy Warhol: A Memoir," in *Making It New*, 44.

Based on this story, one might argue that Warhol didn't care who spent time with him, that it was the artist's need for company, not the specific company of Geldzahler. However, in the strict terms of Warhol's memoir and its representation of Geldzahler, the artist continually asserted it was Geldzahler as a friend specifically. For instance, Warhol also recounted a brief falling out in their friendship, which transpired around the curator's organization of the Venice Biennale in 1966. Geldzahler did not select Warhol for the exhibition. Warhol insisted, however, it was not that he wasn't chosen that cooled their friendship, it was the fact that Geldzahler did not tell him. Warhol recalled saying to Geldzahler, "But, I mean, Henry, I understand all that. When it's business, you can't think about friends, and I've always believed in that. But you could have told me before you told *The New York Times*. You owe it to a friend to tell it to them face to face, that's all…," see Warhol and Hackett, *POPism,* 197–198.

[20] Aristotle, *Nicomachaen Ethics*, VIII.3, 1156b32.

> It was Henry who gave me the idea to start the Death and Disaster series. We were having lunch one day in the summer at Serendipity on East 60th Street and he laid the *Daily News* out on the table. The headline was “129 DIE IN JET.” And that’s what started me on the death series—the Car Crashes, the Disasters, the Electric Chairs…[21]

Geldzahler offered a similar recollection in an undated memoir. In his version, the series *Flowers*, which came after *Death and Disaster,* is also mentioned as work he inspired (Figure 1.6):

> We were close for six years; through the switch in his art from commercial subjects to death and disaster; through his development of silkscreened paintings and through his early efforts to make films—my role was as a friend and advisor. One day when we met for lunch I brought him a copy of the *Daily Mirror* with the front-page headline *129 Die in Jet* printed above a photograph of the wreckage. He made a large hand-painted canvas reproducing the page. Several years later, on our way to the New York World’s Fair of 1965 I said, enough death Andy, it’s time again for life. What do you mean, he said. I serendipitously picked a magazine off the floor and flipped it to a two-page advertisement with a color photograph of flowers. These were my best contributions.[22]

In his twinned role as a “friend and advisor” to Warhol, Geldzahler could track artworks that took inspiration from him, which always seem to have crystallized during serendipitous moments spent together.

In total thus far, Warhol’s representation of his friend Henry—reiterated in various ways by Geldzahler himself—affirms what Telfer has delineated as the “‘shared activity’ condition for friendship.” In her article “Friendship” (1971), Telfer posits “three types of activity which are all necessary conditions of friendship: reciprocal services, mutual contact, and joint pursuits.”[23] Telfer cites shoveling snow for a neighbor as a basic example for “the performing of services of

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[21] Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 17. Warhol writes it was the *Daily News*, although the painting reads the *New York Mirror*.

[22] Geldzahler, “Andy Warhol: A Memoir,” 43. Geldzahler repeats a version of this story in “Virginal Voyeur,” in *Making it New*, 359-360.

[23] Telfer, “Friendship,” 223–224.

all kinds for some other person" that "reciprocal service" partly constitutes for friendship. Telfer then adds "mutual contact," such as talking or writing letters to one another, which are "activities the main point of which is that they involve contact with the friend." Finally, "joint pursuits" refers to the friends' "joint engagement in pursuits which the friends would in any case perform quite apart from the friendship—notably leisure pursuits, but also sometimes work, worship and so on."[24] Whether it was Warhol and Geldzahler talking "five-hours-a-day-on-the-phone," Geldzahler spending part of every day at the Factory, or Geldzahler giving Warhol ideas for artworks, the descriptions of the curator's relationship with the artist in *POPism* align with foundational aspects of friendship's "shared activity condition."[25]

According to Telfer's argument, the shared activity condition does not by itself constitute friendship, however. While Warhol and Geldzahler's talking, spending hours together, and creating artworks are well-known in and out of *POPism*, Telfer's framework would clarify further that the activities these two friends shared can explain only part of what made their relationship a friendship. When friends perform shared activities, Telfer additionally posits, they do so on the basis of what she describes as "passions of friendship;" only when passions of friendship motivate the shared activity condition are friendships formed. "Would we be able to say that the pair were friends, simply on the strength of [their shared activity condition]?" Telfer asks in her discussion of a hypothetical pair of friends. She answers:

> I think it is clear that we would not, on the ground that friendship depends, not only on the performance of certain *actions*, but also on their being performed for certain specific *reasons*—out of friendship, as we say, rather than out of duty or pity or indeed self interest. These reasons can, I think, be seen as a set of long-

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[24] Telfer, "Friendship," 223.

[25] Tomkins also describes Geldzahler's near daily visits to the Factory in "Profiles: Moving with the Flow Henry Geldzahler."

term *desires*, which motivate and hence explain actions done out of friendship.[26] Telfer names "affection," which she defines as the "desire for another's welfare and happiness *as a particular individual*," as the primary passion that motivates the bond and actions joining friends.[27]

Although statements like "Henry gave me all my ideas," or Warhol's clever nickname for Geldzahler as his "five-hours-a-day-on-the-phone-see-you-for-lunch-quick-turn-on-the-'Tonight Show' friend," look like tell-tale signs of a special friendship—indeed these are the kinds of anecdotes commentators in the artistic field conventionally cite—if we follow Telfer, these shared activities cannot fully constitute the picture of Warhol and Geldzahler's friendship. Focusing exclusively on actions misses fuller consideration of friendship, and what this form of relation entails between the artist and others. In fact, in his memoir's telling, Warhol raises affection as a crucial aspect of Geldzahler's friendship with him.

As the artist laid out the talking, creating, and plotting he and Geldzahler did together, Warhol also lets the reader in on his sense of the motivations that he felt were driving Geldzahler's actions. For example, just before Warhol tells the story of Geldzahler giving him the idea to start the Death and Disaster series, he explains:

> Take my commercial drawings. By the time Ivan introduced me to Henry, I was keeping them absolutely buried in another part of the house because one of the people Ivan had brought by before had remembered me from my commercial art days and asked to see some drawings. As soon as I showed them to him, his whole attitude toward me changed. I could actually see him changing his mind about my paintings, so from then on I decided to have a firm no-show policy about the drawings. *Even with Henry, it was a couple months before I was secure enough about his mentality to show them to him.*[28]

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[26] Telfer, "Friendship," 224.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 17. Emphasis added.

What Warhol emphasizes here is Geldzahler's "mentality." The artist wanted to discern whether the curator was like the other visitors, who had caused embarrassment for the artist in a moment of vulnerability. Warhol eventually found instead that Geldzahler, "understood my style, he had a Pop attitude himself," making the curator—his friend—a privileged source of ideas because Geldzahler did not hold the same "contempt" the artist suffered from others when he "asked their advice."[29] Geldzahler's advocacy of Warhol with prospective art dealers further demonstrates how the artist's welfare and happiness motivated Geldzahler's actions as his friend.

POPism contains a revealing discussion of what Warhol thought was at stake in Geldzahler's protracted effort to help the artist secure gallery representation. Warhol writes:

> Henry Geldzahler was also pounding the pavements for me. He offered me to Sidney Janis, who refused, He begged Robert Elkon. ("I'm sure I'm making a big mistake," he told Henry, "But I just can't") He approached Eleanor Ward, who seemed interested but said she didn't have room. Nobody, but nobody, would take me. Henry and I would talk every day on the phone about the progress he was making. This dragged out for over a year. He'd tell me, "They're only resisting you because you're such a natural. They're afraid of you because the continuity between your commercial work and your fine art work is so obvious.[30]

In the years of Pop art's emergence, Warhol was especially preoccupied with the career-making mechanics of participating in the art world's newest development, and the artist pinned specific hopes on the possibility of joining Leo Castelli's gallery. Warhol discloses that aside from the monetary value or professional support that would come from the gallery representation that Geldzahler sought out on his behalf, the artist felt something more fundamental was at stake. Beyond the "business side of it," as Warhol put it, the artist felt:

> I was like a college kid wanting to get into a certain fraternity or a musician wanting to get on the same record label as his idol. Being part of Castelli's stable

[29] Ibid.

[30] Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 22.

was just something that I knew would make me happy […] [31]

In this sense, Geldzahler's advocacy with dealers or "pounding the pavement" for Warhol was more than supporting the artist's career advancement. As an artist's friend, Geldzahler cared for Warhol's overall happiness and the artist's desire to belong.

Ultimately, the various representations of Geldzahler found in *POPism*, which highlight the shared activity he pursued with Warhol and the affection he held for the artist, underline another constitutive question Lewis poses at the heart of friendship: "Do you *care about* the same truth?" Lewis subsequently posits, "The man who agrees with us that some question, little regarded by others, is of great importance, can be our Friend."[32] Warhol's representation of Geldzahler indicates that Henry was indeed an exemplary friend, who especially cared about the artist's truth. As a friend, the curator not only shared activity with the artist, but, more importantly, the curator aligned his motivations and actions according to the artist's standpoint, which included the artist's desires, aspirations, and hope for happiness.

As I have sought to suggest by this juncture, the importance of motivation in friendship bears critical implications for conceptualizing the relationship between artist and curator, and the dynamics of the artist's imbrication and autonomy. Unlike the given assumptions about their friendship, which prioritize the idea that Geldzahler supplied ideas to the artist or, conversely, that Warhol surrendered his authorship to the curator, my reading of their friendship through *POPism* complicates the simple give-and-take that shared activity can amount to in discussions concerned with the blurring of roles between artist and curator. Instead, friendship imbricates the artist's friend with the artist at the point of the latter's interest and well-being. That is, the

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[31] Warhol and Hackett, *POPism*, 21.

[32] Lewis, "Friendship," 78.

artist's interest and well-being become synonymous with the artist's friend's interest and well-being. Somewhat paradoxically, however, if the actions that constitute artist-curator friendship often appear to decenter the artist, in fact the motivations of friendship recenter the artist—insofar as their interests appear to drive those of their curator-friend.

Such a complex circuit of relationality is not entirely unexpected for Warhol. For example, in a study of Warhol's filmic collaboration with artist Ronald Tavel, Douglas Crimp has delineated a "radical reorientation of relationality," which the art historian specifically situates as a queer subjectivity. Rather than taking the multi-film collaboration between Warhol and Tavel at face value, or as *mere* collaboration, Crimp focuses attention on their "deliberate failure of cooperation." He interprets a confrontational mode that constituted a "break with normative conditions of relationality." Crimp writes:

> Precisely at that moment when Warhol came most to rely on someone else, and moreover on someone else of a highly articulated sensibility, collaboration—coming together, working together—is undone. It is as if Warhol and Tavel each simply went about his imaginative business at odds with the other as the very condition of working together.[33]

In so doing, Crimp concludes that the Warhol-Tavel collaboration created a "radically new scene in which the self finds itself not through its identification or disidentification with others, but in its singularity among all the singular things of the world […] a coming together to stay apart."[34]

The distinctively queer collaboration Crimp draws out between Warhol and Tavel does not translate easily to the case of Warhol and Geldzahler however. Geldzahler's sexual identity as a gay man and his belonging to a 1960s queer art world no doubt also inscribed the friendships he enjoyed with Warhol and Hockney. According to mainstream journalistic reporting, Geldzahler "officially came out" in the mid-to-late 1970s, while serving as New York City's first

[33] Crimp, 63.

[34] Ibid, 68.

Commissioner of Cultural Affairs.[35] In the pre-Stonewall milieu of the early 1960s, Geldzahler being a gay man was not an explicit aspect of his public profile.[36] Moreover, to the extent that the publicity of his being an artist's friend has meaning, Geldzahler's public reputation was defined not solely by friendships in a queer art world, but also largely by his close relationships with artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Robert Motherwell, Claes Oldenburg, and Frank Stella. Insofar as this dissertation has presented Geldzahler as a boundary-defying figure, his intimate friendships also straddled queer *and* heteronormative art worlds.[37]

Yet, more critically for the immediate discussion here, the nature of the collaboration (if it can be called that) between Warhol and Geldzahler does not quite align with the "coming together of autonomous elements" that Crimp sensitively parses from the queer relationality

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[35] On the occasion of an exhibition of David Hockney's work, Geldzahler and Hockney discussed their friendship with Paul Richard of *The Washington Post*. Geldzahler also spoke about his coming out. Richard reported, "Both [Hockney and Geldzahler] were bright, concerned with art history, ambitious, independent. And both of them are gay. Hockney never hid it. He figured, 'What's the point?' and his preferences were clearly reflected in his art. Geldzahler's did not show up in his curatorial efforts. When he mentioned it in public-after his appointment-his "official coming out" was at length reported in the New York press. 'Mayor Koch called me the next morning.' He [Geldzahler] said, 'Henry, that was gutsy. I'm proud of you. Now call your mother.'" See Paul Richard, "The Painter and His Subject." *The Washington Post* March 30, 1979.

[36] For an important account of queer disclosure in the pre-Stonewall New York art world, including a discussion of Warhol and gossip, see Gavin Butt, *Between You and Me: Queer Disclosures in the New York Art World, 1948-1963* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

Geldzahler's own romantic relations were in fact the subject of reported gossip at times. For example, under the title, "Friends Get Mixed Up Sometimes," the *New York Daily News* speculated on February 10, 1970, "Henry Geldzahler, curator of contemporary art at the Metropolitan Museum, and MCA heiress Jean Stein vanden Heuvel, estranged wife of political William vanden Heuvel, are considered an item by friends. But then friends get mixed up sometimes." Photocopy of Daily News Clipping, February 10, 1970, Box 38, Folder 13, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[37] This chapter and dissertation has not yet been able to address fully the place of Geldzahler's sexuality and the formative influence it played on his friendships and his status as an artist's friend. Like so many other aspects of his biography, Geldzahler's example sits unevenly along the prevailing contours of thinking and discourse on queer identity and friendship. It is difficult to locate Geldzahler in a subcultural or counter cultural formation given the lineaments of his public, mainstream profile. Moreover, his limited corpus of exhibitions and writings do not easily lend themselves to the critical kinds of interpretation achieved, for instance, with Frank O'Hara, who shares some basic similarities with Geldzahler. This latter problem of evidence also raises a potential methodological or discursive gap. At present, my project's turn to discourses of friendship articulated by ethicists, analytical, and moral philosophers has been in part to leverage less familiar frameworks, such as "motivation," "shared activity," and "partiality" that differently open up Geldzahler's resolutely mundane activities in arenas like government, arts public policy, and museum administration.

forged between Warhol and Tavel. Geldzahler was neither an artist nor could the curator's suggestions, I would argue, be considered in the same way as Tavel's writing and directing. At least according to the textual representation in *POPism*, Geldzahler's special status as Warhol's friend is almost always exemplified by his ostensible service to Warhol—from their talking, his supplying ideas, to the curator's advocacy. This is a picture of devotion that defies, for instance, how Warhol and Tavel radically "ignor[ed] the implicit demand placed by one individual on another," to use Crimp terms.[38]

Returning to the matter of actions versus motivations, consider also how Warhol and Geldzahler described their own exchange. For instance, by Warhol's account, Geldzahler also obscured motivation with a focus on actions, misrecognizing, perhaps, what was truly at stake in his friendship with Warhol. "Henry liked to compare our relationship to ones between the Renaissance painters and the scholars of mythology or antiquity or Christian history who doled out the ideas for their subjects," writes Warhol. Yet, the broader and defining story of friendship Warhol presents around their shared activity—that he felt "not especially embarrassed" and that he needed to be certain of Geldzahler's shared "mentality," or that securing a gallery would make the artist happy—exceeds the functional process Geldzahler's historical allusion to the Renaissance narrowly focuses upon.

In contrast to historical relations of patronage, which Geldzahler might have thought offered the most familiar kind of framework for his "doling out ideas," the defining place of motivation in friendship complicates the nature of imbrication patronage conventionally connotes. Take, for instance, art historian Michael Baxandall's account of Renaissance art that interrogated the place of the patron and relations of patronage. In the opening line of *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (1972), Baxandall writes:

[38] Crimp, 66.

> A fifteenth-century painting is the deposit of a social relationship. On one side there was a painter who made the picture, or at least supervised in its making. On the other side there was somebody else who asked him to make it, provided funds for him to make it and, after he had made it, reckoned on using it in some way or other.[39]

The "social relationship" Baxandall highlighted between "artist" and "client" (Baxandall's preferred term for the patron) reasserted the conceptual ground that imbricated the artist and artwork in "conditions of trade" or "economic life." His intervention sought to reset prevailing disciplinary assumptions regarding the "genius" of the artist, that vision of the artist's autonomy which divorces the artwork from the economic or social transactions—such as the stipulation of subject matter, colors to be used, size of work, etc.—under which it was produced. Although Geldzahler and Warhol's shared activity may look like someone stipulating the specifics of a commissioned artwork, the fact that the curator provided ideas, *out of friendship*, makes the deposited social relationship something quite different. When friendship specifies the social relationship, a focus on functional transactions or the artwork as outcome of the relation would miss the "most important point," according to philosopher Alexander Nehamas. In concert with Telfer, Nehamas asserts:

> Any attempt to account for friendship by describing the activities to which it gives rise misses the most important point: what defines a friendship is not the particular actions and activities that friends engage in but the motives with which they perform them as part of their friendship.[40]

In the case of Warhol and Geldzahler, or the artist and artist's friend, their friendship establishes the artist's imbrication as, primarily, a matter of how the artist's friend—manifest in shared activities of mutual contact, reciprocal service, and joint pursuits—supported the artist's welfare.

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[39] Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 1.

[40] Alexander Nehamas, *On Friendship* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 103.

Put another way, and to modify Baxandall's template, if *129 Die in Jet* and *Flowers* are in some sense deposits of the artist and artist's friend's friendship, they reflect Geldzahler's affection for Warhol and the curator's adoption of Warhol's needs and wants as his own.

Looking Together: David Hockney's Self-Formation in Friendship with Henry Geldzahler

Friends are omnipresent in English painter David Hockney's works. Not only in the double portraits of the 1960s–70s and his prolific production in drawing, but also in his early works as a student at London's Royal College of Art and the later photographic serial portraits of the 1980s and 1990s. It is not an overstatement to say that Hockney's close, intimate friends are figures who have sustained his artistic invention over a lifelong practice. Geldzahler astutely observed in 1977 the importance of friends for Hockney's art:

> Hockney has never been interested in the commissioned portrait. As he has become increasingly fascinated by exactly how things look and in finding ways to paint what he sees with greater veracity, he has turned quite naturally to drawing and painting his close friends again and again. They are his guitar, absinthe bottle, and journal, the objects of his affection.[41]

In comparison with the "guitar, absinthe bottle, and journal" that were central to Pablo Picasso's innovations in collage, Geldzahler identifies Hockney's "close friends" as "objects of affection" through which the latter artist pursued his own project of truth-seeking and vision.

Especially given the fact that he was Hockney's "best friend," as the artist named him once, Geldzahler certainly had a privileged insight into the way Hockney focused upon friends in

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[41] Henry Geldzahler, "David Hockney," in *Making it New*, 126. Originally published as "Introduction," in *David Hockney by David Hockney*, ed. Nikos Stangos (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977).

his interrogation of vision and visual representation.[42] Besides the artist's mother and another intimate friend Celia Birtwell, Geldzahler appeared with nearly unmatched frequency in Hockney's drawings, photographs, and paintings. The artist produced portraits of Geldzahler from the time they met until the curator's very last days (figs. 1.7–1.10). As a best friend, Geldzahler was a prominent object for Hockney's fascination into "how things look," as Geldzahler put it. Over the course of so many artworks, we could also say Hockney and Geldzahler looked at each other again and again.

"We got on instantly," remembered Hockney of his and Geldzahler's first meeting in 1963 at the Factory.[43] In a handwritten Foreword to Geldzahler's 1994 collection of essays, Hockney describes an immediate mutual recognition and sketches, in summary strokes, their shared activity and passion for one another. Whereas Warhol and Geldzahler prominently mentioned talking as their primary shared activity, Hockney highlights "looking." In particular, Hockney describes how he and Geldzahler looked at art together. "We have spent many hours in the large + small museums of Europe," Hockney writes:

> One couldn't have a better companion looking at and searching out art. His eye is terrific, and, trained as an Art Historian differant [sic] to mine, but between us we had a very rich time…His taste is wide, so we took trips to very out of the way places just to see one thing Henry had heard of. It was always worth it […] About Art, he is like me an amateur, —one who loves it, with a passion.[44]

That a painter and curator would occupy themselves with looking at art may not seem particularly noteworthy since both had in common lives organized around visual art. However, given the synthesis of friends and looking in Hockney's artworks, and Hockney's particularly

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[42] Hockney mentions, "I never did get to know Andy very well, but Henry became my 'best friend'," in David Hockney, "Foreword," in *Making it New,* vii.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

cherishing of the literal looking he did with Geldzahler in life—they were friends looking at one another, as well as friends looking at art together—what could "looking" say about the friendship forged between David and his best friend Henry? What significance can we draw about their friendship from "looking" and Hockney's painted depiction of Geldzahler in the painting entitled, as it were, *Looking at Pictures on a Screen?*

At first glance, *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* looks like a picture of a friend that is at the same time a self-reflexive picture about looking in general (Figure 1.2). Geldzahler is the major figure, dressed in a fine suit and standing with a *sprezzatura* worthy of an aesthete or connoisseur. Rendered in profile, he performs the action of the title of the painting. Yet unlike the "hours in the large + small museums of Europe" Hockney enjoyed with Geldzahler in real life, in this painting, Geldzahler eyes poster reproductions of canonical artworks casually taped on a dressing screen. From left to right, they are Johannes Vermeer's *A Young Woman Standing at a Virginal* (1670–72), Piero della Francesca's *The Baptism of Christ* (after 1437), *Sunflowers* by Vincent van Gogh (1888), and Edgar Degas' *After the Bath, Woman drying herself* (1890–95). The posters are all facsimiles of works in the collection of the National Gallery, London, and Hockney did not choose them arbitrarily. Hockney considered these artworks major touchstones for his own practice—a personal canon for his history of painting.

Hockney realized *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* at almost life scale; the painting measures just over six feet square. As Hockney once explained to a critic, he had an ambition to implicate the painting's viewer so that they join in on what Geldzahler is doing in the picture:

> The painting is called *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*. This means that the spectator is having the same experience as the subject of the painting. If you've got yourself to here, in front of the canvas, whoever you are, then he is looking at pictures on a screen, but so are you.[45]

[45] Quoted in Christopher Stephens and Andrew Wilson, eds. *David Hockney* (London: Tate Publishing, 2017), 218.

In one sense, *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* does not form as explicit a relationship with the viewer like Hockney's double portraits that came before it, which conventionally featured, in contrast, a subject who looks directly out beyond the painting's surface. However, in another sense, the painting's scale, whereby the poster reproductions are almost the size of an actual poster, supports the intended self-reflexive play that implicates the viewer, who both looks at the reproductions "with" Geldzahler and also looks at him looking at the pictures.

In his 2019 memoir, John Hockney, the artist's brother, remembered Hockney working on *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* at the same time as another major painting *My Parents* (Figure 1.3). John Hockney writes:

> He [David] had struggled to paint *My Parents*. Until this third and last picture, he was never satisfied it truly represented who they were. I had driven Mum and Dad to London on a bright sunny morning. David was eager to begin their painting. His studio was on the top floor where he had placed a two-meter square canvas on an easel, allowing him to observe a drawer and shelf unit, on which stood a mirror and a vase of flowers. Underneath the drawers was an open shelf with a pile of books lying on their side. Chairs placed at each end of the unit were ready for Mum and Dad to sit. In another area of the studio was an unfinished painting of Henry Geldzahler looking at a screen of pictures.[46]

John Hockney's memory of the struggles Hockney faced with *My Parents* rehearses a particular story about this painting that has been told repeatedly by many Hockney commentators.[47] The full resolution of *My Parents* dogged the artist—Hockney achieved the final version in London, after he painted and destroyed a first version that he started two years earlier in 1975 in Paris, as

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[46] John Hockney, *The Hockneys: Never Worry What the Neighbours Think* (London: Legend Press, 2019). Christopher Simon Sykes's account of *My Parents* also quotes a letter from Hockney to Geldzahler in which the artist said he wanted to complete an "imaginative portrait of you [Geldzahler]," but had to first finish his parents portrait, see Christopher Simon Sykes, *David Hockney: A Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2014), 54.

[47] Hockney's biographers and art historian Marco Livingstone have written extensively on the biographical circumstances and details of Hockney's multi-year effort to produce the final version of *My Parents*. See Peter Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989); Christopher Simon Sykes, *David Hockney: A Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2014); and Marco Livingstone, *David Hockney* (London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 2017).

well as a second version, which he abandoned unfinished. The first version is known only by color reproduction (Figure 1.11). The second was never publicly shown until recently, before which it was known primarily by written description alone (Figure 1.12).[48] Both of the "failed" versions had the title *My Parents and Myself*.

Upon initial comparison, *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* and the final *My Parents* share more than an overlapping time of creation. They are roughly the same size. Both painted scenes appear to inhabit the same studio-like space—there is the same pale bluish-green wall as background. Hockney's mother and father in *My Parents* and Geldzahler in *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* sit and stand among items one could easily imagine finding in the painter's workspace: taboret, folding chairs, and dressing screen. Finally, each painting's center contains *The Baptism of Christ* poster, almost as if the subsequent painting *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* faces the central mirror of *My Parents*. In *My Parents*, a cropped view of the facsimile of Piero della Francesca's painting is visible in the mirror's reflection, presumably taped against the wall opposite. In *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*, the poster is enlarged, affixed on the title screen, just above the radiating center of the painting. It is important to note, however, that before the final *My Parents*, the mirror reflection was entirely different in the failed versions of *My Parents and Myself*—not a cropped view of the painter's studio, but a depiction of the artist's own mirrored self-reflection.

Deviating from all other paintings in the double portraits series, Hockney included his self-reflection in the first and second version of *My Parents and Myself* (Figure 1.11). In the larger series, the artist was only ever implied by the outward looking gazes of the portrait subjects that presumably looked to him painting and the actual biographical relationships he had

[48] In his recent exhibition *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*, National Portrait Gallery, London (2020), the artist decide to present the second version in public.

with the sitters of the paintings, such as in *Don Bachardy and Christopher Isherwood* (1968) or Celia Birtwell and Ossie Clark in *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy* (1970–71) (Figures 1.13–1.14). By contrast, in the first *My Parents and Myself*, the artist, sporting his familiar uniform of oxford shirt and tie, is made visible to the painting's viewer. The mirror reflection captures him chest up, only his visage is perceptible, with little description or sense of the space he presumably inhabits in front of the wider scene. Hockney's gaze meets the viewer while the father looks away and the mother also looks out, although with some emptiness that makes it hard to say she meets the viewer's gaze exactly.

In the second version of *My Parents and Myself* Hockney returned to some of the conventions of the preceding double portraits in the series (Figure 1.12). The entire scene has straightened out. Rendered with greater realism like the overall series, the space of the painting is parallel to the surface of the picture plane with a one-point perspective that gives the illusion of some depth. Mother and father sit atop a horizontal, blue band that suggests a stage, reiterated by a new draped curtain Hockney added to the second version. Hockney's painted self-reflection remains roughly the same, except the mirror and his reflection inside of it are now at the radiating center of the painting's vanishing point. Hockney still receives and returns the viewer's gaze. The mother's outward gaze now has a greater sense of connection with the viewer while the father's gaze remains out of relation from mother and son.

In the third and final version of the painting, now named *My Parents* (Figure 1.3), Hockney dropped "Myself" from the title to correspond to the seeming disappearance of the image of himself in the mirror. Mother and father are still seated, firmly planted on the ground, no longer elevated. On the taboret's bottom shelf are books still standing and stacked. Their spines have been identified as the six volumes of the English translation of Marcel Proust's *A la*

Recherche du Temps Perdu [*In Search of Lost Time*] and a book on Chardin.[49] The mother's outward gaze is unchanged, whereas the father does not gaze out in front of him anymore. Instead, a copy of Aaron Scharf's *Art and Photography* absorbs the father's attention.

The final version of the tabletop mirror reflects, presumably, a wall opposite the painted scene, in the viewer's imagined space. In it we can make out white and brown lines that look like the edge of a door, distinct from the beige wall and running parallel to the left side of the mirror's wooden frame. Besides *The Baptism of Christ* poster, the mirror's reflection also includes an image of a painted green curtain hung on a rod against a gray background that juts towards the center of the mirror from outside the mirror's right side frame. Hockney no longer appears in the mirror as noted already, his self-reflection replaced with a reflection that looks like a cropped view of the artist's studio.

Altogether, the critical shifts that transpired over Hockney's three different campaigns resulting in *My Parents* was over the problem of his own self-representation in the mirror. Hockney tried to incorporate his own self-reflection twice then decided against it in the end. As Hockney stated, he could not find a way "to put myself successfully in the picture."[50] In agreement, most commentators have accepted a similar conclusion that argues the erasure of the artist's self-reflection meant just that: a removal of his self from the painting.

Geldzahler, for example, described the final mirror reflection from *My Parents* in the following way:

> What turned out to be the most arduous task was placing himself in the portrait. If he was in focus (in a mirror placed on the artist's taboret in front of which his quite disparate parents sat), he lost the tension and clarity of his mother's and

[49] "My Parents," in *The Tate Gallery 1980-82: Illustrated Catalogue of Acquisitions* (London: Tate Gallery, 1984).

[50] Quoted in Livingstone, *David Hockney*, 180.

> father's images. It was only when he dropped himself out of the equation that he was finally able to complete the painting in quite another version, *My Parents* (1977), executed on his final return to London from Paris.[51]

Although curator Helen Little has recently described the mirror's reflection as "a spectral image of the artist"—an assertion based on the artist's professed fondness for Piero della Francesca's painting—Little's overall argument still reiterates the standing assumption Geldzahler made before her, that Hockney's final painting "dropped himself out of the equation."[52]

In other words, according to these prevailing interpretations of *My Parents*, the final version amounts to the last double portrait in the series, featuring the relationship between Hockney's mother and father exclusively. And, like all the other double portraits, *My Parents* is thought to contend with the "theme of looking" or whose "subject is a kind of looking."[53] Although Hockney's depiction of himself was an abiding challenge in the course of the painting's development, his self-representation is not considered to be part of the painting's problematic or concern in *My Parents* since his literal self-reflection is no longer there.

But is Hockney really not there? Of course, the central mirror does not contain his literal self-reflection, but to assume that the absence of an explicit representation can only mean the removal of the artist's self, and that Hockney gave up on his self-representation, misses the possibility that *My Parents* still achieved the artist's self-representation by other means. It is possible that the final reflection in the mirror is not a failure to realize the artist's self, but, rather, a substitutive assertion of the self. We might ask, how does the mirror image in *My Parents* maintain the artist's pursuit towards self-representation?

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[51] Geldzahler, "Hockney: Younger and Older," in *Making It New*, 257–258.

[52] Christopher Stephens and Andrew Wilson, eds., *David Hockney* (London: Tate Publishing, 2017), 83. Little mentions the "spectral image of the artist" only in passing, and the idea does not play a substantive factor in her interpretation.

[53] Ibid, 83 and 218.

If painted mirrors and artist's self-reflection have signified plays of reciprocity throughout the history of painting, Hockney's final version of the mirror in the double portrait of his parents actually plays with two forms of reciprocity: spatial and temporal. Regarding the former, the mirror's reflection of what look like fragmented views of the imaginary space of the studio opposite the painted scene triggers a paradoxical spatial reciprocity. Consider, for comparison, the well-known play of space in Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434), where the central mirror in the historic painting is at once the farthest point of the painting's visual recession but reflects also the closest point in space, where the bride and groom, as well as the presumed viewer stand. Regarding the latter temporal reciprocity, the contents of Hockney's mirror can be read not just as mere fragments but also as signifiers of the painting (and mirror's) past and future. The painted curtain is a subtle pentimento—a fragment that refers to the past, second version of *My Parents and Myself*.[54] *The Baptism of Christ* poster is, in turn, a proleptic sign pointing to a not yet realized future.[55]

[54] The secondary literature that discusses *My Parents* contains contradictory readings of the painted curtain fragment. To the extent that I'm aware, there are two sources that correctly identify the curtain fragment. The first is in Peter Webb's discussion of the painting in the biography, Peter Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*. There's also a confirmation of the fragment pertaining to the second version in a short entry that reads, "This painting records a bit of its own history by reflecting in the mirror a corner of its predecessor," see Penelope Curtis, ed. *David Hockney: Paintings and Prints from 1960* (Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1993). Other commentators have identified the curtain fragment erroneously; the error likely stems from the fact that Hockney's second version was not widely reproduced, and therefore, only the first version was readily available for comparison. Some have thought the painted curtain is another Hockney painting from 1975 entitled *Invented Man Revealing Still Life*, which the artist has explicitly discussed producing in homage to Fra Angelico's *The Dream of the Deacon Justinian*. The painted curtain in Hockney's *Invented Man*, however, sits atop a pale white background with four multi-colored vertical brushstrokes at the point where the curtains drape over the rod; see Stephens and Wilson, *David Hockney*, 83. The work's entry in *The Tate Gallery 1980-82: Illustrated Catalogue of Acquisitions*, like Little, also mistakenly identifies the fragment as *Invented Man Revealing Still Life.* Martin Gayford repeats this incorrect attribution; see Martin Gayford, "Hockney's World of Pictures," *Tate Etc.* June 25, 2019, https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-39-spring-2017/hockneys-world-pictures.

[55] My thinking on the poster as a proleptic sign takes inspiration from Mieke Bal's discussion of Rembrandt's *The Artist in His Studio* (ca. 1628) wherein she describes the painting's depicted palette as "empty and thus proleptic, introducing time and suspense." See Mieke Bal, "Self-Reflection as a Mode of Reading," in *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word-Image Opposition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 268.

Although the poster reproduction of the fifteenth-century Piero della Francesca painting would normally indicate historical pastness, it is important to recognize that *The Baptism of Christ* image is always forward looking or generative for Hockney (Figure 1.15). Hockney often kept this poster reproduction with him, ready to be taped up in each new studio he established. Answering a reporter who asked him in 1976 whether the artist ever bought artworks, Hockney replied:

> No. But I'd love to have that Della Francesca [points to a print of the Baptism of Christ on the wall between a picture of David exposing his backside to the camera and a photograph of Francis Bacon]. Just so that I could look at it every day for an hour. That picture behind us of my parents, apart from painting it, I bet I've sat and looked at it for many, many, many hours. Dammit the only pictures I have to look at for an hour are my own and they're not really worth it.[56]

The Baptism of Christ poster is a favored object of Hockney's close and extended looking. And referencing *The Baptism of Christ* in the same breath as the unfinished painting of his parents that he struggled to complete, Piero della Francesca's painting establishes a point for the artist to strive towards. Although literally a painting from the historical past, *The Baptism of Christ* poster signifies a point in the artist's future, in his creative horizon. Hockney articulated such a historical consciousness that blurs past, present, and future in a later conversation regarding the "return of the figurative" with fellow artist R.B. Kitaj for *The New Review* in 1977:

> What I don't understand is this: why is it that Seurat could study a painter of 300 years before—Piero della Francesca—and produce in 1880 a version of Piero's ideas, updated or progressed or whatever word you want to say, and if that was valid in 1880 why is it not valid in 1977? Nothing has happened between then and now to stop somebody carefully analyzing and studying the pictures of Piero della Francesca and making something from the ideas in them.[57]

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[56] Keith Howes, "Interview: David Hockney," in *Outspoken: Keith Howes' Gay News Interviews 1976-83* (Washington: Cassell, 1995), 20. Originally published in *Gay News*, in this interview Hockney was referring to the first version of *My Parents and Myself*. The bracketed directional is original to the interview transcript.

[57] David Hockney and R.B. Kitaj, "David Hockney and R.B. Kitaj in Conversation," *The New Review* 3 (January/February 1977): 76.

That *The Baptism of Christ* was a favored image by Hockney and that he also saw this and other pictures by Piero as a resource for "making something from the ideas in them" underscores how Hockney's depiction of the poster in the mirror of *My Parents* constitutes a sign of creative prolepsis.

Given these terms, the inclusion of *The Baptism of Christ* poster arguably imagines the subsequent painting that shares the same image at its center—*Looking at Pictures on a Screen*. In temporal play with the pentimento of the second version of *My Parents and Myself*, which had included the artist's self-reflection, we might say Hockney did not simply erase himself from the painting. Rather, he pointed to his portrait of Geldzahler, the artist's best friend, doing the "looking" that defined their friendship.

Hockney's trajectory over two failed paintings before the final *My Parents* was not one that ended with the artist's self-abnegation. Although the mirror no longer reflected his literal self, it maintained a pursuit of self-representation that departed from his literal self (in the painting's past) to a self found vis-à-vis his friend Geldzahler. Hockney's shift from a look at his own self-reflection to a depiction of his best friend looking drew upon another resource of self-representation: a knowledge of the self gained through a friend, in friendship.

In his essay "Friendship," Lewis posits the idea of a "common quest or vision" to articulate the essential relationship between one's identity and friendship. Building upon the "common insight" that first triggers friendship and the "same truths" friends care about, Lewis ultimately posits that the "common quest" is the crux of friendship's role in life. About that quest, he writes:

> I have no duty to be anyone's Friend and no man in the world has a duty to be mine. No claims, no shadow of necessity. Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art, like the universe itself (for God did not need to create). It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival […]

> The common quest or vision which unites Friends does not absorb them in such a way that they remain ignorant or oblivious of one another. On the contrary it is the very medium in which their mutual love and knowledge exist.[58]

Lewis' elaboration of the "common quest" as a "medium" emphasizes above all that it is through friendship friends give and receive love, it is through friendship that friends know not only each other, but also one's self.

Lewis' notion of a "common quest" in friendship is his answer to the question of the relational self that has been a perennial concern in the Artistotelian legacy regarding friendship. "If, then, it is pleasant to know one self, and it is not possible to know this without having someone else for a friend," Aristotle explained in *Magna Moralia*, "the self-sufficing man will require friendship in order to know himself."[59] Or, as Aristotle also put it: "a friend is another self."[60] The legacy of the ancient philosopher's thinking on friendship has guided broad concern over the place of the self, inspiring continued inquiry into how our friends relate and play a role in our individual self-formation.

"You will not find the warrior, the poet, the philosopher or the Christian by staring in his face as if he were your mistress," Lewis insists about the "common quest" that unites friends, "better fight beside him, read with him, argue with him, pray with him."[61] "Looking" was David and Henry's common quest. In the case of *My Parents* and *Looking at Pictures on a Screen,* when Hockney rejected his mirrored self-reflection, he instead proposed, "look with him," in order to find the artist. While Hockney rejected his literal self-reflection in the final mirror of *My Parents*, through the looking glass to the screen, Hockney presents his friend Geldzahler and

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[58] Lewis, "Friendship," 84.

[59] Aristotle, "Magna Moralia," 1213a20–1213b.

[60] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX.4, 1166a30–32.

[61] Lewis, "Friendship," 84–85.

their common quest in order to know and deliver a vision of the artist's self.

Other images Hockney created during and after the creation of *My Parents* and *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* attest further to the circuit of self-knowledge Hockney routed through his friend Geldzahler. According to Hockney's biographers, during the creation of these paintings, the artist made a trip to Los Angeles to escape the difficulties of producing *My Parents* and *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*.[62] Back in the city that was so pivotal for his emergence, he created a portfolio of lithographs with Gemini GEL entitled *Friends* (1976). Made up of 21 images total, Geldzahler is the portfolio's most frequent repeated sitter with a total of six.[63]

Hockney himself makes an appearance in just one image in the series, in the drawing entitled, *Henry Seated with Tulips* (Figure 1.9). A vase of oversized tulips flanks Geldzahler's right side, while a mirror, which reflects Hockney's face, hangs in the background, nearby Geldzahler's head to his left. A dynamic geometry of gazes moves the viewer's eye back and forth between Geldzahler's, Hockney's, and the viewer's position. The mirror does not quite deliver the expected return glance of the artist, however. Instead, Hockney's eyes and chest pivot toward Geldzahler, partly suggesting, perhaps, the best way for the artist to return his own gaze—and to offer up his own reflection—was through his friend's more prominent and direct address to the viewer in the foreground of the drawing.

Hockney also reiterated the looking he did *with* Geldzahler in a poster made six years after *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* (Figure 1.16). Produced for a 1981 exhibition that featured the painting, entitled "The Artist's Eye", Hockney recreates the original scene of *Looking at*

[62] Christopher Simon Sykes, *David Hockney: A Pilgrim's Progress*.

[63] Except for another sitter who appears twice, all the other friends in the portfolio make only one appearance each.

Pictures on a Screen with two modifications.[64] A poster reproduction of *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* replaced Vermeer's painting on the farthest left panel of the dressing screen, and Hockney took the place of Geldzahler in the reconstructed scene. Hockney's playful conceit for the exhibition poster joined the two friends in a kind of *mise-en-abyme* that replicates over and over the looking that constituted their "common quest."

What all these plays with self-reflection and self-representation vis-à-vis his friend Geldzahler amount to is an assertion of a "co-creative self-formation," which philosophers Dean Cocking and Jeannette Kennett, in concert with Lewis, have posited as unique about the nature of friendship.[65] In their own philosophical positing, Cocking and Kennett describe friendship as a "process of mutual drawing" in which:

> […] our close friends draw us and so enrich our sense of self through their engaged interpretations of us. I do not see myself in you as the mirror view suggests, I see myself through you. We are thus, to some significant extent, each other's creators.[66]

Hockney's *My Parents* and *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* express a similar insight about friendship and the ways in which Hockney saw himself through Geldzahler. Across these two paintings, Geldzahler's representation as the artist's friend signifies a facilitating figure through which the artist comes to understand and become himself. Instead of his own literal look before the mirror, Hockney rejected an independent and autonomous notion of self-representation, and acknowledged, in the words of Nehamas, an alternative intersubjective vision: [W]hat friend say

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[64] An informative booklet was also created in tandem with the exhibition. See David Hockney, *David Hockney Looking at Pictures in a Book at the National Gallery* (London: National Gallery, 1981).

[65] Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett, "Friendship and the Self." *Ethics* 108 (April 1998): 502–527.

[66] Cocking and Kennett, "Friendship and the Self," 509.

and do together ramifies through their entire being."[67] To see and know Hockney, the artist pointed the viewer to his friend Geldzahler—to the looking that constituted their friendship, and the formation of the self they realized through one another.

"To stay alert and sensitive to what the artist is doing:" Henry Geldzahler at the Symposium on Pop Art

On the evening of December 13, 1962, Geldzahler joined a panel of four critics and scholars who convened at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) to discuss the new prevalence of Pop art in the United States (Figure 1.17). Invited by curator Peter Selz for a "Symposium on Pop Art," Geldzahler's fellow pundits were Dore Ashton, Stanley Kunitz, Hilton Kramer, and Leo Steinberg. Geldzahler provided a single, younger perspective whose affirmative voice gave the panel a fervent counterpoint to the majority's skepticism about the merits of Pop art.

The Symposium was a controversial flashpoint during Pop art's rapid emergence. The panel capped off a year and a half of intense attention on a group of artists, including Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, and Warhol. Together, these artists and others appeared to depart controversially from the terms of Abstract Expressionist painting. The liberal use of mass media imagery made their departure in style, manner, and self-fashioning especially notorious. Selz's symposium sought to explore and debate what shifts in object and practice were being ushered in by the Pop artists. The "Symposium on Pop Art" was also Geldzahler's first official,

[67] Nehamas, *On Friendship*, 139. Geldzahler also seems to have shared this insight about the self-knowledge gained through friends and his friendship. After the curator's passing, Hockney penned a remembrance in the *New York Times* that included an anecdote from Geldzahler's last days. Hockney writes, "When he [Geldzahler] was very ill, he asked a young photographer to come take his picture, and the photographer was nervous about him looking sick. And I said: 'Take the pictures, if you'll notice, Henry doesn't really have mirrors in the house. He looks at himself through pictures.'" Of course, these were not just pictures, but pictures by Geldzahler's friends, including Hockney. See David Hockney, "Drawing Henry," *New York Times*, January 1, 1995.

public appearance as a young twenty-seven-year-old curator from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[68]

The primacy of the artist guided Geldzahler's prepared remarks and his fiery defense during the acrimonious discussion. "I have heard it said that pop art is not art, and this by a museum curator," Geldzahler began. He continued, "My feeling is that it is the artist who defines the limit of art, not the critic or the curator."[69] For Geldzahler, the Pop artists, like any other artist, were serious in their pursuits and deserved attention. His appreciation of Pop artists went against the contemporary art field's suspicions and denouncements regarding their activities, however.

Ashton, Kramer, and Kunitz expressed strong skepticism and a full range of the suspicions about Pop art. The trio assessed Pop as banal and lacking in aesthetic criticality. Its seamless translatability to a wide mass audience and the rules of the culture industry was deemed a serious shortcoming. "Pop art does not tell us what it feels like to be living through the present moment of civilization—it is merely part of the evidence of that civilization," opined Kramer, "Its social effect is simply to reconcile us to a world of commodities, banalities and vulgarities-which is to say, an effect indistinguishable from advertising art."[70] Kramer's accusation that artists like Lichtenstein and Rosenquist were merely copying their sources, unchanged or uncommented upon, echoed Ashton's disquiet about Pop art's apparent relinquishing of aesthetic criticality:

To the extent that it shuns metaphor, or any deep analysis of complex relations, it

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[68] Geldzahler explained to Paul Cummings that the Symposium was his first public appearance in New York, see Cummings, oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 36. Regarding the acrimonious nature of the Symposium, Geldzahler described the controversy in an interview with Clare Sparks in 1970 and seemed to confirm a rumor that Stanley Kunitz had kicked Geldzahler under the table, see Clare Sparks, Interview with Henry Geldzahler, 16 October 1970, audio recording, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, acc. no. 2010.M.91.

[69] "A Symposium on Pop Art," 37.

[70] Ibid, 38–39.

> is an impoverished genre and an imperfect instrument of art. Far from being an art of social protest, it is an art of capitulation.[71]

Finally, Kunitz felt Kramer and Ashton's fears were verified by the rapid machinations of public reception that greeted the Pop artists. Kunitz posed a comparative observation:

> The best analogy I can think of is a blitz campaign in advertising, the object of which is to saturate the market with the name and presence—even the subliminal presence—of a commodity. "Repetition is reputation" said one of the great tycoons of American industry.[72]

All three critics shared a deeper fear of what Kunitz called the "tyranny of the avant-garde." The Pop artists, especially their popularity, confirmed for these critics the art world's "indefatigable search for novelty," a condition under which a "nine days' wonder" was being confused for a form of critical invention.[73]

Steinberg offered a moderating, pedagogical voice. Regarding the repeated question that audiences posed, "Is it art?," Steinberg demurred on the merits of trying to answer such a question. Instead, he remarked that if works by Pop artists prompted the very question, there must be something significant in them. "The question 'Is it art?' is regularly asked of Pop art, and that's one of the best things about it," Steinberg explained, "Because it's one that ought to be asked more or less constantly for the simple reason that it tends to be constantly repressed."[74] The preoccupation with this question reminded Steinberg of Baudelaire's response to Victor Hugo's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, when the French critic told the author, "You create a new shudder."[75] And despite the protestations against Pop art, Steinberg insisted that further patient inquiry,

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[71] Ibid, 39.

[72] Ibid, 41.

[73] Ibid, 41.

[74] Ibid, 39.

[75] Ibid, 40.

rather than premature appraisal, was needed. Offering a pedagogical salve to the overheated debate, Steinberg reminded the panel that the terms of the debate and the alacrity of evaluation compromised any legitimate assessment:

> But it is obviously impossible to declare whether pop art represents conformity with middle-class values, social satire, effective or otherwise, or again a completely asocial exploration of new, or newly intriguing, formal means. It is impossible to give one answers because we are not dealing with one artist. We are asked to deal with many. And so far, there has been no attempt around this table to differentiate between them.[76]

Steinberg reasoned that should one instance from the emerging movement "produce a valid experience, e.g., a new shudder, then the whole movement is justified by its proven ability to produce a valid work."[77] His ultimate conclusion was that the field had not seen enough or analyzed enough to make a reasonable determination possible.

Geldzahler's answer to the debate that night delineated a limit for the proper role of the critic or curator in relation to the artist. "[R]esponsible critics should not predict, and they should not goad the artist into a direction that criticism would feel more comfortable with," he argued. "The critic's highest goal must be *to stay alert and sensitive to what the artist is doing*, not to tell him what he should be doing."[78] Geldzahler's dictum, "to stay alert and sensitive to what the artist is doing," demanded a proximate and deferential attitude toward the artist, withholding judgment or input in order to understand and also to support the artist's will. On behalf of the living artist, Geldzahler asserted the primacy of the artist's actions as the necessary and only starting point for the artwork's critical evaluation. Geldzahler further reasoned that the allure of an "instant art history" that asked observers to judge whether Pop art was good or bad missed the

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[76] Ibid, 40.

[77] Ibid, 41.

[78] Ibid, 37. Emphasis added.

point. He passionately urged the symposium's audience "not to make an immediate ultimate evaluation, but to admit the possibility that this subject matter and these techniques are and can be the legitimate subject matter and technique of art."[79] The authority behind such legitimation, Geldzahler argued, had to be left to the artist, and that Geldzahler's and others' roles in ancillary positions were to humbly follow the artist's lead and direction.

"You don't need a magnifying glass, Dore. All you need is a pair of eyes and an open, willing spirit, and a soul […]" retorted Geldzahler at the very end of the heated debate.[80] His retort fired back at Ashton's incredulous doubt, when Geldzahler insisted that, "Pop art is definitely a formal art. It's an art of decisions and choices of composition." Ashton facetiously asked back, "What do you need, a magnifying glass?"[81] Through the roar of the audience's laughter, Geldzahler's exasperated riposte was his final ditch plea. Appealing to vision, spirit, and soul, Geldzahler proposed, if nothing else, shouldn't open-mindedness and reservation of judgment prevail over willful ignoring? For Geldzahler, the controversy over seeing, welcoming, and connecting with Pop art was not just an issue of aesthetics or the liberal championing of a new and controversial artistic movement. Geldzahler's defense of Pop art was actually a particular defense of the artist in general.

Ultimately, Geldzahler's contributions to the "Symposium on Pop Art," betray an inchoate translation of his experiences of artist friendship into the broader functioning of the art world. Firstly, in a basic sense, Geldzahler's countless hours talking with Warhol or looking with Hockney were all experiences of joining "what the artist is doing." Friendship was the relationship Geldzahler forged in order to know the artists and experience the New York art

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[79] Ibid, 37.

[80] Ibid, 44.

[81] Ibid, 44.

world. His dictum was also an ethical one—recall that he began by saying "responsible critics should not […]." As a matter of ethics, Geldzahler's proposition "to stay alert and sensitive to what the artist doing, not to tell him what he should be doing" also begins to suggest something else about his experiences of artist friendship. For Geldzahler, the experiences and insights of artist friendship also should shape parameters of the art world's functioning: the roles and responsibilities of non-artists, the artistic field's forms of legitimation, how figures of the artistic field justify their grounds of authority (or lack thereof). Finally, although the representations of his friendships by Warhol and Hockney indicated a deep imbrication of the artist with the artist's friend—how a friend adopts the artist's needs and wants as his own or how a friend facilitates the artist's self-formation and knowledge—Geldzahler's translation also re-asserted a primacy of the artist, a vision of their pure autonomous status.

I raise these concluding assertions about his translation—perhaps, not yet fully substantiated—in order to forecast the nature of the negotiations across artistic and non-artistic fields Geldzahler went on to pursue over the course of the decade. In this chapter, Warhol and Hockney's respective representations of their friend Geldzahler signified key features of friendship: shared activity, affection or the desire for the artist's welfare and happiness as an individual, and the co-creative self-formation one realizes through friendship with others. These aspects of friendship will reappear as Geldzahler negotiated exchanges between the artistic and political fields at the NEA, as well as exchanges between artistic, economic, and journalistic fields with his exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture*. As Chapters 2 and 3 will demonstrate, these features of artist friendship and his literal reputation for being an artist's friend facilitated and, at times, complicated the changing relationship of artistic and non-artistic fields that his activities manifest. Insofar as Chapter 1 has also demonstrated the paradoxical

intersections of friendship and the artist's autonomous status—friendship is a dynamic of imbrication that seemingly can re-assert the artist's pure autonomy in the artistic field—this negotiation of the status of the artist will also remain in flux and in play as the picture of his broader field-wide negotiations come into view.

Chapter 2

Curator as Professional Reformer in the Era of the Great Society: Henry Geldzahler at the National Endowment for the Arts (1966–69)

Introduction

"U.S. Arts Council Picks 3 Directors." So announced a *New York Times* headline on January 7, 1966. "Curator, Poet and Aide of ANTA to Head Programs."[1] Henry Geldzahler was the curator, selected by Roger Stevens, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), to serve as the inaugural Program Director overseeing activities in the Visual Arts. Just over three months had passed since President Lyndon B. Johnson and his administration successfully pushed through legislation that established the NEA. Geldzahler's selection was a pivotal step towards giving concrete direction to the lofty hopes pinned on the nation's first federal arts agency.

The NEA partly expressed the human flourishing LBJ and his administration strived for with an ambitious domestic agenda they called the "Great Society." Famously introduced in his commencement speech at the University of Michigan on May 22, 1964, the Great Society synthesized existing and future prongs of LBJ's plans under a single vision. With Civil Rights and anti-poverty as its twin focuses, the Great Society conjured numerous aims for many other issues as well, including education, health, housing, pollution, urban development, consumer protection, and transportation. Addressing the college graduates, LBJ proclaimed, "The Great

[1] Grace Glueck, "U.S. Arts Council Picks 3 Directors," *New York Times*, January 7, 1966, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time." Johnson continued:

> But that is just the beginning. The Great Society is a place where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents. It is a place where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, not a feared cause of boredom and restlessness. It is a place where the city of man serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community. It is a place where man can renew contact with nature. It is a place which honors creation for its own sake and for what it adds to the understanding of the race. It is a place where men are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods. But most of all, the Great Society is not a safe harbor, a resting place, a final objective, a finished work. It is a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor.[2]

The NEA—an independent agency armed with statutory mandate and appropriations dedicated to supporting the arts in all its forms—promised to fulfill the "desire for beauty" and the goals of "honor[ing] creation" that the farthest horizon of the Great Society envisioned.

When his selection was reported on in the *Times*, Geldzahler posed "the artist" as the particular angle of attack for his imminent NEA role. "Mr. Geldzahler said yesterday that he was pleased at the prospect of greater Federal, state and municipal involvement in the arts," wrote journalist Grace Glueck. The curator also shared his hope that "whatever funds are available will be channeled as directly as possible to the artists." Naming ideas such as "grants-in-aid for individual creative artists," "inexpensive housing for artists," and "semester-long sabbatical leaves for artists who teach," Geldzahler eyed "the artist" as his primary target. The artist was the figurative, organizing center for how he would design, implement, and evaluate the federal government's involvement in the visual arts.[3]

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[2] "Remarks at the University of Michigan," May 22, 1964, in *The Public Papers of the President of the United States: Lyndon Baines Johnson*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963–69), 704–7.

[3] Glueck, "U.S. Arts Council Picks 3 Directors."

This focus on the artist is also the jumping off point for Chapter 2's study of Geldzahler's work at the NEA Visual Arts Program. The particularity of his concern and approach made Geldzahler's role not just a matter of cultivating arts and culture generally, but also of fulfilling the needs and well-being of "the artist." More than serving as a mere bureaucrat, Geldzahler facilitated powerful exchanges between the artistic and political fields in his role as the inaugural director of a program that still operates today. In this chapter, I argue that Geldzahler and the NEA appropriated public policy characteristics of "the poor" and their presumed "powerlessness"—as delineated by LBJ's War on Poverty—to render "the artist" and their own needs within the parameters of governmental action during the era of the Great Society. My account of Geldzahler's negotiation of art and government will also touch upon wider ramifications for how the artistic field conceives of the status of the artist, as well as their artistic and political empowerment.

The first section of this chapter makes an initial historiographic intervention, setting the grounds for rethinking the NEA along the terms of the Great Society, especially as they were expressed in the domestic agenda's major manifestation: the War on Poverty. Past studies of the NEA have mainly understood the federal arts agency as a program of government patronage distinct from, ancillary to, or outside the governmental era that established it. Yet insofar as the Great Society targeted the poor and racial minorities, or, more generally, "the oppressed, the underprivileged, and the helpless," as LBJ once explained, I reframe the history of the NEA's work following the ways in which Geldzahler similarly conceptualized the artist as an underserved and disadvantaged group within society.[4] In so doing, the NEA is newly contextualized and explicated through the Great Society's dominant policy features, specifically

[4] "Remarks at a Fundraising Dinner in Detroit," June 26, 1964, accessed, April 1, 2020, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-fundraising-dinner-detroit.

its War on Poverty and the figure of the professional reformer. Although there were some significant differences, Geldzahler's work at the NEA and the professional reformers' efforts dedicated to the War on Poverty shared a common premise. Whether regarding the arts or poverty, the curator or professional reformer, their respective governmental programs sought to help people in need.

The second section focuses on the features Geldzahler and the NEA appropriated from "the poor" and "powerlessness" for their model of the artist and the problems they faced. The War on Poverty relied upon a subject formation—"the poor"—for whom and around whom professional reformers enacted their work. As political theorist Barbara Cruikshank has shown, modeling the poor entailed a process of "constitut[ing] the poor as a group by defining their characteristics, capacities, and desires" into "an administrative category of policy analysis."[5] Geldzahler and the NEA's brainstorming and programming discussions mirrored this same process. They based their own discourse of rationality and the structure of the Visual Arts Program itself on the understanding of the artist as powerless, echoing the vulnerability, apathy, and lack of agency attributed to the poor. These correspondences between the artist and the poor are especially apparent when comparing the NEA's articulations against the prevalent social scientific and cultural analyses of the day, such as Michael Harrington's account of poverty in *The Other America* (1962).[6]

While Geldzahler's model of the artist appropriated main features of the poor and their powerlessness, his exchange between artistic and political fields was not an exact copying or wholesale adoption. The third and fourth sections of the chapter analyze two programs and two

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[5] Barbara Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 76–77.

[6] Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962).

studies initiated by the NEA tracking the ways in which the programs or initiatives that Geldzahler spearheaded bear aspects that converged *and* at times diverged with the War on Poverty, as well as the broader terms of government sponsored social reform.[7] The third section examines the Museum Purchase Program (MPP) and a legal study the Visual Arts Program commissioned, entitled *Legal Protection for the Artist: A Series of Studies Submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts*.[8] The nature of the MPP and the major recommendations proposed in *Legal Protection* converged with tenets of "opportunity" and "empowerment" that were hallmarks of the Great Society policy discourse. At this time, federal anti-poverty programs sought to reject direct aid and privileged what policymakers and professional reformers called "maximum feasible participation," a self-governing ideal meant to moderate national administrative power. This policy posture focused its greatest energy on strategies that conformed to the commonly held maxim that social reform should "help the poor help themselves."

Geldzahler and the NEA similarly tried to help powerless artists help themselves. The MPP and *Legal Protection* aimed to widen and enhance their access to economic opportunity,

[7] The Visual Arts Program during Geldzahler's time was wide-ranging and also in flux given its infancy. My limiting factor has been a focus on his initiatives and studies that targeted the artist's need and welfare. I have bracketed out programs that commissioned art, namely Art in Public Places, as well as programs that have received significant attention elsewhere, such as Westbeth Artist Housing. My discussion also does not devote attention to the State Arts Agencies, which much of the NEA's budget also supported. Geldzahler played a role in all three of these programs, but has not been considered as primary a protagonist. For instance, Donna Binkiewicz's attributes Art in Public Places to Rene d'Harnoncourt's advocacy, and Westbeth Artist Housing was an important pilot program for Roger Stevens. That being said, Geldzahler still participated closely. For instance, in the case of Calder's *La Grand Vitesse*, which became the first commission under the auspices of Art in Public Places, Binkiewicz partly attributes the selection of Grand Rapids, MI to a visit Geldzahler made to the city, for a lecture at the Grand Rapids Art Museum. During the trip he met museum vice president Nancy Mulnix and encouraged the city to apply for a grant, see Donna Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse: United States Arts Policy and the National Endowment for the Arts, 1965-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 118–119. For more on Westbeth Artist Housing, see Jeffrey Trask, "The 'Loft Cause' or 'Bohemia Gone Bourgeois?: Artist Housing and Private Development in Greenwich Village," *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 6 (2015): 1017–1031. Trask describes Geldzahler as a public advocate for the project, whose affiliation with the Met lent credibility to the effort.

[8] Melville B. Nimmer, ed. *Legal Protection for the Artist: A Series of Studies Submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, 1969).

utilizing processes that leveraged the artist's own initiated action. My analysis of the MPP and *Legal Protection* also prompts reconsideration of prevailing art historical assumptions about what constitutes artist empowerment. Comparing this section's analysis with prevailing disciplinary accounts of artist empowerment—particularly stemming from Seth Siegelaub and Robert Projansky's *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement* —challenges the faith that is placed on the appearance of a sovereign artist subject as a measure or guarantee of artist empowerment.[9]

The fourth section focuses on a lesser-known historical study Geldzahler commissioned, entitled *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now*, as well as the NEA's most well-known program, the NEA Visual Artist's Fellowship.[10] *Federal Support* and the Fellowship together reveal how the artist's actual need, unlike the poor's, required little to no evidentiary measurement. Whereas the poor's need and powerlessness typically required empirical substantiation, the indices or markers that could have described the nature of that need for artists did not seem to apply. I analyze this lack of determining criteria as Geldzahler and the NEA's critical divergence from the model set by the larger governmental imperative to support the needy. The absence of an empirical demonstration of need also reveals the limits of Geldzahler's negotiation—while he and the NEA could equate the artist with the poor, this exchange with the political field could not entail corollary terms of qualification or justification.

The conclusion at the end of the chapter returns to Geldzahler himself to meditate on "the curator as professional reformer" that his negotiation of art and government brought to life. In

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[9] Seth Siegelaub and Robert Projansky, *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement* (New York: School of Visual Arts, 1971).

[10] *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* was first submitted to the NEA and the study's author Francis V. O'Connor subsequently organized its publication with the NEA's encouragement. See Francis V. O'Connor, *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1969).

addition to the shared premise of targeting people in need, there was a corollary conceptual exchange that Geldzahler's appropriation of the poor and social reform entailed: his own role and the grounds of legitimation and authority to support the artist. In the case of the professional reformer, proximity with and expert knowledge of the poor served as the legitimating ground of their anti-poverty action. Being embedded in impoverished communities, and the confidence that technical or social scientific research properly captured the reality of the poor, authorized professional reformers to give voice to, to speak on behalf of, the poor and served as the legitimating grounds of their role. I end the chapter by discussing how Geldzahler's work at the NEA required a similar process of consolidating his authority. Importantly, it was the ideals and promises of friendships with artists that substantiated his role's requisite expertise and legitimation.

Re-situating the National Endowment for the Arts in the Great Society Era

The creation of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was a legislative victory among the many that made the Great Society era and the 89th United States Congress one of the most productive periods for the executive and legislative branches. Signed into law by Johnson in a Rose Garden ceremony on September 29, 1965, the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 established two agencies: the NEA and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) (Figure 2.1). Both agencies were given the power to grant federally appropriated funds in support of the arts and humanities.[11] Unlike previous efforts such as

[11] Donna Binkiewicz, Gary Larson, as well as Fannie Taylor and Anthony Barresi provide informative accounts of the legislative process that led to its passage, including the strategy of combining the humanities to the arts in order to convince remaining skeptics of the legislation's merits. See Donna Binkiewicz, "Let Us Continue: Arts Policy during the Johnson Administration," in *Federalizing the Muse,* 69–92; Gary Larson, *The Reluctant Muse: The*

federal art projects during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal or special task forces initiated by executive order—both of which in their various ways delimited arts policy making with a conditional or subordinate mandate—the NEA provided the nation with an independent federal agency secured by law.[12] The Arts and Humanities bill particularly enjoyed the advantage of a congressional Democratic supermajority that, on the whole, saw over 180 out of 200 pieces of proposed legislation pass in the first two years of the Johnson presidency.[13] In the strictly political sense, the Johnson Presidency and his Great Society domestic agenda were the NEA's crucial point of origin.

Yet, in the realm of art historical scholarship, the fact that the NEA emerged within Johnson's Great Society is rarely mentioned let alone seriously analyzed. Instead, art historians have primarily focused on the NEA during 1980s/1990s culture wars (well after the historical conditions of the Great Society era), when debates over censorship and freedom of expression dominated examinations of the NEA.[14] Otherwise, art historical studies have paid greatest

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United States Government and the Arts, 1943-1965 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); Fannie Taylor and Anthony L. Barresi, "Reaching Legislative Consensus, 1960–1965," in *The Arts at a New Frontier: The National Endowment for the Arts* (New York: Plenum Press, 1984), 19–54.

[12] For more on what government involvement looked like before the Endowment, see Taylor and Barresi, "Development of Government Support for the Arts," in *The Arts at a New Frontier*, 1–14; and Binkiewicz, "Prelude to Policy," in *Federalizing the Muse*, 11–33.

[13] John Andrew writes, "By the time the Eighty-ninth Congress adjourned in October 1966, LBJ had asked for 200 major pieces of legislation; Congress had approved 181 of them," see John A. Andrew III, *Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 13.

[14] See Julie Ault, et. al, eds. *Art Matters: How the Culture Wars Changed America* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Richard Bolton, ed. *Culture Wars: Documents from the Recent Controversies in the* Arts (New York: New Press, 1992); Michael Brenson, *Visionaries and Outcasts: The NEA, Congress and the Place of the Visual Artist in America* (New York: New Press, 2001); Dustin Kidd, *Legislating Creativity: The Intersections of Art and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Richard Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Past work on so-called alternative spaces of the 1970s has also put a spotlight on the work of the NEA, especially program director Brian O'Doherty who played a prominent role in identifying alternative spaces as the target of his and the NEA's concern. See Julie Ault, ed. *Alternative Art New York*, 1965–1987 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Grant H. Kester, "Rhetorical Questions: The Alternative Arts Sector and the Imaginary Public," in *Art, Activism, and Oppositionality*, ed. Grant H. Kester (Durham, NC: Duke University Press,

attention to works of public art tied to the NEA's Art In Public Places Program, and, relatedly, the federal government's General Services Administration (GSA) (Figure 2.2).[15] The parameters of free expression or the sponsoring of monumental public sculpture—rather than public policy conditions or the government's intervention in the lives of artists themselves—have been the primary concerns of these prevailing art historical inquiries into the NEA.[16]

Scholars at the intersection of American history and political science have interrogated the NEA with a broader frame of reference. Historian Donna Binkiewicz's authoritative account of federal support for the arts under the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations primarily

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1998), 103–135; Lauren Rosati and Mary Anne Staniszewski, eds. *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960–2010* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012).

[15] Consider canonical examples such as Alexander Calder's *La Grande Vitesse* (1969) or Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (1981, removed 1989). See John Beardsley, *Art in Public Places: A Survey of Community-Sponsored Projects Supported by the National Endowment for the Arts*, (Washington, DC: Partners for Livable Places, 1981); Clara Weyergraf-Serra and Martha Buskirk, eds. *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991); Miwon Kwon, "Sitings of Public Art: Integration versus Intervention," in *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002).

[16] Grant Kester's work on alternative spaces in the 1970s is one notable exception. On one hand, my account of Geldzahler's exchange between "the artist" and "the poor" agrees with Kester's claim of a similar appropriative move by the "institutional model of the artists space." He writes, "A key component of the institutional model of the artists space was the invention of a new civil subject—the 'cultural worker.' With the cultural worker model artist/administrators appropriated the existing language of Great Society programs that sought to 'empower' the poor and working-class beneficiaries of government assistance by directly involving them in funding decisions. They performed a strategic substitution in which the artist became the disenfranchised citizen in need of 'empowerment.' Alternative sector artists were taken to constitute a special class of citizens who were being systematically exploited or ignored by the art market." Geldzahler appears to provide a precursor example of a similar move. On the other hand, Kester's account betrays an evaluative assumption that I think needs to be suspended. Kester writes, "Thus artists 'took' the political rhetoric that was 'originally intended' to address the disenfranchisement of the poor and working class, and mobilized it to their own ends […] But the victimization of a fine artist by the art market is surely of a somewhat different order than, for example the victimization of the rural poor by the processes of agricultural modernization under capitalism. The experience of an artist whose work is rejected by the gallery system is simply not interchangeable with that of the poor or working class, whose relationship with the market economy has far more profound consequences." While Kester is surely right to question such interchangeability, my analysis accepts that the exchange did happen, continues to happen, and has had wider discursive, practical, and institutional consequences that need to be explored. See Kester, "Rhetorical Questions: The Alternative Arts Sector and the Imaginary Public," 116–117. Stephen Schryer's recent account of American literary writer's intersections with the War on Poverty also makes significant inroads in closing this discursive gap, see Stephen Schryer, *Maximum Feasible Participation: American Literature and the War on Poverty* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).

focused on the NEA's meaning for the cultural front of the US-Soviet Cold War.[17] Other historians and political scientists engaged with political economy, cultural policy, and public policy have also lent their analytical focus on what the NEA signified for the evolution of American liberalism and governance.[18] While these investigations offer a broader framework to understand the NEA and its tie to Great Society, they do so by assuming that the NEA was an *outlier* from the domestic agenda's centers: Civil Rights and the War on Poverty. Locating the NEA on the periphery—at the edge of the Great Society's wider field of public policy issues, such as leisure time and education (or, as LBJ once put it, matters "more of the spirit than of the flesh")—most studies still distinguish the NEA from the social reform that placed racial minorities, the "poor," or the "sick and forgotten" at the center of the Great Society's concern.[19] The Great Society may be acknowledged but its defining social reform activity is not considered integral to the NEA's origins and early work.

Within these discourses, Geldzahler's explicit concern for "the artist" is effectively illegible for interrelated reasons. Primarily, art historians and historians alike rely upon a traditional notion of arts patronage. When art historical accounts focus on freedom of expression, public sculpture, or the arts in the general sense, analysis of the NEA fixes the problematic around sponsorship or the provision of resources that produce works of art. And even when the conditions of the Great Society are vaguely acknowledged, the NEA and its broad support for the arts get bracketed out as a special, ancillary policy determined by its own supposedly artistic or cultural rules and characteristics. Although the policy features and social reform of the Great

[17] Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse*.

[18] For example, see Karen Patricia Heath, "Artistic Scarcity in an Age of Material Abundance: President Lyndon Johnson, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Great Society Liberalism," *European Journal of American Culture* 36, no. 1 (2017): 5–22. See also Shauna Saunders, "The Case for the National Endowment for the Arts: Federal Funding for the Arts in America in the 1960s and 1970s," *History of Political Economy* (2005): 593–616.

[19] Quoted in Andrew, *Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society*, 163.

Society could provide a framework for explicating the relationship between government action and individuals, like artists—this is an essential conceptual relationship in Civil Rights or the War on Poverty—preceding accounts of the NEA have had no use for such frameworks since the artist is predestined as an actor in a process of patronage or sponsorship that leads to works of art. Put differently, analytical parameters of art history, cultural history, political science, among other disciplines, subsume the artist within support for the arts. Narrowly understanding the NEA as a matter of government patronage, the artist is describable and analytically significant only to the extent that they make works of art. Yet, crucially, when Geldzahler, and even President Johnson invoked the artist, their identity as makers of artworks was not the only, or even the most significant aspect at stake.

Communicating the high-level vision of what federal support to the arts could provide, Johnson's own rhetoric sometimes pictured an artist handicapped by neglect and disadvantage. "No people can afford to neglect the creative minds among it," Johnson instructed in a June 1965 speech at the White House Festival for the Arts (Figure 2.3).[20] Like Geldzahler's naming of the artist in the *Times*, Johnson's words beg the question what about the artist, what forms of "neglect" did government involvement in the arts seek to redress? At the Rose Garden signing ceremony for the Arts and Humanities Bill, Johnson further reflected:

> We in America have not always been kind to the artists and the scholars who are the creators and the keepers of our vision. Somehow, the scientists always seem to get the penthouse, while the arts and the humanities get the basement.[21]

Contrasting sunlit "penthouse" and dark "basement," Johnson's analogy to compare the regard held for scientists vs. artists conjured a disadvantaged, unrecognized artist in need of assistance

[20] "Remarks at the White House Festival of the Arts," June 14, 1965, in *The Public Papers of the President of the United States: Lyndon Baines Johnson*, 659–60.

[21] "Remarks at the Signing of the Arts and Humanities Bill," September 29, 1965, in *The Public Papers of the President of the United States: Lyndon Baines Johnson*, 1023.

(Figure 2.4). The artist on Geldzahler's mind, as well as in Johnson's high-level formulations, signaled more than a person who made works of art. Invocations of the artist in the Great Society era also connoted an adverse status and disadvantaged social position that demanded reforms like those pursued for the poor and racial minorities—the more familiar subjects of intense public policy concern that have defined the Great Society.[22] Johnson left others to articulate the precise plight signified by the artist identity. With Henry Geldzahler as its first program director, the NEA Visual Arts Program took up this task, supporting and intervening in the lives of artists vis-à-vis their need for government assistance.

Through this corresponding point of the artist and their need, this chapter's overall interpretive realignment of the NEA within the Great Society era summons the conditions that determined the federal government's actions that provided the overarching political rationality for how entities, like the NEA, pursued their work. Broadly speaking, the Great Society represents a third and final chapter of American liberal reform in the twentieth century, when the nation's federal government progressively transformed into a more centralized, activist, and bureaucratic state designed to provide greater positive rights and regulatory protection.[23] Following the Progressive Era and then the New Deal, the Great Society was the Johnson Administration's attempt to extend these earlier reformist periods under different circumstances. While LBJ considered FDR an exemplary president and spent his own formative years in Texas

[22] LBJ's War on Poverty is my focal point because its discursive claims and policy features bear critical parallels I will explicate in the NEA Visual Arts Program. Insofar as I am treating civil rights policy and anti-poverty policy as two discrete spheres of the Great Society, I am following the dual-structured framework many historians of the Great Society rely upon, both explicitly and implicitly. The two spheres of policy making were, however, more intertwined and vexed than this framing suggests. See, for example, Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, "The Politics of the Great Society," in *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism*, eds. Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005); and two recent studies that situate the origins of US state sanctioned racial violence and mass incarceration in the War on Poverty and broader terms of social reform in the Great Society, see Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

[23] Milkis and Mileur, "Preface," in *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism*, xii–xiii.

state and congressional politics as a New Dealer, the same economic and political conditions that enabled previous transformations could not buttress LBJ's own agenda.

Unlike their past precedents, Great Society policymakers and professional reformers worked during a period of relative economic prosperity; they faced unrest, agitation, and dramatic social change to the nation's racial, class, and sexual hierarchies; and they contended with the broad public's increasing suspicion of national administrative power. A burgeoning middle class particularly signified the widespread economic prosperity and material well-being perceived throughout the country. Subsequently, the nation's economic growth, and the assumed durability of that growth, predicated the LBJ Administration's attempt to widen the privileges and progress many did not enjoy.[24] When employing and feeding the majority of the nation was no longer the most urgent priority, however, a shift from quantitative to qualitative national concern, as historians of the period have called it, modified the Great Society's reform agenda.[25] Further, the Sixties' movement politics and its calls for greater participatory democracy coupled with conservative suspicion of the increasing size and role of the federal government also questioned national administrative power from all sides of the political spectrum. As a result, centralized administration and the direct exercise of executive and federal power—hallmarks of the New Deal era's stronger social democratic impulse—diminished as available tools for enacting a liberal agenda. These economic and political forces shaped the Great Society era's policymaking dynamics, inside and outside the NEA, determining the broad domestic agenda's conditions or tenets.

On one hand, the Great Society is an important umbrella that helps us see the NEA

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[24] Andrew, *Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society*, 14–16.

[25] Sidney M. Milkis, "Lyndon Johnson, the Great Society, and the Modern Presidency," in *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism*, 8–9.

alongside the other policies and political dynamics of the period. On the other, the concomitant War on Poverty and its paradigmatic figure of the professional reformer are key to understanding how Geldzahler and his Visual Arts Program appropriated tenets and policies that emerged around them. First formally initiated by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, LBJ's War on Poverty was the primary site of policy innovations that cut across the whole of the Great Society. Cruikshank has conceptualized the War on Poverty's discourses and programs as "technologies of citizenship" and the exchanges this chapter recovers between the poor and the artist are helpfully made visible by the framework she provides.[26]

Contemporary and later commentators on the War on Poverty have also observed in particular the emergence of a new type of public servant termed the "professional reformer."[27] Unlike elected officials and distinct, though reminiscent, of historical grassroots, populist progressive reformers, professional reformers were considered a hybrid agent borne out of the era's elevation of expert social scientific planning and technocratic structures of social reform. Sociologists Peter Marris and Martin Rein have argued that the professional reformer was one of the "most important" innovations to come out of the War on Poverty in their book *Dilemmas of Social Reform: Poverty and Community Action in the United States* (1967). In this study, which focused in particular on the War on Poverty's strategy of "community action," they described the

[26] Cruikshank presents the Great Society and its War on Poverty as the historical apex of a multi-generational process of democratic reform in the United States, which she argues developed "technologies of citizenship." Following Michel Foucault's theorizations of governmentality and technologies of the self, Cruikshank posits technologies of citizenship as "discourses, programs, and other tactics aimed at making individuals politically active and capable of self government." In technologies of citizenship, Cruikshank tracks modes of governance that "work upon and through the capacities of citizens." As my discussion develops below, my arguments about Geldzahler's activities at the NEA are indebted to Cruickshank's account of the War on Poverty and her larger revisionist readings of "empowerment" and the "professional reformer"; see Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 4–5. I am grateful to Adom Getachew for first alerting me to Cruikshank's work.

[27] See Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The Professionalization of Reform," *The Public Interest* I (Fall 1965), https://www.nationalaffairs.com/storage/app/uploads/public/58e/1a4/9e9/58e1a49e939a5835456873.pdf; and Peter Marris and Martin Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform: Poverty and Community Action in the United States* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967).

professional reformer this way:

> Above all, within the administration of social policy, a new kind of public servant had become crucially important, at once more independent of established authority and more responsive to the people. Responsible towards government, but free to work out his own policy by negotiation and expert analysis; holding no elected office, but in continual consultation with the people whose needs he served; with influence to guide the course of any social institution, but unencumbered by routine duties, he held an ambiguous but potentially commanding position at the heart of the community power structure. Of all the innovations of community action, this may prove the most important: it created the professional reformer, and invested an organizational framework appropriate to his function.[28]

It was the balance of expert knowledge, pragmatism, and strategic negotiation of multiple, at times, competing stakeholders and constituencies that Marris and Rein considered essential to the professional reformer's function. "No mere gesture towards co-operation," specified Marris and Rein, the professional reformer executed a "purposeful and exacting formula" that made the policy mechanisms and operations of social reform in the 1960s work.[29] Elsewhere in their study, borrowing economist Andrew Shonfield's description of the planner from his *Modern Capitalism* (1966), Marris and Rein accentuated what kind of personality or characteristics professional reformers needed:

> […] the professional administrator cum political operator. He often has a particular field of expertise in which he has achieved some eminence, but he is not content merely to tender expert advice. He is a lobbyist, an intriguer—in short, a fixer who is also a technician. Indeed, precisely because he does possess technical mastery over his subject, he knows better than any ordinary politician just how far he can go in making a compromise with the interest groups involved in any question, without losing the substance of his cause.[30]

"Professional administrator cum political operator," "lobbyist," "intriguer," or "fixer" also applied to Geldzahlzer. The professional reformer offers an apt prism for grappling with the

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[28] Marris and Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*, 222.

[29] Ibid, 31.

[30] Andrew Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 408. Quoted in Marris and Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*, 230.

leadership Geldzahler exercised and the programs he ultimately pursued, as the sections below will elaborate.

Appropriating "the Poor" and "Powerlessness:" The NEA's Modeling of the Artist

It was not sufficient to simply name "the artist" as a beneficiary of the NEA's support. Geldzahler and the Visual Arts Program also had to define "the artist" specifically for their policy work. Geldzahler, as well as other arts leaders and policymakers, inside and outside the NEA, modeled a profile of character, capacity, and social position that rendered the artist legible *and* suitable for governmental intervention. Geldzahler and the NEA's ambition to marshal federal support to the artist required what political theorist Nikolas Rose has described as government's dependence upon knowledge. Rose explains, "Government thus depends upon the production, circulation, organization of truths that incarnate what is to be governed, which make it thinkable, calculable, and practicable."[31] Focusing on verbal rhetoric and textual evidence, as well as the initial structure of the Visual Arts Program, the following section examines the definitions, problems, and rationales Geldzahler and others articulated in order to make "the artist" "incarnate," "thinkable, calculable, and practicable," for the NEA's governmental action. This section argues that Geldzahler appropriated models of "the poor" and "powerlessness," exchanging aspects of the War on Poverty's policy model and aims for the NEA's own concern for the artist and their status in the artistic field.

Geldzahler started to make good on his early declaration to channel funds as directly as possible to the artist by guiding NEA Chair Stevens and members of the National Council on the

[31] Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Routledge, 1990), 6.

Arts (NCA) towards such a purpose.[32] Over the course of several meetings in the spring of 1966, the NCA authorized areas of activity Geldzahler and his Visual Arts Program staff would pursue. In order to construct a program of support organized around the artist, Geldzahler allied closely with members of the Arts Council whose expertise represented visual arts and museums, particularly Rene d'Harnoncourt, director of The Museum of Modern Art.

The succession of meetings to craft the Visual Arts Program's mission and program structure narrowed in on the artist and multiple facets of their apparent need. At NCA's first March 24, 1966 meeting held at The Museum of Modern Art, its members d'Harnoncourt, Lloyd Goodrich of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Martin Friedman of the Minneapolis Museum of Art, William Luck of the American Federation of the Arts, Mitchell Wilder of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, and David Scott of the National Collection of Fine Arts tentatively proposed a three pronged mission: 1) Direct Assistance to the Creative Artist, 2) Dissemination of Knowledge and Appreciation of Arts and Opportunities to Enjoy Original Works of Art, and 3) Recognition of Excellence in Artistic Achievement.[33] At the outset, these areas of focus spread across forms of individual support alongside honorific acknowledgements of excellence, to broader, pedagogically-minded arts education initiatives.

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[32] The National Council on the Arts was a precursor advisory body established by the National Arts and Cultural Development Act of 1964. Upon successful passage of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act in September 1965, the NCA remained intact and the legislation turned the existing NCA into an administrative body above the NEA. Like a board of trustees, for example, the NCA is authorized to advise, review, and make recommendations to the Chairman of the NEA. The original National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act stipulated 26 citizen experts to serve on the NCA; it is now 18 along with an additional six members of Congress who serve in an ex officio, non-voting capacity. Roger Stevens, the NEA's first chairman, was prior to the establishment of the NEA, the chairman of the Arts Council and special assistant to the President. Geldzahler began his work with Stevens and the NCA as a consultant. For the sake of clarity I have placed the starting point of my narrative with Geldzahler's appointment to the Visual Arts Program Director position. For more on this pre-history of the NEA, see Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse*, 95–112; and Fannie Taylor and Anthony L. Barresi, *The Arts at a New Frontier: The National Endowment for the Arts*, (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1984), 17–55.

[33] Memo: April 4, 1966, The Report on the Visual Arts Meeting March 24th, Box 16, Folder 10.32, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Specific, hot-topic concerns of the day motivated the three nascent categories under consideration. Elaborating upon "direct assistance," they discussed the active campaigns for "artists rights" and the need for "legal advice."[34] The NCA members discussed in particular the wide-ranging set of legal issues raised by concerns over inequities between artists, dealers, museums, and art buyers. And they specifically cited New York State Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz's proposed arts legislation and public hearings related to art fraud.[35] Secondly, coordination of nationwide exhibition tours that connected cities and regions across the country manifested their high-level vision for "dissemination of knowledge." Finally, regarding "recognition of excellence," Arts Council members brainstormed a "National Award of Excellence" that both recognized an accomplished, exemplary artist and provided a mechanism for the NEA to acquire two or three works of painting and sculpture by the awardee.

In subsequent meetings, what began as three overarching high-level spheres grew into several more fields for "Projects to deal with the Artist, the original work of art and public education."[36] Beyond protection of artist's legal rights, direct assistance to the artist now envisioned financial grants, affordable housing and studio space, and technical support for materials and production processes.[37] The NCA also reiterated their interest in "circulating exhibitions" which they hoped would serve areas of the country that did not receive exhibits like the kind in the nation's art centers. And, finally, recognition of excellence newly included an

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Joan Kee discusses Lefkowitz's broader efforts in Joan Kee, *Models of Integrity: Art and Law in Post-sixties America*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 51–53.

[36] Distinction between fields of activities of the National Council on the Arts and the National Council on the Humanities, April 11, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.32, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[37] Outline of a Proposed Three-Year Program in the Visual Arts, April 11, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.32, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

invitational exhibition and a specification that the prior discussed acquisition of works could be accomplished in the form of "purchase or commission of outstanding works of art for public premises (plazas, public buildings, parks, beaches, etc.)."[38]

In its final stipulation of the "Area of Activity of the National Council on the Arts," Geldzahler and members of the Arts Council ultimately established a six-part breakdown, which prioritized the artist as the main target of concern in four separate categories. The approved program structure was as follows:

> a. Grants to the artist
> b. Opportunities for work
> c. Housing
> d. Legal Protection
> e. Recognition of achievement, and
> f. Dissemination of knowledge and appreciation[39]

Out of six program areas, four were concerned with the artist's political and economic status as well as their social welfare. Grants or "subsidy," economic opportunity, affordable housing, and expansion of legal rights were the Visual Arts Programs' battle fronts to combat a systematic breakdown that had left the artist in a state of need, or as the Visual Arts Program staff would subsequently describe, a system that left the artist:

> […] to become the victim of increasing demands upon his talent while traditional sources of support are actually decreasing, or too slowly increasing to meet current responsibilities. Despite enormous dedication on the part of trustees and patrons, the economic situation with the art world remains desperate.[40]

How Geldzahler and the NEA understood the artist's vulnerability if not victimhood, how they conceptualized the sources of the artist's state of need, and thus rationalized their intended action

[38] This area of concern led to the Art in Public Places Program the NEA initiated.

[39] Distinction between fields of activities of the National Council on the Arts and the National Council on the Humanities, April 11, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.32, Henry Geldzahler Papers.

[40] "Needs in the Arts," in National Endowment for the Arts Budget Justification and Estimates Fiscal Year 1968, page A-5, Box 16, Folder 10.26, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

areas, manifest in deeper-rooted claims ascribed to the artist's identity.

Vulnerability, apathy, and lack of agency, drawn from the language to describe "the poor," constituted social and cultural claims about the artist that drove the NEA's emerging program of artist-centered support. Commentators inside and outside the NEA repeatedly raised concerns over the "welfare of the artist"[41] or the "survival of the artist,"[42] framing how the government, as well as critics, museums, galleries, and foundations, should engage with artists. Arguing for the proper role of the government in the lives of artists, painter and Special Assistant Attorney General Joseph Rothman argued, "It would seem that in a climate where art is important, government treats the artist as a 'ward of the state,' as one who by virtue of his vulnerability to exploitation must be sheltered from the vicissitudes of a free-enterprise system."[43] Beyond attaining subsistence income, for instance, concerns over the artist's unique vulnerability indicted an inequitable system that prioritized the interests of all but the artist. The artist's own personal apathy, however, nuanced these structural claims of vulnerable exclusion.

Personal traits or individual characteristics like ignorance, hopelessness, and a tendency toward inert apathy also constituted the NEA's modeling of the artist. "[U]nlike almost all other professionals, [artists] tend to be amazingly ignorant of their legal rights," wrote lawyer Robert Projansky in the pages of *Juris Doctor* for a special issue focused on art law.[44] Projansky, whose famed contract *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement* I discuss later in the chapter, expressed to the magazine's attorney readership the peculiar nature of working with and

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[41] Joseph James Akston, "Art, Fraud, and Equity," *Arts Magazine*, February 1966, 12.

[42] Roger Stevens, "The State of the Arts: A 1966 Balance Sheet," *Saturday Review*, March 12, 1966, 67.

[43] Joseph Rothman, "The Artist and His Rights," *Arts Magazine*, March 1966, 9. Rothman served as a Special Assistant Attorney General appointed by Lefkowitz.

[44] Robert Projansky, "The Perilous World of Art Law," *Juris Doctor*, June 1974, 15. Projansky's reflection is from the mid-70s but it offers a summary of his experiences working with artists, which began in the 1960s.

on behalf of artists. “Often artist themselves are a source of frustration. As clients, many tend to be stubborn, impractical, and loath to follow advice.”[45] For Projansky, proper representation and advocacy meant, “being able to deal with the people who inhabit [the art world].”[46] The artist that the NEA and engaged advocates like Projansky identified was both victim to broad societal norms that undervalued and marginalized their worth, and also hampered by personal traits, making the improvement of their underserved status a matter of structural change and project of individual improvement.

Writing in May 1963 about artist’s lofts and the problem of affordable housing and studio space, Geldzahler noted his surprise that artists associated with the Artists Tenants Association (ATA) collectively organized with one another. While discussing the ATA’s successful 1961 campaign to create the M1 artists-in-residence zoning variance, which legalized some loft-dwelling in downtown Manhattan, Geldzahler insisted, “artists like to think of themselves as individuals and anti-organization,” which made this instance of collective action and political participation an “unusual move.”[47] In a policy memo Geldzahler later prepared for then-Parks Commissioner Thomas Hoving in 1966, a personality-driven characterization of the traits that united artists and necessitated the government’s intervention again came to the fore. Geldzahler reasoned:

> The artist-in-residence regulation so diligntly [sic] fought for applies only to visual artists. This is manifestly unfair to the practitioners of the other arts: composers, coreographers [sic], film-makers, bassoonists, acting companies, in short all those who keep New York alive and in ferment, a place to look to and come to. All those just mentioned even when successful are uncertain in their income. All are engaged in activities which require studio conditions. Their work

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Article on Lofts for Harper’s Magazine (unpublished), May 1963, Box 10, Folder 398, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

> requires enormous open space. They make a lot of noise. They work odd hours. They are all in some sense anti-social in their habits and require special working conditions, which make them unsuited for residential areas. The definition of artist in residence must be extended to include all artists.[48]

Here, Geldzahler did not shy away from attributing an overarching demographic and personality account of the artist that could group together a diverse array of practitioners and make them legible for policy change. In the sphere of public policy formulation, the individualized artist genius not only corralled widely divergent media practitioners but also, crucially, underscored their shared character of atomization, apathetic disengagement with wider political activity, and alienation from larger forms of affiliation and social participation. The combination of vulnerability and structural exclusion on one hand and apathy and alienation on the other added up to a conception of the artist vis-à-vis their powerlessness.

Powerlessness gave these policy diagnoses and characterizations of the artist's identity an overall coherence. Geldzahler and Stevens, for example, posited an artist who possessed little to no options to resist forces that diminished their socioeconomic standing. "Artists who cannot find lofts must either live illegally in constant fear of being discovered or make do with inadequate space," Geldzahler also wrote to Hoving.[49] The idea of the powerless and helpless artist reappeared in Stevens' report on the Endowment's first year published in the *Saturday Review*. Describing to the nation for whom and why the Endowment created its aid programs, Stevens wrote, "There was the problem the creative artist faced of finding working quarters whose rentals were within his means; for his old quarters, even in a garret, were being bulldozed

[48] Memorandum To: Thomas P. Hoving From: Henry Geldzahler, Box 16, Folder 10.34, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Geldzahler provided Roger Stevens with a carbon copy of this memo and the archival record indicates he also shared the memo with journalist Grace Glueck, who subsequently wrote about Geldzahler and the NEA's emerging efforts to pilot an artist housing program with the Kaplan Fund. See Grace Glueck, "Housing the Loft Generation," *New York Times*, October 9, 1966, X28, Henry Geldzahler Papers.

[49] Ibid.

right out from under him by real-estate development projects."[50] In both private policy discussion and public messaging, the artist's relative lack of power over and against a complex array of forces—economic, social, and political—distilled the nature of the problem the NEA had to tackle. Legal scholar Monroe Price, in an NEA-commissioned study on artist's legal protection, which I discuss later in the chapter, similarly observed the prevalent sense of the artist's powerlessness. But, unlike the voices above, he demurred on its validity. Price argued such perceptions of powerlessness were, perhaps, a state of mind more than a state of affairs; he opined:

> Many participants in the process think that artists and sculptors could not get changes in their arrangements even if they so desired. As a consequence, they give little thought to the form change might take. The prophecy of powerlessness is self-fulfilling.[51]

Whether structural, personal, or both, the sociocultural policy diagnosis by Geldzahler and others attributed the artist's plight and need to deeply engrained social and cultural traits rooted in a lack of power.

Geldzahler's and the Visual Arts Program's modeling of the artist captured an identity distinct from simple deprivation or material determinants of need. Their diagnosis of powerlessness organized a qualitative set of social and political problems—vulnerability/lack of agency, isolated alienation, and non-participation—that rationalized and shaped their emerging program of artist support. Although the figure of the artist defined by the Visual Arts Program may be somewhat unfamiliar, given its departure from the conventional understanding of the artist as creative and independent maker, the foregrounding of powerlessness as a central

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[50] Roger Stevens, "The State of the Arts: A 1966 Balance Sheet," *Saturday Review*, March 12, 1966, 24–25.

[51] Monroe Price, "Government Policy and Economic Security for Artists: The Case of the *Droit de Suite*" in Nimmer, *Legal Protection for the Artist: A Series of Studies Submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts*. Price's contribution was also published in *Yale Law Journal*, see Monroe E. Price, "Government Policy and Economic Security for Artists: The Case of the *Droit de Suite*," *Yale Law Journal* 5, no. 77 (1968): 1333.

attribute of their policy identity is not unusual within the context of the Great Society.

Amidst a nation of apparent plenty, the plight of the poor began to preoccupy mainstream scholars and policy makers at the dawn of the 1960s.[52] Economist John Kenneth Galbraith published *The Affluent Society* in 1958, which included his ideas of "case poverty" and "insular poverty" as well as his warnings about income disparities and narrow conceptions of economic progress that did not properly account for social and personal well-being.[53] On the 1960 campaign trail, then-candidate John F. Kennedy foregrounded a domestic agenda targeting those out of work after a swing through Appalachian West Virginia. Troubled by the grim economic realities facing coal miners and rural families isolated from more productive urban and suburban centers, Kennedy pledged to "get America moving again" including the nation's most poor.[54] Michael Harrington's *The Other America*, published in 1962 (which became a bestseller the following year thanks to Dwight MacDonald's review in *The New Yorker*) galvanized mainstream attention on the plight of the poor and helped make poverty a broad public concern of the day.[55] Harrington's searing and accessible account of the new, obfuscated form of poverty gripping the nation's neediest people particularly sought to speak to those who were not poor—

[52] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor provides an important rejoinder to the dominant historical narrative regarding poverty's renewed legibility in the 1960s and Johnson's representation as a champion of postwar liberalism. Taylor nuances the progressive triumphalism of LBJ's example by considering LBJ and the wider establishment's commitment to private, corporate investment and the "free-enterprise system." Taylor is not alone, as other historians also have discussed how the War on Poverty's funding was never sizable enough to do the work it promised. The NEA was subject to similar constraints of resources at the outset, suffering from a misalignment between ambitious rhetoric and too little appropriation. Evaluating these flaws in LBJ's Great Society agenda writ large, however, exceeds the parameters of my discussion. For more on this terrain, see Taylor, "Who Won and Who Lost in the War on Poverty," *SocialistWorker.org*, February 4, 2014, https://socialistworker.org/2014/02/04/fifty-years-of-the-war-on-poverty. See also Taylor's related study on how these dynamics played out in housing discrimination after the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, see Keeanga-Yahmatta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (Raleigh, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

[53] John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1958).

[54] "Get America Moving Again" and "To Seek a New Frontier" were key slogans in JFK's 1960 presidential campaign.

[55] Dwight MacDonald, "Our Invisible Poor," *The New Yorker*, January 11, 1963.

the beneficiaries of prosperity and those in power. It also cogently set the terms for the broadly social and cultural orientation the War on Poverty prioritized.[56]

Harrington's main assertion in *The Other America* was not just that poverty was widespread, but that poverty was hard to see—that it was invisible. Harrington stated, "The other America, the America of poverty, is hidden today in a way that it never was before. Its millions are socially invisible to the rest of us."[57] His particular concern with the fact that so many could not see poverty struck at the heart of his argument that blindness thwarted the nation from summoning the social and political will to relieve poverty. *The Other America* asked its readers to "perceive passionately" so that "the unskilled workers, the migrant farm workers, the aged, the minorities, and all the others who live in the economic underworld of American life" could return to focus.[58] Harrington's conjunction of "other" and "America" cast self-critical attention to the crisis befalling a mis- and under-recognized American poor who had slipped outside the nation's vision of the body politic. Arguably more impactful, however, was the way in which the invisibility of this other America encouraged a policy orientation that demarcated the poor in social and cultural terms.

Harrington's attention to the invisibility of poverty framed his key claims about what made poverty in the midcentury new and different. The poor in the 1960s were rendered invisible, Harrington argued, by the remapping of urban geographies that further segregated the poor from prosperous suburban landscapes and "removed poverty from the living, emotional experience of

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[56] For a discussion of the impact of Harrington's book, including Kennedy's reported interest in it, see Maurice Isserman, "Foreword to *The Other America*," in *The Other America*, by Michael Harrington (New York: Scribner, 2012), ix–xx.

[57] Harrington, *The Other America*, 2–3.

[58] Ibid, 17 and 2.

millions upon millions of middle-class Americans."[59] He described the ways the poor were made unseen by mass consumer culture that flattened appearances and submerged inequity behind material sameness.[60] Most of all, as "the first minority poor in history, the first poor not to be seen, the first poor whom the politicians could leave alone,"[61] the new poor, according to Harrington, were politically invisible:

> It is one of the cruelest ironies of social life in advanced countries that the dispossessed at the bottom of society are unable to speak for themselves. The people of the other America do not, by far and large, belong to unions, to fraternal organizations, or to political parties. They are without lobbies of their own; they put forward no legislative program. As a group they are atomized. They have no face; they have no voice.

Together, the poor's invisibility, social isolation, and political alienation amounted to Harrington's most well-known claim. "The poor are caught in a vicious circle; or, The poor live in a culture of poverty," pronounced Harrington. "Poverty in the United States is a culture, an institution, a way of life."[62]

Such a claim popularized a theory of poverty's cause based on cultural terms, and powerlessness was a central facet of his formulation. "One of the most important things about the new poverty is that it cannot be defined in simple, statistical terms," explained Harrington. Instead, he offered alternative frameworks, identifying the poor's lack of "aspiration," their "loneliness," and the ways in which they were more "politically powerless than ever before."[63] "Everything about them, from the condition of their teeth to the way in which they love is

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[59] Ibid*,* 4.

[60] Ibid, 5.

[61] Ibid, 9.

[62] Ibid, 16. Harrington was not the progenitor of the phrase; he drew the idea from Oscar Lewis. The popularity of the idea, however, can be attributed to Harrington.

[63] Ibid, 10-13.

suffused and permeated by the fact of their poverty," proposed Harrington, articulating a provocatively broad assertion that betrayed the all-encompassing scope of his culturally-driven framework. He concluded:

> There is, in short, a language of the poor, a psychology of the poor, a worldview of the poor. To be impoverished is to be an internal alien, to grow up in a culture that is radically different from the one that dominates the society. The poor can be described statistically; they can be analyzed as a group. But they need a novelist as well as a sociologist if we are to see them. They need an American Dickens to record the smell and texture and quality of their lives. The cycles and trends, the massive forces, must be seen as affecting persons who talk and think differently.[64]

While neoconservative political tacticians would later appropriate and weaponize the "culture of poverty" idea, in *The Other America,* Harrington's use of the keyword "culture" sought to attribute poverty to factors larger than the individual. "The individual cannot usually break out of this vicious circle. Neither can the group, for it lacks the social energy and political strength to turn its misery into a cause," specified Harrington. "Only the larger society, with its help and resources, can really make it possible for these people to help themselves."[65] Harrington's understanding of poverty as a vicious circle, an institutionalized norm, and deeply ingrained cultural condition hoped for a large-scale solution that matched poverty's multifaceted nature and all-encompassing scale.[66]

The Other America, central among an array of popular, social scientific, and public policy studies like it, ultimately inspired, instead, a narrower policy response that rejected a New Deal style solution.[67] "Powerlessness" dovetailed with a "philosophy of liberalism" that contended

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[64] Ibid, 16-17.

[65] Ibid, 15.

[66] Isserman, "Foreword," xvi–xvii.

[67] *The Other America* was a part of a corpus of social scientific interest in the poor's cultural distinctiveness. See also Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, *Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs* (New York: Free Press, 1960); Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (New York: Basic

with forces constraining a federal role, as political scientist Sidney Milkis explains:

> Implicit in the philosophy of liberalism that emerged during the 1960s was the view that the problems afflicting the well-to-do and the poor could not be solved by centralized administration and federal largesse alone but required a more creative intervention of the state that would address the underlying causes of social and political discontent: alienation, powerlessness, and the decline of community.[68]

What Milkis calls a "creative intervention of the state," Cruikshank, in her study of the War on Poverty, further explicates as a technology of citizenship. Cruikshank scrutinizes how a particular invention of what she calls a "citizen/subject" precedes technologies of citizenship, like the War on Poverty. Cruikshank claims:

> Technologies of citizenship do not cancel out the autonomy and independence of citizens but are modes of governance that work upon and through the capacities of citizens to act on their own. Technologies of citizenship are voluntary and coercive at the same time; the actions of citizens are regulated, but *only after the capacity to act as a certain kind of citizen with certain aims is instilled*.[69]

The sociocultural claims about the poor and their powerlessness "helped create an administrative category of policy analysis out of a vast assortment of divided people," instilling "the capacity to act as a certain kind of citizen." Regarding "the poor" in the War on Poverty, her argument clarifies that:

> "the poor" cannot have interests of their own until and unless they are constituted as a group. That did not happen until the War on Poverty was waged; government did not repress the poor but invented the poor as a group with interests and powers.[70]

Powerlessness was both the content of the particular plight of the poor and a model that determined for whom, how, and to what ends the government's anti-poverty action would unfold.

Books, 1959); Oscar Lewis, *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty—San Juan and New York* (New York: Random House, 1966).

[68] Milkis, "Lyndon Johnson, the Great Society, and the Modern Presidency," 3.

[69] Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 4. Emphasis added

[70] Ibid, 86.

Although Geldzahler and his fellow advocates of the artist lacked a landmark text like *The Other America*, their modeling of the artist vis-à-vis their powerlessness found precedence and support in this broader anti-poverty discourse and policy landscape.[71]

Geldzahler essentially exchanged the poor with the artist, appropriating the characteristics and diagnoses of powerlessness in order to define his own policy target. The NEA's claims about the neglect, vulnerability, and lack of governmental recognition artists suffered, as well as traits like alienation and capacities like non-participation, meant more than conventional bohemian myths at this particular historical moment. Utilizing and extending the idea of powerlessness, the NEA similarly "invented" the artist as a group with interests, problems, and aims, priming the artist for their own "creative intervention" or "technologies of citizenship." As the next section will show, the Museum Purchase Program and the NEA's study of artist's legal protection exemplify how Geldzahler and the NEA's appropriation of the poor manifested in specific actions that converged with the privileged tenets of the Great Society era.

Converging with "Opportunity" and "Empowerment": Museum Purchase Program and *Legal Protection for the Artist*

With the prevailing diagnosis of powerlessness guiding policymakers inside and outside the arts, "opportunity" and "empowerment" became tenets of the Great Society's policy posture,

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[71] *The Other America* actually contains a very brief discussion of artists. In a chapter entitled "Three Poverties," Harrington describes whom he calls "the poor who are intellectual, bohemians, beats." While he observes that this "intellectual poor" share experiences similar to "established cultures of poverty," like inadequate housing, job insecurity, and hunger, Harrington writes, "[…] they do not really enter into the culture of poverty. They have chosen a way of life instead of being victimized by it. They are passing through, either moving back toward the larger society or achieving a place in literature or the arts. They do not participate in the atmosphere of defeatism and pessimism that permeates the lives of the truly poor." For Harrington, the majority of the intellectual poor were formed in the middle-class and "come to the slums of the other America, to the physical life of impoverishment, because they are fleeing a spiritual poverty in the affluent society." Given his limited discussion, it's hard to evaluate Harrington's assertions about artists, but his distinction between the intellectual poor and the regular poor as a matter of choice is noteworthy. See Harrington, *The Other America*, 83–88.

especially in the War on Poverty. These were tenets that indexed the era's desire to moderate forms of direct aid (i.e. direct relief, work relief, etc.). LBJ crafted what some insiders called "an opportunity crusade," believing that the War on Poverty should look like a building up of access to opportunity whereby the poor could achieve their own empowerment.[72] When he first declared his "unconditional war on poverty" in his State of the Union address in 1964, he named "opportunity" as a main policy ideal:

> Unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope—some because of their poverty, and some because of their color, and all too many because of both. Our task is to help replace their despair with opportunity.[73]

In practice, the vision to replace despair with opportunity ruled out job creation, stronger entitlements, or expanding the guarantees of a social safety net. Instead, the government's action across the realms of the Great Society insisted that ameliorating powerlessness—or supporting "empowerment"—should consist of programs that encouraged the poor's "maximum feasible participation" and supposed self-improvement:

> The war on poverty is not a struggle simply to support people, to make them dependent on the generosity of others. It is a struggle to give people a chance. It is *an effort to allow them to develop and use their capacities, as we have been allowed to develop and use ours*, so that they can share, as others share, in the promise of this nation […][74]

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[72] Quoted in Milkis, "Lyndon Johnson, the Great Society, and the Modern Presidency," 10.

[73] "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," January 8, 1964 in *The Public Papers of the President of the United States: Lyndon Baines Johnson*.

[74] Lyndon B. Johnson, "Total Victory over Poverty" in *The Great Society Reader: The Failure of American Liberalism,* edited by Marvin E. Gettleman and David Mermelstein (New York: Random House, 1967), 182. Emphasis added.

The War on Poverty imagined that the best way to empower the poor was "a hand up, not a handout" approach, as policymakers in the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, informally conceived of their work.[75]

Having appropriated features of the poor and powerlessness for the artist, Geldzahler and the NEA devised initiatives that strategically positioned artists towards commercial opportunities and adjusted their environmental, economic, and legal conditions—altogether directing their capacities for their own participation and self-improvement. Despite Geldzahler's repeatedly professed commitment to the ideal that government involvement in the arts should "channel funds directly to the artist," the nature of the Museum Purchase Program and *Legal Protection for the Artist* study were consistent with the broader posture that eschewed direct aid. Moreover, the program and larger beliefs Geldzahler and the NEA held about their programs harbored misrecognitions of opportunity and empowerment that were endemic to the period.

Museum Purchase Program

Geldzahler considered the Museum Purchase Program (hereafter MPP) his second most important initiative after the Visual Artists' Fellowship, which is described in a subsequent section.[76] Evidence of the lasting impact of the MPP lives on in the credit lines of artwork labels mounted in museums across the country that usually read something like, "National Endowment for the Arts Purchase Program with matching funds […]"[77] On its face, MPP enabled museums

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[75] "Opening Opportunity to All," Sargent Shriver Peace Institute, August 20, 2018, http://www.sargentshriver.org/blog/opening-opportunity-to-all.

[76] Paul Cummings, oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 27 January 1970–23 February 1970, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 51–52.

[77] For example, the credit line for Frank Stella, *Warka I*, 1973 in the collection of the Denver Art Museum reads, "Funds from National Endowment for the Arts Purchase grant and anonymous donors," see "Warka I," Denver Art Museum, accessed June 5, 2021, https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/object/1974.77.

to acquire artworks with financial help from the government. Geldzahler offered a seemingly straightforward rationale for the program in his draft proposal (notice how the curator invokes the artist):

> There are approximately one hundred and fifty museums, civic centers and universities in the United States that have shown interest in contemporary American art. They demonstrate a great geographical spread. If fifty of these could be given ten thousand dollars to be matched three to one in their community, for the purchase of painting, sculpture, graphics, etc., directly from living American artists of their choice, the program would cost five hundred thousand dollars for the year and two million dollars would pass *directly into artists' hands*.[78]

Alluding to direct subsidy or the direct provision of resources, Geldzahler argued that purchasing artworks was in essence another kind of transfer of money "directly into artists' hands."

The NEA approved a modified version of Geldzahler's original proposal in June 1968 and the program began with the following parameters: the MPP granted fifteen institutions in fourteen states $10,000 on a matching basis; the NEA provided $10,000 and the grantee institution had to match the grant with another $10,000, which most often came from private, municipal, or corporate donations.[79] The MPP's primary stipulation instructed grantees to acquire artworks made by living American artists.[80] Regarding how grantees could use the money, Geldzahler sought to leave as much discretion to the institutions as feasible, stating, "Whether they spend everything on one major purchase or attempt to build a broadly based

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[78] Museum Proposal Memo to National Arts Council from Henry Geldzahler, April 12, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.32, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Emphasis added.

[79] *Annual Report 1968,* National Endowment for the Arts, https://www.arts.gov/about/publications/1968-annual-report.

[80] Ibid.

collection with these funds should be up to the purchasing institutions."[81] Finally, Geldzahler and a panel of experts selected museums according to their demonstrated interest in contemporary American art.[82] Furthermore, Geldzahler's MPP appeared to provide another source of income, an empowering material gain in terms of the artist's economic standing, through the coordinated action of artists, museums, dealers, and private sources of patronage.

The War on Poverty similarly executed much of its actions through an analogous communal structure, the Community Action Program, also referred to as Community Action Agencies, or CAPs. Formally established by Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, CAPs grew out of pre-existing entities addressing so-called juvenile delinquency. CAPs met the desire for "[…] action initiated against poverty at the point closest to where the people live by encouraging and inspiring local governmental units, and local private voluntary agencies, to initiate programs at the local level," as Shriver from the OEO described the program.[83] Such an organizational form was meant to be distinct from existing municipal and state government entities and also formally separate from party organizations. The locally-inflected community structure strived toward:

> [a] process of building bridges between the poor and non-poor, between government official and private groups, between professionals and laymen, between agencies which operate related programs, between the poor and the

[81] Museum Purchase Program Proposal Draft with Handwritten Annotation, ca. April 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.32, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[82] For example, the first round of grants went to: Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art (Ithaca, NY), Brooks Memorial Art Gallery (Memphis, TN), Des Moines Art Center (Des Moines, IA), Flint Institute of Arts (Flint, MI), The High museum of Art (Atlanta, GA), Milwaukee Art Center (Milwaukee, WI), Newark Museum Association (Newark, NJ), North Carolina Museum of Art (Raleigh, NC), Oakland Art Museum (Oakland, CA), Allen Memorial Art Museum (Oberlin, OH), Pasadena Art Museum (Pasadena, CA), Portland Art Museum (Portland, OR), Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art (Providence, RI), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN), and Wichita Art Museum (Wichita, KS).

[83] Quoted in Milkis, "Lyndon Johnson, the Great Society, and the Modern Presidency," 5.

> opportunities which could help them become self-sufficient, productive, respected citizens […] [84]

Yet, complicating these ideals of the poor's "self-sufficient, productive, respected" participation—or their "maximum feasible participation"—Cruikshank's study of the War on Poverty has moderated the OEO's foregoing assertions about CAPs.

Reading against the grain that imagined CAPs as a sort of entity beyond or in spite of government, Cruikshank has re-framed CAPs as a "terrain of government." "CAP set out to create a 'community' for action by legislating the decentralization of power relationships and the multiplication of power relations between constituencies," Cruikshank has claimed.[85] Within such a legislated terrain, the autonomous appearing action of the poor cannot be taken at face value, "[r]ather self-help meant that the government intervened to create relations of help between selves."[86] CAPs were structures of power that made the poor act and shaped what their action within the constructed terrain of government could look like.

In the case of the artist, although Geldzahler claimed the MPP was a "win-win" for artist and museum—reasoning that the program's design enabled "direct purchase of his [American painter or sculptor] work"—this representation of MPP makes a similar misrecognition as the one by policymakers from the War on Poverty. Like Shriver and the OEO, Geldzahler asserted yet obscured the community and power relations at stake in the MPP. Geldzahler's focus on the idea that money passed directly to the artist—or as he also put it, "An obvious way to help the American painter or sculptor is through the direct purchase of his work. An obvious way to help museums around the country is to give them purchase money to buy the work of contemporary

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[84] Quoted in Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 79.

[85] Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 75

[86] Ibid, 79.

American artists"—overlooked what actually happens in the community that MPP created.[87] Geldzahler's articulations, which are arguably a common way many in the artistic field might also understand the MPP or initiatives that look like it, does not recognize how the community action strategy underlying MPP shaped the artist's action.

Under the terms of MPP, the NEA's federal money and power did more than purchase artworks. MPP leveraged existing art world entities and intervened upon how those actors and institutions coordinated with one another and with the artist. The communities that MPP catalyzed consisted of multiple and overlapping relations of power between living artist, museum, patrons and other sources of matching support, dealers and galleries. These entities were not simply purchasing; they guided how money and power circuited through their community.

Although Geldzahler highlighted the benefit that artists would receive through the MPP, the primary agent was not the artist but the museum. Museums *qualified* for the NEA's disbursement; museums *selected* the work(s) of living artists, who were often *mediated* and *advocated* by a dealer and gallery. The relationships proliferate further when we contend with the museum's required funding match which meant they had to *seek partnership* with external sources of support usually in the form of private, municipal, or corporate donors, "stimulat[ing] local interest and patronage of contemporary art," as the NEA envisioned.[88] Finally, living artists were put in relation to these sources of matching patronage because of the museum's negotiation between its fundraising obligation on one hand and their choice of the artist on the other. These transactions and coordinated relations resonate with a reformist logic that sought to "chang[e] the environment," which Marris and Rein, in their own study of community action,

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[87] Museum Purchase Program Proposal Draft with Handwritten Annotation, ca. April 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.32, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[88] *Annual Report 1969,* National Endowment for the Arts, https://www.arts.gov/about/publications/1969-annual-report.

identified in CAPs. In a discussion on the reform precursors that ultimately defined the form CAPs took on, they observed:

> […] emphasis upon changing the environment, rather than the individual, recognized education and vocational opportunities as crucial aspects of the environment. Reform, they both believed, must grow out of a much more coherent integration of relevant institutions.[89]

Although the literal environments Marris and Rein refer to in the realm of anti-poverty social reform are admittedly quite different from Geldzahler and the MPP, the logic that elevated a "more coherent integration of relevant institutions," is critically similar to the logic of the MPP. Despite the "purchase" in the title "Museum Purchase Program," purchasing artworks was really a small action within a network of interactions and transactions that made up the MPP.

Therefore, it is important to recognize that when Geldzahler described the MPP as a mechanism that would "pass [money] directly into artist's hands," he not only mistook the full complexity of the program's intervention, but he also based the program's rationale on an, arguably, questionable premise of artist empowerment. According to Geldzahler's words, artists are empowered with a quantitative increase in income. In the case of the MPP, he and the NEA believed that artist's empowerment need only be "treated as a simple quantitative increase in the amount of power possessed by an individual," in the words of Cruikshank, who has observed a similar, misrecognized premise of empowerment in the War on Poverty. [90] "Rather than merely increasing that capacity [to act], empowerment alters and shapes it," Cruikshank specifies, however. While Geldzahler and the NEA desired a program that could empower artists and believed that "passing money" directly to them was the way to do it, altering the artist's position

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[89] Marris and Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*, 24.

[90] Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 71.

and capacities as primarily a seller of artwork was the real effect of MPP's mode of empowerment.

Converging with the structure of community action from the War on Poverty, as well as the broader tenets of opportunity and empowerment, the MPP shaped the artist's action and exercise of power through re-engineered relations of art world entities. MPP intervened upon how artists, governmental, and non-governmental entities engaged with one another, and understanding it this way forces a reconsideration of how we conceive of artist empowerment. Instead of thinking of the MPP as a program for purchasing artworks, it would be more accurate to say that it created commercial opportunities for the artist involving a range of players. MPP guided how and with whom the selling and purchase of the artist's work would take place. The mode of empowerment that MPP forged, in other words, was not a matter of simply redistributing money to the artist. Rather, it was a matter of privileging and transforming their status for market viability and inventing a procedure for the government to facilitate the process.

Legal Protection for the Artist

When Geldzahler and the Arts Council agreed to pursue legal protection for the artist, they joined an ongoing debate in the art world and the public policy realm over artist's rights and whether existing law and conditions of commerce were fair to artists. The debate was multifaceted, involving many technical issues such as forgeries and authentication of works, exploitation of artists by dealers, the artist's right to re-sale profits, conditions on royalties and licensing, as well as artist's moral rights.[91] Overarching these issues were broader questions about how stakeholders transacted with one another (artist, dealer, buyer, owner), how

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[91] Joan Kee provides a detailed overview of the broad and complex debate, see Kee, "Introduction," in *Models of Integrity*, 1–41.

commercial relations and individual transactions could be regulated differently, and how the artist was a disadvantaged party needing urgent help. One instance of this debate transpired over several issues of *Arts Magazine* in the winter and spring of 1966. Geldzahler followed these issues himself and the positions recorded in the magazine's pages give us a sense for how he and the Arts Council understood the problem when they approved "legal protection" as one of their action areas.[92]

In February 1966, *Arts Magazine* editor Joseph James Akston penned a special editorial entitled "Art, Fraud and Equity."[93] Akston had been following New York Attorney General Lefkowitz' hearings on legal protections for the artist and sought to steer the direction of the hearings' objectives. For Akston, the artist's equity in the artwork buying-selling transaction was of primary concern. He saw fraud and forgery less as an issue of authentication per se, and believed instances of fraud were symptoms of a system that left no place for the artist after the initial sale of his work on matters of financial interest or otherwise. Akston argued fraud and other related matters could be more properly handled if the artist enjoyed a "residual interest in his work that extended beyond initial, physical ownership, an interest that continued to exist no matter how many times a work was resold or otherwise changed hands."[94] In addition to proposing artists enjoy residual rights to resale profit, as well as other moral rights,[95] he further suggested this change happen via congressional legislation that authorized "an appropriate government agency" and non-profit entity (the music industry's regulatory entities ASCAP and BMI were his examples) to administer and regulate these residual interests. At the end of his

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[92] Typed reply from Akston to Geldzahler regarding his letter to *Arts Magazine*, Box 16, Folder 10.34, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[93] Akston, "Art, Fraud, and Equity."

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

editorial, Akston invited input from the magazine's readers, and their replies over several months indexed an intensity of interest in improving the "welfare of artists."[96]

Letters to the editor by artists, dealers, museums, and elected officials echoed or complicated Akston's residual rights proposal. In the subsequent March 1966 issue, the magazine granted painter Joseph Rothman, who was serving as a Special Attorney General in Lefkowitz' hearings, with a guest editorial. In a piece entitled, "The Artist and His Rights," Rothman discussed key privileges musicians and literary authors relied upon in contrast to visual artists, who were creative producers without robust legal protections.[97] Building on Akston's initial proposal, Rothman discussed *droit de suite*, the statutory mechanism utilized in France and other European nations to afford visual artists a share of an artwork's resale profit. Translated into English as an "art proceeds right," *droit de suite* appeared, to Rothman, and Akston before him, as well as to many others at the time, like a ready solution that could furnish visual artists with financial and legal remedy against an art market system many perceived to be stacked against them. That remedy was the "right to follow up" on subsequent resale of a visual artist's individual works so that a stipulated portion of the work's increase in value would be shared by the artist and the seller. In essence, *droit de suite* offered a transactional right that would be established and administered by the government. Rothman also posited what such a statute said about the French government's treatment of its nation's artists. He saw in *droit de suite* a desirable relationship in which an advocacy government held artists as "wards of the state."[98] *Droit de suite* was not just an economic measure for Rothman but a moral intervention to protect artists, understood in this case as uniquely vulnerable subjects deserving of

[96] Ibid.

[97] Joseph Rothman, "The Artist and his Rights."

[98] Ibid.

governmental assistance and protection.[99]

Legislators' responses to the expanded role of state and federal government advocated by Akston, Rothman, and others ran the spectrum. Senators Claiborne Pell and Edward Kennedy agreed that Akston's proposal deserved "full" and "serious" consideration.[100] While expressing interest in Akston's proposition, other senators, such as Joseph Clark, Daniel Inouye and Philip Hart, questioned whether the federal government could realistically provide the proper remedy.[101] Museum leaders joined this heterogeneous chorus, many sharing Akston and Rothman's concerns over the apparent imbalance of protections offered musicians and writers vs. visual artists. Others like, Sherman Lee, Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art challenged the grounds of the proposal, writing, "I am afraid you are asking for special treatment [for the visual artist] which is morally and legally untenable."[102] Thus, while there was clear and overwhelming acknowledgement of the artist's inequitable legal and commercial position, the back-and-forth about the practical terms of the *droite de suite* proposal underscored a deeper policy issue and tension regarding artist's legal rights: whether the federal government had, or should have, a role to play in ensuring the artist's legal rights, and, if so, what that role should be.

Geldzahler and the Visual Arts Program took steps to find a viable solution by commissioning a study led by the legal scholar Melville Nimmer, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law and considered an authority on copyright and intellectual

[99] Ibid.

[100] "Letters Art, Fraud and Equity," *Arts Magazine*, March 1966, 11.

[101] "Letters Art, Fraud and Equity (Continued)," *Arts Magazine*, April 1966, 8.

[102] "Letters Art, Fraud and Equity," *Arts Magazine*, March 1966, 11.

property law.[103] Writing to NEA staffperson Devon Meade on July 18, 1966, Nimmer outlined initial ideas for how he and a team of experts could study, analyze, and comment on the "laws applying to the arts and legal rights of artists."[104] *Droit de suite* was one among many topics that Nimmer identified. Following a September 28, 1966 meeting with Nimmer in Los Angeles, the Visual Arts Program received his final proposal for a study and made a grant of $25,000 to fund it.[105] Entitled *Legal Protection for the Artist: A Series of Studies Submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts*, Nimmer and his team formally submitted their findings two years later in 1969.

The main questions Nimmer and his team explored were: *droit de suite*'s legal and economic basis; *droit de suite*'s design and its use in France, Italy, and Germany; technology's impact on copyright law; and the use of *domaine public payant* also in France, Italy, and Germany.[106] Nimmer's summary introduction sympathized with the wide interest in *droit de suite* and the broader concern many held about the disparity of protection for visual artists in existing copyright statutes that better served musicians and writers. Nimmer stated:

> The problem arises from the fact that conventional copyright protection though meaningful to writers may be irrelevant to painters and other creators in graphic arts. The prime (though not the only) protection afforded by copyright is the right to control reproductions of given work…It was this disparity in meaningful copyright protection between the writer and the graphic artist that *droit de suite*

[103] According to LexisNexis, *"Nimmer on Copyright* is the most cited copyright treatise with citations in more than 4190 U.S. cases, including 22 U.S. Supreme Court decisions." LexisNexis, "Nimmer on Copyright," accessed May 12, 2020, https://store.lexisnexis.com/products/nimmer-on-copyright-skuusSku10441. See also Norman Abrams, "Melville B. Nimmer: A Special Kind of Man," *UCLA Entertainment Law Review* 1 (1994): 4–6.

[104] Typed letter to Meade from Nimmer, July 18, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.33, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[105] Typed letter to Devon Meade and Henry Geldzahler, October 3, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.33, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. *Annual Report 1967,* National Endowment for the Arts, https://www.arts.gov/about/publications/1967-annual-report.

[106] There were nine studies in total.

was intended to correct.[107]

Despite the conventional assumption that held up *droit de suite* as an ideal remedy for achieving artists' legal protection, however, the study reached the opposite conclusion that "*droit de suite* does not constitute the most effective means for aiding artists," Nimmer opined.[108] Nimmer's study cast expert doubt on the effectiveness of the federal government's potentially expanded legislative and regulatory role in the pursuit of "attaining adequate legal protection for the artist."[109] The report's summary recommendation especially drew from one of its individual chapter studies, "Government Policy and Economic Security for Artists: The Case of *Droit de Suite,*" authored by a member of the study team, Monroe Price.[110]

Price joined the debate over *droit de suite* and artist's legal protection by asking what kind of artist and artworks were best suited to benefit from the historical mechanism. Countering the demands for explicit government action, Price directed policymakers to reject a government-administered program of *droit de suite*. Two of his main claims were 1) contemporary artists and artworks were unsuitable for *droit de suite* and 2) there were better opportunities in a technical adjustment in the artist's contractual terms as opposed to larger regulatory change to the marketplace. The individualized scope of his recommendation—encouraging artists and their allies to pursue modifications in private transactions and contractual arrangements —echoed the MPP's shaping of the artist's action, and were another expression of the Great Society's particular emphasis on certain kinds of opportunity and modes of empowerment.

The crux of Price's suggestions prioritized "voluntary action rather than continuous

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[107] Nimmer, ed., *Legal Protection for the Artist*, I.1-I.2.

[108] Ibid, I.4.

[109] Ibid, I-1.

[110] Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I am unable to provide the pagination from the original Price chapter, so the following citations are based on the same study's publication in the *Yale Law Journal*.

government intervention."[111] He saw the greatest potential in various modifications that could be made to the way artists, dealers, and buyers conducted their private bargaining with one another. Price also recommended that actors adjust "bargaining power" to better account for or favor artists.[112] Focusing on changes at the contractual level, which also relieved the burden of still undetermined constitutional merits, Price advised and reminded: "Private bargaining does not require an elaborate rationale; if an artist arranges for additional future compensation by contract, he does not have to say it is 'just' or 'necessary' or 'encourages the arts.'"[113] He mentioned the following areas that artists and their advocates could make contractual adjustments to: reproduction rights, dealer practices, royalties, and non-financial controls such as display and moral rights over the integrity of the literal work. If there were a function that government could take on, Price narrowly stipulated that it should do no more than "furnishing information" and transparency in order to encourage "fair voluntary bargaining takes place."[114] Price's perhaps more conservative sounding recommendation shared the same motivations and aims as proponents of *droit de suite*, but instead of a government administered program Price maintained a confidence that the existing marketplace could accommodate reforms and contractual adjustments made by individuals alone.

Ultimately, Price wanted the artist himself to drive improvements in their legal protection. His study also claimed that misperceptions of relative power thwarted serious interest in leveraging private bargaining as the solution. Regarding the perception that the artist lacked agency and power—a belief held by artists and their supporters alike, as I discussed above—

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[111] Monroe E. Price, "Government Policy and Economic Security for Artists: The Case of the *Droit de Suite*," 1352.

[112] Ibid, 1356.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid, 1357.

Price declared, “The prophecy of powerlessness is self-fulfilling.”[115] He suggested behavioral issues of custom, ignorance, and even fear overdetermined “theologies” that assumed individually-driven reforms would not work. “The artist, ignorant of his rights, saddled with the concept of powerlessness, has by no means explored the limits of contractual arrangements with dealer and purchaser,” reported Price.[116] Between the lines of his legal opinion, Price urged: artists and the artistic field did not really know what reforms were or were not possible on the individual level for they had not tried.

The archival record is not clear about how Geldzahler and the NEA officially responded to the conclusions in *Legal Protection*. There were no subsequent grants or programs initiated around artist’s legal protection. The Nimmer-led study appears to have remained an internal white paper, and perhaps we can safely speculate that Geldzahler and NEA leaders agreed with the study’s conclusion that federal governmental action in the realm of artist’s legal protection should be limited in scope.

Whether or not the NEA officially agreed with the overall report’s conclusion against *droit de suite*, Nimmer’s study and Price’s recommendation were consistent with the prevailing tenets of opportunity and empowerment in the Great Society era. Price’s notion of “voluntary action rather than government intervention” evinced the prevalent belief that the “system was fundamentally sound but required mild reforms and technical adjustments so that it might provide opportunity for everyone,” as historian John A. Andrew has described LBJ’s and the Great Society’s broad policy posture.[117] The call for artists to modify their contractual arrangements and alter their attitudes towards participation in the marketplace was a

[115] Ibid, 1358.

[116] Ibid, 1364.

[117] Andrew, *Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society*, 8.

manifestation of programs that pursued mild reform and technical adjustment only. And like the MPP, that preference was manifest in a mode of empowerment that mobilized and shaped the artist's action. Rather than reconceive the structural organization of the art marketplace to carve out new or stronger protections for the artist—*droite de suite* or otherwise—the Visual Arts Program's legal experts reiterated the belief that the artist's empowerment was best realized by the artist themselves utilizing the art market's existing laws and tools.

The importance of contextualizing the NEA's legal study within the Great Society's preference for mild reforms and the larger targeting of specific capacities of individual citizens is most clear when we turn our attention to *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, a well-known contemporaneous intervention into artist's legal protection (Figure 2.5). Developed by curator Seth Siegelaub and lawyer Robert Projansky over a two-year period, the *Agreement* is considered by many to be a major achievement in the pursuit of artist's rights and artist empowerment. It is important to recognize how Siegelaub and Projansky's famed contract in fact realized the recommendations *Legal Protection* put forth. Despite this similarity or consistency, the art historical claims about empowerment that the *Agreement* has inspired in its aftermath are hard to reconcile with my analysis above.

Siegelaub and Projansky devised contractual terms that maintained the artist's right to a share of resale profits, in essence a voluntary, individualized version of what Price recommended. The *Agreement* opens with the following declaration: "WHAT THE AGREEMENT DOES / The Agreement is designed to give the artist: 15% of any increase in the value of each work each time it is transferred to the future."[118] This resale profit sharing provision may have been what attracted the most debate about the contract, but the *Agreement* also carved out related residual

[118] Siegelaub and Projansky, *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, 3.

protections that artists and other artist's rights advocates sought, including: moral rights, provisions for adjudicating proper display and exhibition, shared revenue from exhibition and loans, as well as reproduction and copyright protections. Although artists, dealers, and collectors have disagreed on the merits of the *Agreement*, which persist in its limited use and so-called failure, prevailing assessments broadly praise its effort to remedy the artist's inequity. Many consider the *Agreement* a symbol of what artist empowerment should look like.

In particular, art historians overwhelmingly hold up the *Agreement* as a representative model of artist empowerment. For example, Alexander Alberro concludes his book on conceptual art with the *Agreement*, highlighting it as an example of Siegelaub's legacy of "rupturing a number of the fundamental tenets of the art world."[119] While he mentions some of the criticism of the *Agreemen*t on the grounds that it too easily capitulated to the artwork's commodity status, Alberro maintains his belief that the project was "politically progressive in its intention." He argues the *Agreement* was a "political project that provided the groundwork for substantive artist empowerment"[120] and concludes that it was a "self-help document in line with the ethos of anti-institutional trends of the period."[121] Alberro specifically points to the explanatory preface, where Siegelaub insisted:

> The Agreement form has been prepared to be used by any and all artists—known, well-known and unknown. Simply make a lot of copies and use it whenever you give, trade or sell your work. It will be effective from the moment you use it. The more artists and dealers there are using it, the better and easier it will be for everybody. It requires no organization, no dues, no government agency, no meetings, no public registration, no nothing—just your will to use it. Just plug it in and watch it go—a perfect waffle every time![122]

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[119] Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004), 170.

[120] Ibid, 164.

[121] Ibid, 168.

[122] Siegelaub and Projansky, *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, 4.

Alberro interprets these assertions as emblematic of how Siegelaub "circumvented gallery or bureaucratic intervention" and elevated the empowered artist—a contract that required "just your will to use it," as Siegelaub put it.[123] Such an evaluation of the *Agreement* assumes that empowerment is legitimated or authenticated exclusively by the artist, the sole figure who appears to exercise agency or power in the exchange process.

In separate studies, Lauren van Haaften Schick and Joan Kee have provided more detailed examinations of the *Agreement*, especially its legal ramifications. Haaften Schick and Kee both harbor similar assumptions as Alberro's regarding the basis of empowerment. They also watch for an appearance of the artist exercising their agency alone. "It is through the Agreement's leveraging of self-governance by artists that its greatest legal, political, and performative act of critique occurs," concludes Haaften Shick.[124] The apparent absence of government, according to van Haaften Schick, led to a "self-governance" that authenticates the artist's empowered self and the merits of the artist's critique. Kee's examination of the *Agreement* does discuss the tension between government and individual action during the Sixties' debates on artists' rights, but her evaluation still holds up the *Agreement* a "universal declaration of artists' rights."[125] Her broader examination that "law was indispensable for artists seeking to broker an identity as a genuine political and social force" similarly places the greatest interpretive priority on the artist's sovereign actions.[126]

[123] Alberro, *Conceptual Art*, 68; Siegelaub and Projansky, *Agreement*, 4.

[124] Lauren van Haaften-Schick, "Conceptualizing Artists' Rights," *Oxford Handbooks Online: Law*, Oxford University Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935352.013.27.

[125] Joan Kee, *Models of Integrity*, 43.

[126] Ibid, 64.

These readings of artist empowerment by art historians—with the artist conceived as anti-institutional, entirely self-governing, and acting upon "just their will"—are hard to maintain when we acknowledge that Siegelaub and Projansky reached a similar conclusion to Price's and the *Agreement* effectively manifested expert recommendations from Geldzahler's NEA legal study. Just because the NEA and the federal government took no explicit action to intervene in artist's legal protection does not mean there was "no organization, no dues, no government agency, no meetings, no public registration, no nothing," as Siegelaub dramatically put it.[127] Within the context of the Great Society, empowerment of the artist, like the poor, entailed shaping their so-called self-help or maximum feasible participation through constructed interventions like the MPP or technical adjustments to private bargaining.

At the very least, insofar as the NEA's study of the artist's legal rights converged with the tenets of opportunity and empowerment in the Great Society, the primacy of the artist as a sovereign figure, which undergirds the conception of the artist's self-empowerment in the *Agreement*, needs to be challenged. The discourses on postwar art developing around Siegelaub and Projansky's contract, and the accounts of the *Agreement* by Alberro, Haaften Schick, and Kee, presume that artist empowerment need only be measured by the artist, through the artist's self-motivated assertion of rights. Siegelaub reiterated the narrow terms of this measurement at the end of the preface:

> We have done this for no recompense, for just the pleasure and challenge of the problem, feeling that should there ever be a question about artists' rights in reference to their art, *the artist is more right than anyone else*.[128]

When Siegelaub boiled down the question of "artists' rights" to the answer that "the artist is more right than anyone else," he reduced the question of artist empowerment to a matter of the

[127] Siegelaub and Projansky, *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, 4.

[128] Ibid. Emphasis added.

artist's primacy above all else. Indeed, this was a similar premise to Geldzahler's regarding the MPP, when he reasoned that the MPP would "pass [money] directly into artist's hands." In the case of artist rights and artist empowerment, few voices have yet to scrutinize the full faith placed on a sovereign vision of the artist, a faith that has delimited the terms of evaluating their empowerment to a question of "Does the artist have power?"

Ultimately, Geldzahler, as well as other advocates like Siegelaub, were subject to a historical perspective that obscured the conditions, systems, and institutions that frame the artist and shape what their supposed self-empowerment can and cannot look like. Geldzahler and the NEA maintained a deep-seated confidence in the existing institutional and commercial system, and converged with the prevailing policy tenets of opportunity and empowerment in order to situate the artist's "self-help" within the given commercial, institutional, and legal environment. These were initiatives of empowerment, following Cruikshank once more, in which, "the autonomy, interests, and wills of citizens [i.e. the artists] are shaped and enlisted."[129] What remains to be fully reevaluated is the valorized disciplinary misrecognition that has mistakenly accepted that empowerment at face value —based on an abiding belief in the autonomy and primacy of the artist as a sovereign figure. The question remains: "How does artist empowerment operate?"[130]

Diverging from a Determination of Need: *Federal Support for the Arts* and the NEA Visual Artist's Fellowship

[129] Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 4.

[130] My concluding remarks especially take inspiration from Cruikshank's observations on the ways "power" is admitted into political analysis. She claims, "If we are to understand how democratic modes of government work, it is essential to ask not who has power and who does not, but how does power operate?" see Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 34.

Geldzahler's negotiation between the artistic field and the political field of the Great Society was not an even exchange of ideas and processes. Alongside the NEA's model of the artist that adopted features of the poor, or the convergences of the MPP and *Legal Protection* with tenets of opportunity and empowerment, Geldzahler also diverged from the terms of social reform his work appropriated. Namely, despite their repeated evocations of powerless artists, Geldzahler and the NEA's programs on the whole did not require empirical determinations of need, neither to substantiate their claims about the artist's powerlessness nor to delineate the indicators of an individual artist's need.[131]

A historical report that Geldzahler commissioned from art historian Francis V. O'Connor, entitled *Federal Support for the Arts: The New Deal and Now*, and the early procedures of the NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship reveal this critical divergence. Firstly, *Federal Support* lays out how a "means test" was used to determine assistance to the artist for the New Deal's art initiatives. As a contrast, and as a past precedent, *Federal Support* further contextualizes what made Geldzahler and the NEA's later appropriation of "the poor" and "powerlessness" distinct. Secondly, the lack of a determination of need was most apparent in the initiative Geldzahler considered his highest achievement: the NEA Visual Artist's Fellowship. Despite the original criteria for the grant-in-aid, which said artists were chosen on the basis of "promise and need," Geldzahler and his chosen panelists did not require the latter criteria itself to be measured. Together, the divergence from determining need revealed by my examination of *Federal Support* and the Fellowship highlights the critical ramifications regarding the limits of Geldzahler's model of the artist and the potential consequences of a policy category that sought to invent a new group of policy concern, yet did not also distinguish between the real distinctions of the

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[131] Westbeth Artist Housing was an exception, and I mention this further below.

individuals grouped under "the artist."

Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now

Geldzahler's exchange between the artist and the poor had a pre-history, when the federal government involved itself in the arts under the auspices of FDR's New Deal. The Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration [hereafter WPA/FAP] and the commissioning of sculpture and murals by the Department of Treasury, commonly known as "the Section," are the best-known examples among several programs that carved out employment or "work-relief" opportunities for painter, sculptors, and other artists and craftsman.[132] This earlier intersection of the artist and the poor was the focus of the NEA-sponsored study, *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now*, commissioned by Geldzahler in the first year of the NEA's activity.

The idea to do a historical study on the New Deal era art projects came to Chair Roger Stevens' attention as early as winter 1965, before the NEA's creation. In January, Stevens received memoranda with general background on the WPA/FAP, and, with it, recommendations to study the historical precedent in greater detail.[133] Notable distinctions were drawn immediately between what happened under the New Deal versus what the future NEA would tackle. "The aim of a National Arts Foundation would not, as the WPA was, be to provide across the board employment or relief for artists in all fields," the memorandum insisted.[134] Consistent with the Great Society era, Stevens and his staff basically ruled out direct aid at the outset, citing

[132] For more on these programs, see A. Joan Saab, *For the Millions: American Art and Culture Between the Wars* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

[133] Memorandum for Roger L. Stevens from Betsy Knight, January 7, 1965, Box 7, Folder 86, Francis V. O'Connor papers, Archives of American Art.

[134] Ibid.

the National Science Foundation as a more appropriate reference, which was an entity that made select interventions to support individuals of demonstrated excellence rather than investments in a large group. Unlike the New Deal era federal art projects, "unemployment relief for the destitute artist" was considered an impossible basis of intervention in the minds of Stevens and his staff.[135]

After continued discussion over subsequent months, a study design emerged around an idea to produce an inventory of New Deal era artworks, and the Archives of American Art (AAA) were forecasted as the study's likely investigators. Stevens and colleagues, such as AAA Director W. E. Woolfenden, curator Richard Wunder from AAA, and National Collection of Fine Arts Director David Scott, aimed to ascertain where works of mostly painting and sculpture produced by the various New Deal art programs ended up in order to assess their past and present monetary value. Stevens, in particular, hoped to find out whether the government's acquisitions of artworks—what he called "investments"—could be validated through the presumed increased market value of the New Deal era project artists' most successful participants.[136] Jackson Pollock was top of mind for Stevens and it was through Pollock's widow, artist Lee Krasner, that Stevens met Frances V. O'Connor, a historian of Pollock's work.[137]

On December 17, 1966, O'Connor chaired a meeting with Stevens and stakeholders from AAA to finalize what they entitled, "The Federal Art Project Index." At this stage, they were still focused on the physical fate and monetary value of the artworks created and allocated under the

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[135] Ibid.

[136] Memorandum to Roger Stevens from David W. Scott, July 27, 1965, Box 7, Folder 86, Francis V. O'Connor papers, Archives of American Art.

[137] Typed letter from Francis V. O'Connor to Roger L. Stevens, October 20, 1966, Box 7, Folder 86, Francis V O'Connor papers, Archives of American Art.

auspices of the federal art projects.[138] They also envisioned an "archive devoted to reassembling in terms or documents and photographs all available information concerning the activities, creations, and personalities involved with the Federal Art Project."[139] The project's accounting and study of New Deal era art objects would eventually be national in scope made possible through an initial grant award of $100,000. The plans for the Federal Art Project Index, however, changed drastically after Geldzahler stepped into the process in early 1967.

Scuttling the original design, Geldzahler's intervention changed the aims and size of the commissioned report. After O'Connor and the AAA submitted their proposed nationwide index in February 1967 for NEA and NCA consideration, Geldzahler spoke separately with O'Connor by phone and two months later, in April, by letter. Geldzahler wanted the budget of the project reduced and he asked O'Connor to take the reins unilaterally. Writing on April 14, 1967, Geldzahler said to O'Connor: "We [Geldzahler and Stevens] would like such questions answered as: How successful was each of these projects? What kind of mistakes were made? Can we profit today from these successes and disasters?"[140] And instead of the $100,000 that had been proposed, Geldzahler countered with a significantly smaller project budget at $20,000.[141] O'Connor supplied an amended $48,000 proposal to Geldzahler a few weeks later in May 1967.[142]

O'Connor accepted Geldzahler's demand for a less costly study and created an alternative

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[138] Meeting Attendee List, Agenda, and Prepared Remarks by Francis V. O'Connor, December 17, 1966, Box 7, Folder 86, Francis V O'Connor Papers, Archives of American Art.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Typed letter from Geldzahler to Francis O'Connor, April 14, 1967, Box 7, Folder 86, Francis V O'Connor Papers, Archives of American Art.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Typed letter from Francis O'Connor to Henry Geldzahler, May 1, 1967, Box 7, Folder 87, Francis V. O'Connor Papers, Archives of American Art.

version that narrowed scope to New York State and City and virtually eliminated the project's original aim to catalog New Deal era artworks. Instead, O'Connor offered to study the lived experience of artists who participated in the government's two main programs: the Section and the WPA/FAP. He proposed collecting and analyzing survey data from a sample of project artists, and on the basis of the survey's quantitative and qualitative results, as well as select interviews and archival research, O'Connor promised to assess the "economic and cultural effectiveness" of the federal art programs. He also indicated the WPA/FAP would be the study's primary concern as it was not designed with the strict parameters of commissioning characteristic of the Section. O'Connor included his hypothesis that:

> The WPA/FAP, on the other hand, had two farsighted goals. The first was to preserve and nurture the skills of indigent artists; the second, to cultivate a broader national consciousness of the value of artistic creativity through a program of exhibitions and community art centers…By emphasizing relief for all needy artists rather than the acquiring of quality art, it provided innumerably young artists with eight years in which to find themselves and develop their talents.[143]

The proposal for the amended study with the new title *Federal Support* met the NCA's approval in Spring 1967—to the consternation of stakeholders at the AAA whose own grant proposal was rejected before reaching full NCA review.[144] At AAA, Wunder writing to Woolfenden could only speculate on the surprise dead end, wondering whether the outcome was Geldzahler's responsibility, "But putting two and two together I believe it was Henry Geldzahler's doing. He is Roger Stevens' advisor on the visual arts, and apparently he was afraid that Stevens was

143 Ibid.

144 Correspondence indicates the approval went through in the spring, followed by the official awarding in August 1967. National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Grant Award Letter to Francis V. O'Connor, August 11, 1967, Box 7, Folder 86, Francis V. O'Connor Papers, Archives of American Art. The final amount of the grant award was $43,000.

apportioning too much of his budget for a single project."[145] Wunder's speculations about budget constraints and Geldzahler's influence likely had merit. Without a doubt in any case, Geldzahler's entry into the process dramatically reshaped the study from artworks to a quantitative and qualitative description of artist's experiences and outcomes.

The findings and recommendations contained in *Federal Support* were based on a multi-part questionnaire that demarcated three major areas of inquiry. The first area of inquiry was "A questionnaire for each of the art projects you worked on" in order to collect information on the administration of the given federal program and the artist's experience in it.[146] For the WPA/FAP participants, for example, survey questions ascertained the artist's assigned skill classification and in which divisions the artist worked; where, how, and in what duration artists completed their work; and how the work was received by supervisors and program administrators. The second, "A questionnaire concerning your past and present professional activities," focused on cultural impact, seeking data on the nature of the artist's activities during the New Deal and in the present. Measuring cultural effectiveness relied primarily on qualitative answers to survey questions that asked, for example:

> "For how many years were you an artist before you sought employment on a government project?",
>
> "Did your work on the projects bring you your first public recognition? Yes_ No_ If yes, give details"
>
> "When you left the projects, were you able to continue your career as an artist? Yes_ No_. Give details:"[147]

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[145] Typed letter from Richard P. Wunder to William Woolfenden, June 7, 1967, Francis V. O'Connor Papers, Archives of American Art.

[146] Survey Cover Letter and Questionnaires, February 1968, Box 7, Folder 88, Francis V. O'Connor Papers, Archives of American Art.

[147] Ibid.

The third and final area of inquiry, "A questionnaire concerning your past and present economic status," sought to assess the artist's economic outcomes in the immediate aftermath of their New Deal participation and twenty years later. Diagnostic questions measured economic effectiveness by seeking, among other determinants: the artist's average annual income from 1933–1943, sources of income, family size, as well as value of standard type works from 1933–1943. To construct the long-term comparison of economic outcomes, the questionnaire asked the same questions based on the participant's then-present circumstances in 1967–1968.[148] The study's questionnaire also captured baseline demographic data including: sex, age, level of education, and non-artistic employment.

Although *Federal Support* ultimately disapproved of the WPA/FAP's use of a means test to certify artists for employment on account of what O'Connor called its "hardship and humiliation," the contrasting empirical terms by which the artist and the poor intersected in the New Deal era are informative.[149] Across the WPA, quotas dictated the permissible proportion of relief vs. non-relief employees and rules of financial eligibility determined each program's hiring practices. O'Connor's findings made clear that the FAP was no exception. The artist's qualification to receive government work-relief was an official determination conferred after comprehensive examination of the candidate's background and financial status by municipal relief systems or welfare bureaus.

Federal Support described residence as the first qualifying category, and prospective relief recipients needed to prove New York state residency of at least two years. Relief bureau investigators then determined whether the candidate had "the means to furnish the necessities of

[148] Ibid.

[149] Francis V. O'Connor, *Federal Support for the Visual Arts*, 68–69.

life for himself and his family."[150] In practice, O'Connor explained, lack of job or income was not sufficient. Artist applicants had to also prove they were not in possession of other forms of assets that could be converted into cash such as savings, stocks and bonds, insurance, or property. O'Connor emphasized the extreme demonstration of need artists and other relief applicants had to meet when he relayed:

> During the early period of the WPA/FAP in New York City, it has been stated that the ruling about real property extended to include refrigerators, radios, etc., and that an applicant was required to strip himself of personal possessions in order to qualify for relief, often creating real hardship.[151]

O'Connor further explained the invasive degree to which assessment for relief qualification could pursue, such as the possibility of home investigations when "investigators would be so thorough as to examine the contents of the refrigerator," according to *Federal Support*.[152] The artist like all other impoverished candidates had to be virtually destitute to partake in the government's direct employment and work-relief scheme. *Federal Support* underscores that in the New Deal era's exchange between the artist and the poor, artists underwent the same screening as any other prospective impoverished job candidate seeking work relief.

What is illuminating about the means test is not whether the manner or goals were appropriate or inappropriate; rather, as O'Connor's report underlines, it is the fact that the artist had to undergo such a screening at all. Since the WPA/FAP was a work-relief program housed within the WPA, the New Deal's federal assistance to the artist did not cohere around the artist as a discrete and separate policy or social reform category. Instead, "the artist" was effectively a job, not an identity or culturally-described policy subject. Unlike the Great Society era, when the

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[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid, 70.

[152] Ibid.

NEA's modeling of artist appropriated characteristics of the poor and powerlessness, the artist during the New Deal was just one among many of the unemployed. In the terms of the New Deal programs, an artist who received government assistance through the employment program was first and foremost part of "the poor," so to speak. The New Deal example was a historical precedent that the NEA ultimately rejected. But as a counterfactual of the process Geldzahler and the NEA ultimately adopted, the lack of a determination of need reveals a critical divergence in the NEA's modeling of "the artist."

Firstly, the fact that artists previously underwent assessments of their actual need emphasizes that simply asserting need, as Geldzahler and the NEA's later model endeavored, was once not enough. Secondly, although Geldzahler and the NEA adopted powerlessness from the anti-poverty realm, the actual determinants of that powerlessness did not also follow with that appropriation. In the case of the War on Poverty and broader Great Society programs, professional reformers broadly proffered culturally-inflected claims of powerlessness, but they did so in concert with forms of empirical determination—the professional reformer demonstrated "technical mastery over his subject" through expert analysis.[153] Even *The Other America*, for instance, included an appendix where Harrington outlined the numerous technical studies and their "statistical assumptions and basic interpretations" that undergirded his claims.[154] The process of awarding the NEA's Visual Artists' Fellowship makes clear that while need was a stated criteria for their selection of awardees—a criterion in discursive alignment with the model of powerlessness the NEA had so appropriated for the artist—there was no appreciable requirement to delineate the actual indicators of an artist's individual need for the award's granting.

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[153] Marris and Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*, 230.

[154] Harrington, *The Other America*, 180.

The NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship

Initially and internally called "Grants-in-aid to Painters, Sculptors, Craftsmen over 25 Years of Age," the NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship was a grant subsidy that Geldzahler is credited with devising. He argued that directly awarded money was the best way to support the artist "at a crucial phase in the development of his career […] to enable him to continue his work and attain eventual financial stability."[155] The Fellowship accomplished his earliest hopes to craft an artist-centered program of support. Speaking retrospectively in 1971 about the fellowship's establishment, Geldzahler reiterated:

> It seemed to me from the beginning that the best way to help artists was to give them money and give it directly to them and not make them responsible to anybody for anything.[156]

The fellowship award was unrestricted and had no prerequisite stipulations and no required outcomes. Artists were neither selected on the basis of a proposed project nor did they have to demonstrate any specific result at the conclusion of the annual grant. Instead, in Geldzahler's time, artists were solely chosen on the basis of criterion articulated as "artistic excellence and need," or "promise, achievement, and need," as he also put it to the *New York Times* in a public statement.[157]

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[155] Memorandum on Grants-in-Aid, ca. 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.31, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[156] Paul Cummings, oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 51.

[157] Typed memorandum from Henry Geldzahler to Charles Mark, November 22, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.31, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Second quote was published in Grace Glueck, "30 Artists Here Get 5000 Grants," *New York Times*, Wednesday December 4, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

The Visual Artists' Fellowship launched with its first 60 artist awardees in the fall of 1966, each receiving an amount of $5,000 (approximately $37,000 today).[158] Over the course of his three years at the Endowment, Geldzahler oversaw the awarding of a total of 119 direct grants. The wider art field soon recognized the Fellowship as the Endowment's flagship program over the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, especially since the awardees were chosen through a panel review process that comprised independent art experts, not Endowment staff.[159] The panel review system evolved from Geldzahler's prototype process in the nascent years of his leadership at the NEA.

During his tenure, Geldzahler established three geographically-organized panels, convening figures from throughout the broad visual arts field. For example, the following art world representatives worked with Geldzahler to award the Endowment's first year of grants:

> East Coast Panel: Robert Motherwell, painter; George Segal, sculptor; Barbara Rose, critic
>
> Mid-West Panel: Martin Friedman, Walker Art Center; Edward Henning, Cleveland Museum; Richard Hunt, sculptor, Chicago
>
> West Coast Panel: Walter Hopps, Pasadena Museum; James Humphrey, San Francisco Museum of Art; John Denman, collector, Seattle[160]

As the first round demonstrated, the selection panels comprised a mix of artists, critics, museum curators, and directors, and even, in the case of the West Coast panel, a private collector. Geldzahler chose the panelists on an ad hoc basis, from his own standpoint as a leader in the

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[158] For context, according to a 1964 survey of members of the Artists Tenants Association (ATA), the annual median income of artists living in New York was $5,200. Data quoted in Aaron Shkuda, "The Artist as Developer and Advocate: Real Estate and Public Policy in SoHo, New York," *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 6 (2015): 1002.

[159] For an official account of the Fellowship, see Bill Ivey and Jennifer Dowley, eds. *A Creative Legacy: A History of the National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artists' Fellowship Program* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001).

[160] Letter to Sweeney from Geldzahler, November 4, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.33, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

field and based on recommendations from colleagues.[161] Panel session minutes as well as general correspondence regarding the selection process from the first round reflect an informal process wherein panelists assessed their criterion of "artistic excellence and need," based on their own personal impressions of artists and their knowledge of the field.

Minutes from the East Coast panel describe a process that privileged informal discussion, rather than empirical indicators of need, to determine the narrowing down of the eventual awardees.[162] Segal, Motherwell, and Rose met at Geldzahler's home in Manhattan's Upper West Side for a six-hour meeting from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. "The purpose of the meeting was to compile a list of the names of East Coast painters and sculptors the panel felt worthy of receiving grants-in-aid," recorded the minutes. The minutes continue:

> Each of the panelists, having been previously instructed to do so, brought with him [sic] an extensive list of names from which was compiled a master list. General agreement on thirty-two names was arrived at.[163]

Geldzahler subsequently reported of a similar procedure at the conclusion of the second and third Mid-West and West Coast panels the following month, writing, "Each panel member came to the meeting with his own list of worthy candidates. The two criteria were artistic excellence and need. In each case we feel both criteria were met."[164] Neither the minutes nor the later report detail anything further about the selection process. How were such criteria evaluated, especially "need," a category with readily available indicators, as *Federal Support* certainly makes clear?

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[161] Correspondence between Geldzahler and artists, as well as other administrators, indicate he solicited names for both awardees and people who could sit on the panels. See Letters from Katz, Motherwell, Copley. Box 16, Folder 10.31, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[162] Grants-In-Aid Program Minutes of the September 11th Meeting of the East Coast Panel, Box 16, Folder 10.31, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Typed memorandum from Henry Geldzahler to Charles Mark, November 22, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.31, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

One letter of complaint that reached Geldzahler's desk at the Endowment offers a clue into what the panels' assessment did not factor.

"My question is quite simple – just how can your panel of experts judge the value of work without at least seeing photographs?" asked Professor David E. Black from the School of Art at Ohio State University in a letter written to Meade, dated November 8, 1966.[165] Black's letter also questioned the merits of the panel's evaluation as he reported on rumors circulating in New York that speculated the panels' decisions were overly reliant on anecdote, reputation, and existing relationships. In response, Meade expressed regrets about the lack of photographs and promised that Geldzahler and the NEA would take Black's feedback into consideration. Black's suspicions are confirmed by retrospective accounts art historian Michael Brenson has cited from participating panelists. For instance, artist Richard Hunt, who served on the Midwest panel recalled:

> Members of the panel brought names or information about artists. We spent probably a day. No slides but some materials…Henry wanted individual panel members to bring up artists that they felt were talented people…obviously not someone who didn't need it, where it would be seen as an extravagance, throwing money at somebody.[166]

Certainly, it is hard to imagine this sort of process as at all defensible from the present standpoint. The lack of supporting evidence—photographic or otherwise—and rumors of insider preference all point to a final facet for understanding Geldzahler's and the NEA's appropriation of the poor and powerlessness or his exchange with the social reform of the Great Society.

Although it appropriated features of the poor and a similar diagnosis of powerlessness, "the artist" did not require actual need to be empirically verified or identified as such. The early

[165] Typed letter from David E. Black to Devon Meade, November 8, 1966, Box 16, Folder 10.31, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[166] Quoted in Brenson, *Visionaries and Outcasts*, 50.

administration of the Visual Artists' Fellowship demonstrates that while "need" was posed as a criterion for the grant subsidy, the fellowship's panel reviewers did not give that criterion any technical evaluation. There was a critical gap between conceptualization, establishment of criteria, and substantiation. That is, there was no discernible connection between the artist's presumed status as economically vulnerable, socially alienated, and powerless on one hand and the demonstration of such a status on the other. Furthermore, when we consider this lack of a needs assessment next to the New Deal's own intersection of the artist and the poor—when the artist meant no more than an employment category codified inside a work-relief scheme that *did* measure all applicant's economic standing—we have to recognize that the NEA's lack of substantiation was not just a byproduct of a program in its infancy or a program run by casual administration.[167]

What *Federal Support* and the Fellowship ultimately suggests is that the powerlessness that Geldzahler and the NEA ascribed to "the artist" only required the identity category and ascription of characteristics alone. The artist became a public policy model defined by economic vulnerability, political apathy, and an overall crisis of powerlessness. Both in process and characterization, this modeling of the artist echoed the poor, which the War on Poverty similarly

[167] I do not mean to suggest that prevailing accounts of the peer panel process are inaccurate, rather, I am suggesting they overlook the matter of need, and what the lack of determining need might mean in deeper structural terms. Binkiewicz attributes the ad hoc administration of the award to the program's process not being fully developed, "When the NEA was in its developmental phase artists had already begun to request funds for their work by writing directly to the Johnson White House or to NEA chair Roger Stevens. These artists discovered that application procedures had not yet been established and funds could not yet be disbursed at that point, however […] At first, fellowships were not awarded based upon letters and grant applications. Rather, selection was determined by nominations solicited from museum directors, art critics, art magazine editors, and artists. Established art institution leaders who were approached by Geldzahler determined which aesthetic was best suited for recognition," see *Binkiewicz*, *Federalizing the Muse*, 123–124. Binkiewicz's overriding question about the panels was about the aesthetic or style the NEA championed, her analysis does not raise any questions about the matter of need. Brenson attributes the ad hoc nature of the Geldzahler's panel process to his style or personality and similarly does not ask what the lack of empirical determination might mean. He writes, "The peer panel process he developed reflected the personality and the professional life of a knowledgeable and flamboyant New York museum curator who moved fast, avoided conflict and labor, and believed decisions about quality were immediately apparent to anyone in the know," see Brenson, *Visionaries and Outcasts*, 49.

modeled and targeted. However, in contrast to the poor of the Great Society *and* the artists of the earlier New Deal, Geldzahler's policy category of "the artist" did not require a determination of need, as if the very identity was a given.

Doubtless, many individual artists could have demonstrated the need Geldzahler and the NEA never measured. More crucially though, the lack of empirical determination speaks to a totalizing assumption and broader flattening effect that "the artist" model entails. In her analysis of "the poor" in the War on Poverty, Cruikshank also scrutinized the limits of any policy category's over determining ambition to unify a group of people, "The assumption that people do not know their own best interests is politically suspect, but that their interest do not divide them as much as they promise to unite them is unfounded."[168] The absence of needs assessment by the NEA similarly implied that the delineation of individual artist's distinct circumstances—what "divide them" versus what "unite them"—was considered insignificant or moot. If "the artist" refers to all powerless artists, why would any measurement be needed anyway, this divergence questionably implies? Yet, what specific forms of need and inequity might Geldzahler's appropriation of powerlessness actually leave out?

Of course, the essential problem is that not all artists, and their experiences, were or are so united. In a major exception to the NEA's lack of a means test, when prospective residents of the NEA's pilot artist housing project Westbeth Artists Housing had to meet eligibility requirements stipulated by the Federal Housing Administration's criteria for low-income residents, some naysayers insisted on the unsuitability or irrelevance of the needs determination. As historian Jeffrey Trask reports in his study of Westbeth:

> Many artists complained about FHA regulations that allocated space according to family size. "The largest units go to those who have produced the most babies,'

[168] Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 86.

some complained, 'not those who produce the largest scale art."[169]

In light of Geldzahler's appropriation of ideas and values from the political field, there is some strange irony in the fact that when such negotiation required more of the politically sanctioned processes of government assistance to be absorbed by the artistic field, the traditional values of an artist ensconced in or subject only to the artistic field were reasserted. Despite the power of Geldzahler's appropriation of the poor and powerlessness, which rendered the artist actionable within the political terms of the Great Society and enabled the delivery of their government assistance, the lack of empirical determinations of need reveals not only the limits of "the artist" as a modeled policy category, but also the limits of the negotiation between the artistic and political fields itself more broadly.

Friendship as Expertise and the Curator as Professional Reformer

By way of conclusion, I want to circle back to Geldzahler himself, in particular the impact of his negotiations between art and government on the curator's status in the artistic field. As he led the Visual Arts Program, Geldzahler's mission to empower artists manifested in mandates, responsibilities, and a multitude of outcomes that fell far outside the contours of the curator's conventional role as scholar, steward, or exhibition maker, for example. What could his array of activities at the NEA tell us about the status of the curator? Like the exchange between the artist and the poor that my examination of the NEA has interpreted, the professional reformer of the Great Society offers an illuminating corollary for thinking about the transformation of the curator.

For the NEA Visual Artist's Fellowship, Geldzahler assembled and steered committees of influential art world figures, whose credentials, reputations, and expertise merited the evaluation

[169] Trask, "The 'Loft Cause'," 1027.

and selection of artist grantees. Geldzahler devised a Museum Purchase Program that newly wired or rewired relations between his new federal agency, collecting museums, their institutional patrons, and commercial galleries around living artists. To paraphrase and borrow from Marris and Rein's insights regarding the professional reformer, Geldzahler was "[r]esponsible towards government, but free to work out his own policy negotiation and expert analysis," deciding how to model the artist in order to rationalize and execute the NEA's assistance.[170] In other instances, he intervened with his "influence to guide the course of any social institution," like his alteration of *Federal Support*. "In continual consultation with [the artist] whose needs he served," Geldzahler leveraged his version of "technical mastery over his subject" to shape precisely how the federal government's newly established involvement in the arts—and specifically its concern for the artist—should and should not work. In short, Geldzahler's negotiation of art and government created the curator as professional reformer.

One could perhaps argue that Geldzahler's NEA work was not really curatorial work. Yet it is important to recognize how Geldzahler's identity as a curator was the specific basis of the expertise driving his professional reformer role. Moreover, especially defined by his reputation for proximity with the artist and his multiplicity of artist friendships, Geldzahler's curatorial identity as "the artist's friend" was what substantiated the prerequisite assertion that he expertly knew the artist whom the NEA sought to empower. How the NEA rationalized and defended Geldzahler's fitness for his program directorship reveals the ways in which virtuous ideals of friendship between curator and artist—such as shared activity, a concern for the artist's welfare or needs, and a friend's knowledge of the artist's self—translated into the expertise underlying Geldzahler's turn as a professional reformer.

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[170] Marris and Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*, 222.

A year into the Visual Arts Program's operations, Alfred Frankenstein, art critic for the *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, penned a scathing criticism of Geldzahler and the NEA's first actions. "Some of the things Geldzahler says the Endowment is going to do may prove helpful. One is manifestly idiotic. But what interests me most is the general philosophy that seems to underlie Geldzahler's remarks," wrote Frankenstein.[171] The critic expressed deep reservations about a "New York provincialism" that seemed to pervade the Visual Arts Program's opening efforts, which he argued erroneously elevated the single city and its artists. Frankenstein called particular attention to the "sweet smell of success" he sensed in Geldzahler's pronouncements. The critic argued the repeated mention of "leading American artists" begged asking:

> One may seriously question if it is the primary function of a National Endowment on [sic] the Arts to heap further honors, rewards, and emoluments upon artists who already have it made. Some well-known names are doubtless desirable in the lists of those it subsidizes, but nowhere in Geldzahler's statement—or in the Endowment's own statement with reference to the grants we talked about last week— can one find anything about a desire or intention to assist those who have not already won recognition and who really need help, both financial and moral, to bring their ideas to fruition.
>
> Geldzahler and Company are coming dangerously close to establishing a Federally supported academy based on Madison Avenue values. I, for one, would feel a great deal happier about the whole business if there were less talk about the "leading" people and less mention of government subsidy for artists whose work already sells in the five-figure bracket and more mention of the untried, the unrecognized, the novel and unheard of.[172]

Against many who praised the Endowment's first recipients of direct fellowship grants, Frankenstein countered with "the untried, the unrecognized, the novel, and unheard of," worrying those "who really need help" were illegitimately passed over by Geldzahler's flawed

[171] Alfred Frankenstein, "A Question of Endowment Direction," *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, January 15, 1967. Box 16, Folder 10.30, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[172] Ibid.

values.[173] The slipperiness of the artist baked in the operations of the Visual Arts Program (especially its Fellowship)—the slippage between individual and group in a policy model of "the artist" that bypassed a means test or demonstration of need—featured in the defense the Chair of the NEA formulated in reply to Frankenstein.

In a private letter, rebutting Frankenstein point by point, Stevens tried to squash the critic's negative perceptions about the NEA's early actions.[174] Stevens' defense of Geldzahler sheds light on how the curator's status as a friend of the artist constituted the rationalizing expertise underlying the NEA's version of social reform:

> I would also like to point out that Henry Geldzahler, while working for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, from which he is on leave to us as a consultant, made his reputation by knocking on the doors of hundreds of artists who were then unknown in New York and viewing their work. If artists that are well known now were discovered by him on these trips, it is only because I think you will find Henry Geldzahler's aims are very much toward aiding the struggling artist.[175]

The image of Geldzahler the curator journeying through the city and "knocking on the doors of hundreds of artists who were then unknown" signified Stevens' central defense of Geldzahler, as well as the decisions the Visual Arts Program made. Though the NEA program was practically unable to assist all artists, Steven insisted that it was "the struggling artist" Geldzahler had foremost in his mind. Aspects of Stevens' letter also reiterated the original publicity and framing around Geldzahler's appointment.

Even before Frankenstein's questioning, Geldzahler's intimate proximity to artists—the sense that he was in on the ground and had the ear and trust of artists *as a whole*—repeatedly framed the appropriateness of his expertise and leadership of the Visual Arts Program. "In

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[173] Ibid.

[174] Typed letter from Roger Stevens to Alfred Frankenstein, January 18, 1967, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[175] Ibid.

making its choices, the council was guided by the advice of 'strategically placed' people in the arts as well as the recommendations of its own advisory group," reported the *New York Times* on the public announcement of the NEA's first three program directors. "Mr. Geldzahler, just turned 30, is known as a very 'in' man on the New York art scene who discovers art trends almost before they are born."[176] Here, the curator's apparent prescience about what contemporary art would be most important—especially highlighting, again, his mutual contact with artists: being "in the know" or "with the in crowd"—substantiated the prerequisite knowledge of the artist the program director mandate required.

Under the headline, "Colorful Curator, Historian of Art is Arriving on Washington Scene," Leroy Aarons elaborated on Geldzahler's in-ness and fitness for the presumably less informed readers of the *The Washington Post*, the federal government's paper of record.[177] "Washington hasn't heard much about him, this tastemaker, this Henry Geldzahler—not yet. New York has. New York is full of Henry Geldzahler, 30 years old, blue-eyed, stubble-bearded, sun-glassed, cigar stuffed," explained Aarons. The Post reporter pointed to Geldzahler's triumphant turns in the media, mentioning his steady presence on the "Newsweek, Harper's Bazaar, Herald-Tribune circuit." Aarons piece asked, "Why all the fuss over the little fellow with the blond hair and rumpled trousers and wrinkled blue shirt?"

What made Geldzahler such an expert political appointee, the NEA's professional reformer? Beyond his academic credentials, and more than his prestigious affiliation with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the idea that Geldzahler "knew the artists" was the "colorful

[176] Glueck, "US Arts Council Picks 3 Directors."

[177] Leroy F. Aarons, "Colorful Curator, Historian of Art is Arriving on Washington Scene," *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1966. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

curator's" significant characteristic. Geldzahler's knowledge of the artist was the subtext underlying so many repeated appeals to his friendship with them. Aarons further elaborated:

> When he was getting his bachelor's degree in art history at Yale between 1953 and 1957, he'd come down to New York every week and visit the galleries, the studios, the artist's homes. He got to know Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg and Kenneth Noland and Frank Stella when few people knew or cared to know them…He was in – really in – on the Pop art revolution, and the Op one that followed, and the hard edge movement and post-abstract expressionism. *He knew the artists and they trusted him.*[178]

Being in the studios and homes of artists "every week," caring for certain artists when allegedly few did, and earning the mutual trust of artists broadly: these are signifiers of shared activity, affection, and disclosure of the artist's self that made Geldzahler fit for NEA duty. Through such repeated evocations of these ideals of friendship, Geldzahler's curatorial status as the artist's friend guaranteed he held the right expertise about the artist.

In other words, friendships were what certified that Geldzahler had knowledge of the artists the NEA sought to empower. In the context of the War on Poverty, Cruikshank, extending Marris and Rein's analysis, explains how the professional reformer's expert relationship to the powerless poor rested on a similar "knowledge of those to be empowered":

> […] empowerment is a relationship established by expertise, although expertise is constantly contested. Not only the expertise of the 'experts' but also the expertise of the poor as the 'real' experts on poverty, as well as the authority of representatives of subordinated groups…[the relationship of empowerment] is dependent upon knowledge of those to be empowered, typically found in social scientific models of power or powerlessness and *often gained through the self-description and self-disclosure of the subject to be empowered*.[179]

Instead of social scientific or technical expertise in the case of the professional reformer, Geldzahler's friendships with artists predicated "the self-description and self-disclosure of the [artist] subject to be empowered." Friendship with the artist was the curator's analogous basis of

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[178] Ibid. Emphasis added.

[179] Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 72. Emphasis added.

expertise for art policy and the art world's project of social reform. Notice also how friendship offers an abstract yet powerfully evocative sense of the artist's self-disclosure that aligns, in its abstractness, with the lack of empirical substantiation in the NEA's modeling of the artist.

Cruikshank further explains that the War on Poverty's professional reformers were unique for "the link they provided between 'helping' the poor and 'self-help' on the national level."[180] Reformers were meant to hold dispassionate, scientific expertise about the poor so that the reforms they enacted could be conceived as the unmediated expressions of their modeled subjects—a displacement of power away from the reformer onto the poor. Similarly, yet distinctly, through the promises that a friend is motivated by concern for the artist's welfare, and is a part of their self-formation, what Geldzahler said about artists and what he did on their behalf could be understood as a reliable transmission of their needs and desired objectives for their empowerment, not effects of his action and power.

Along a similar vein, briefly consider another invocation of friend and friendship by Siegelaub in his preface to the *Agreement*. As he anticipated suspicions potential users might have about the contract, Siegelaub also deployed friendship to argue for the essential merits of his contract. If an artist was concerned that the *Agreement* would alienate potential buyers and put transactions in jeopardy, Siegelaub countered by insisting a bigger problem was at stake. In the preface's final section entitled "The Facts of Life: You, The Art World and the Agreement" Siegelaub reasoned:

> ALL artists sell, trade and give their work to only two kinds of people:
> - those who are their friends.
> - those who are not their friends.
>
> Obviously, your friends will not give you a hard time; they will sign the Agreement with you. The ONLY trouble will come when you are selling to someone who is not a friend. Since surely 75% of all art that is sold is bought by

[180] Ibid, 84.

> people who are friends of the artist or dealer—friends who dine together, see each other socially, drink together, weekend together, etc.—whatever resistance may appear will come only in respect to some portion of the 25% of your work that is being sold to strangers. Of these people, most will wish to be on good terms with you and will be happy to enter into the Agreement with you. This leaves perhaps 5% of your sales which will encounter serious resistance over the contract. Even this real resistance should decrease toward zero as the contract comes into widespread use.
>
> In a manner of speaking, this Agreement will help you discover who your friends are.[181]

Notwithstanding the potentially facetious tenor of his reasoning, Siegelaub's recourse to the figure of the friend sought to analogize the contractual commitment forged by buyer to artist with something like the partiality, devotion, and well-wishing for the artist that would be found in friendship. In other words, to the extent that the *Agreement* sought to establish rights and protections for the artist that Siegelaub stated were a "substitute for what has existed before—nothing," an artist's friends were, by logical extension, Siegelaub's exemplified guarantors of artist empowerment.[182] What is at stake in these various appeals to friends? How should we understand Geldzahler's story and its broad alignment of the powerless artist, artist empowerment, the curator, and friendship as the basis of expertise and legitimation of the art world's social reform?

Evaluated within the formative context of the Great Society, the early years of the NEA Visual Arts Program, led by Geldzahler, entailed a powerful exchange between the arts and government. Yet, as my introductory historiographic intervention argued, this negotiation between the artistic field and political fields has been seldom appreciated. In relation to the problem of artistic autonomy, Geldzahler's activities at the NEA firstly showed the extent to

[181] Siegelaub and Projansky, *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, 3.

[182] Ibid, 4.

which the status of the artist became so imbricated within the conditions of the federal government's aims and modes of action in the 1960s. "The Artist" was reimagined as a target of public policy; Geldzahler appropriated ideas of "the poor" and powerlessness that drew from the War on Poverty corollary and recombined age-old conventions of the artist with the norms of political practice. The convergences and divergences of Geldzahler's NEA programs and studies also demonstrated how the negotiation of artistic autonomy is uneven, not a wholesale embrace but an exchange that has its limits. Notably, only when the artist could be specifically differentiated from other artists, did the negotiation between artistic and political fields *reassert* the generalizing ideal (or fallacy) of the purely autonomous artist, defined not by indices of economic or political need but rather their role as makers of art.

However, since this story was arguably lost with Geldzahler's own absence in the art historical record, perhaps it begs the question, what, if any, was the enduring effect of Geldzahler's negotiation between the NEA's social reform and the War on Poverty? At this endpoint, I would propose that the lasting reverberation of this negotiation between art and government might have in fact sounded from the harmony of the curator's friendship with the reformer's technical expertise, as I have been pointing to in this final section. When Geldzahler facilitated exchanges between the artistic field and the political field, his friendships with artists became meaningful and operational within social reform's terms of expertise. And we might say, such an exchange also triggered a tandem shift in the realm of the artistic field itself. Social reform elevated "the artist" in the matrix of the curator's expertise. This was a privileging, I want to submit, that put curators in different relation to the artist, rather than the arts, and, triggered deep structural changes, the effects of which I think have only been discernable in the very

recent past.[183] Guaranteed by friendship, the promise of the curator's knowledge of the artist and abiding service to the artist's needs and wants may be the ultimate legacy of the configuration of the artist, the curator, government action, and social reform in the broader artistic field.

[183] I consider these changes in further depth in the Conclusion.

Chapter 3

Curator as Celebrity: The Scandal and Evasion of Henry Geldzahler's *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1969)

Introduction

The exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970* [hereafter *NYPS*] opened in October 1969, and it was Henry Geldzahler's first major exhibition after serving nine years as the Metropolitan Museum of Art's primary specialist dedicated to contemporary art (Figure 3.1). When Geldzahler passed away in 1994 many of his obituaries cited *NYPS* as his magnum opus, graciously forgetting that twenty-five years earlier the exhibition had triggered, in fact, a controversial, widely publicized scandal.[1] Whether magnum opus or scandal, however, few in the field of contemporary art history remember the exhibition today.

In the initial reception of the exhibition, many detractors deemed *NYPS* a failure. The critical rancor particularly slammed Geldzahler as a mere celebrity, someone who broke with a curator's traditional decorum and defied the museum's appropriate functions. In the recent past, *NYPS* has received some mention, but little has been said beyond adjectival descriptors: "landmark" "legendary," "groundbreaking."[2] These are platitudes deployed in service to other

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[1] See, for example, Peter Schjeldahl, "'Henry's Show'," *Village Voice,* September 20, 1994, box 20, folder 13.34, Henry Geldzahler Papers, Beinecke Library; "Milestones," *Time*, August 29, 1994, Henry Geldzahler Papers, box 20, folder 13.34; Jeffrey Hogrefe, "Geldzahler Memories: A Jester with Vision," *New York Observer*, August 29–September 5, 1994, Henry Geldzahler Papers, box 20, folder 13.34; Paul Goldberger, "Henry Geldzahler, 59, Critic, Public Official And Contemporary Art's Champion, Is Dead, *New York Times*, August 17, 1994, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

[2] The recent auction of David Hockney's double portrait *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott* (1969) as well as an exhibition in homage to *NYPS* has brought Geldzahler momentarily back into conversation at times in the recent past. See "Henry Geldzahler: Curator, influencer, cultural svengali," Christie's, February 26, 2019.

ends, not for understanding an exhibition that commentators at the time, and even now, effectively brush off as "Henry's Show."

The absence or hollow remembrances of *NYPS* are curious, however, when we take a broader look and consider the fact that *NYPS* appeared in the middle of a watershed year in the history of exhibitions. Around the same time Geldzahler conceived *NYPS,* several other exhibitions considered groundbreaking by art historians and curators were realized in the United States and abroad. This group of exhibitions, and their respective curators, is especially credited for inspiring how we experience contemporary art today. These exhibitions include, among others: Seth Siegelaub's "The Xerox Book" (December 1968); Harald Szeemann's *When Attitudes Become Form* (March 1969); Marcia Tucker and James Monte's *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* (May 1969); Lucy Lippard's *557,087* (September 1969); and Kynaston McShine's *Information* (July 1970) (Figures 3.2–3.6).[3] Around this corpus, art historians and curators have developed powerful ideas that circulate in the field of art history, museums, and curatorial practice alike, including: the evolution of the curator as creative author, the predominance of the large-scale group exhibition, the exhibition installation as a constitutive part of the artist's process, as well as the mediatized, subsidiary proliferation of the exhibition. They are also exhibitions credited with launching and legitimating vanguard tendencies of the late sixties, such as Postminimal and Conceptual art.

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https://www.christies.com/features/Henry-Geldzahler-Curator-influencer-cultural-svengali-9694-3.aspx; Natasha Gural, "'Totally Hypnotizing' Hockney Portrait of Famous Gay Couple Could Fetch $38 Million at Christie's," *Forbes*, December 16, 2018, https://www.forbes.com/sites/natashagural/2018/12/16/totally-hypnotizing-hockney-portrait-of-famous-gay-couple-could-fetch-38-million-at-christies/#3a0379765689; Julie Baumgardner, "The Met's Groundbreaking 'Henry's Show' Gets a Reprise," *T Magazine*, January 13, 2015, https://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/13/henrys-show-new-york-school-met-reprisal-paul-kasmin-gallery/.

[3] The institutions and dates for these exhibitions are as follows: *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland, March 22–April 27, 1969; *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, May 19–July 6, 1969; *557,087*, Seattle Art Museum, September 5–October 5, 1969; *Information*, The Museum of Modern Art, July 2–September 20, 1970. "The Xerox Book" was an exhibition that took its form as a book project.

Consider the recently published, thick anthology, *Biennials and Beyond*, which brings together many of these late twentieth century exhibitions. All of them are "exhibitions that made art history," according to the anthology's sub-title and its editor.[4] *NYPS* does not make the cut. Compared to the work of his peers, Geldzahler's exhibition is at best treated as irrelevant and at worst completely forgotten.

This is a glaring oversight, however, since Geldzahler and his *NYPS* actually share more "DNA" with these exhibitions and their curators than commentators have noticed or have been willing to acknowledge. Points of commonality include: an impresario-like curator at center, public scandal in the wake of the exhibition's opening, artist-determined mode of exhibition realization, as well as the exhibition's advanced integration with commerce and publicity. While it could be said that the Abstract Expressionist and Color Field painting that *NYPS* prominently featured makes Geldzahler's exhibition different from those of his peers, such a distinction relies exclusively on the content of the exhibition, obscuring the structural conditions their curatorial practice all potentially shared. Given these similarities between *NYPS* and other contemporaneous exhibitions, we might ask: what makes *NYPS* different from the rest, and why has he and his "landmark" exhibition been largely excluded from analysis?

Chapter 3 analyzes Geldzahler's negotiation of the structural relationship between artistic, economic, social, and journalistic fields, as exemplified by *NYPS*. Although my opening remarks have signaled some doubt about the received reputation of *NYPS*, the very scandal that has inspired such superficial impressions is my point of historical intervention. Reading against the grain of Geldzahler's scandal reveals how *NYPS* and its major features were symptomatic of broad shifts in the artistic field due to the increasing "intraconversion" or exchange between

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[4] Bruce Altshuler, ed. *Biennials and Beyond—Exhibitions that Made Art History Volume II: 1962–2002* (London: Phaidon Press, 2013).

artistic, economic, journalistic, and social capital during this period.[5] In light of this deeper transformation in the structural organization of cultural production, I argue that the scandal projected "the curator as celebrity" as an evasive response. Scrutinizing Geldzahler as a celebrity, the curator could personify, and be held solely responsible for a broader artistic field detractors feared was in decline. The curator as celebrity mitigated the waning of artistic autonomy and the apparent shattering of what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has called the "*illusio* of cultural practice," or the beliefs, values, and stakes of the artistic game.[6]

The first section presents the institutional circumstances of the exhibition and its realization. In part an overview of *NYPS*, this section situates the exhibition inside the broader context of the Met, namely, the museum's Centennial Celebration. In conversation with Daniel Boorstin's notion of the "pseudo-event," this section considers how all-encompassing publicity and financial objectives of the 100-year anniversary project left little of the museum's activities

[5] I borrow the concept of "intraconversion" from James English's economics of cultural prestige. English uses the term intraconversion to describe the "exchange or translation from form to form" of all types of capital (social, cultural, economic, etc.) in and out of the artistic field. I will refer to the numerous kinds of exchange between the artistic, economic, social, and journalistic fields as examples of intraconversion. See James F. English, *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 10–12; James F. English, "Winning the Culture Game: Prizes, Awards, and the Rules of Art," *New Literary History* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2002), 126.

English's work bears important parallels with preceding work on the intersection of the museum with cultural conditions produced within a capitalist political economy, for instance, see Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 73–102; Carol Duncan and Allan Wallach, "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis," *Marxist Perspectives* 4 (Winter 1978): 28–51; Rosalind Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October* 54 (Autumn 1990): 3–17. For further related accounts of the museum and capital intraconversion, see also Saloni Mathur, "Museums and Globalization," in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. Bettina Messias Carbonell (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 510–516; Mignon Nixon, et al., "Round Table: Tate Modern," *October* 98 (Autumn 2001): 3–25; Andrea Fraser, "Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk," *October* 57 (Summer 1991): 104–122; Rosalyn Deutsche, "Property Values: Hans Haacke, Real Estate and the Museum," in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 159–192; Martha Rosler, "Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience," in *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), 297–339.

[6] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 227–228.

untouched, including *NYPS*.[7] The efforts of the planners of the Centennial Celebration to increase the institution's power and prestige through public recognition and financial gain amounted to a novel, more open embrace of commercial practices on the part of the museum. This institutional embrace of commerce will be shown to be a pivotal, even if latent, ground for the rise of the curator as celebrity. The latter half of section one examines Geldzahler's and the museum's rhetoric regarding the exhibition's art historical aims, as well as the curator's selection process, exhibition installation, and sources of curatorial influence. Geldzahler's celebrity effectively embodied and absorbed the imbrication of the artistic field with commercial and publicity practices—of which, as this section will demonstrate, he and *NYPS* were only a small part.

A few months before *NYPS* opened, reporter Grace Glueck first publicly named the exhibition "Henry's Show."[8] The possessive moniker stuck, succinctly foreshadowing the awe and suspicion Geldzahler would court with *NYPS*. The second section of Chapter 3 reviews the scandal that erupted after the exhibition's opening and interprets how the scandal framed the reception of *NYPS* as virtually just about Geldzahler, in particular his celebrity. Across the art-political spectrum, critics and commentators collectively pilloried *NYPS* for an array of alleged mistakes. This section reviews the debate over the exhibition's inclusions and exclusions, Geldzahler and the museum's transparent friendliness to money and social power, and the exhibition's alleged star treatment of America's avant-garde. While the exhibition's detractors were the most vocal, this section also considers how many observers welcomed and celebrated both the exhibition and the transformation of the artistic field that the exhibition appeared to

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[7] He coined this term in Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961).

[8] Grace Glueck, "Hanging Henry's Show," *New York Times*, August 3, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

manifest. In total, I discuss how the scandal projected the curator as celebrity as the root cause for the exhibition's failure, making Geldzahler the personification of the fears over an artistic field compromised by its exchanges with commerce and media.

In the third and final section, I draw comparisons between Geldzahler and *NYPS* with better-known or better-remembered exhibitions by curators such as Lucy Lippard, Seth Siegelaub, and Harald Szeemann. It will become clear that if one looks beyond the specific art content of the exhibitions, Geldzahler was not alone in advancing an artistic field that relied increasingly upon exchanges of artistic capital with economic and social capital to facilitate processes of artistic production, consumption, and reception. The operational similarities of these other curators and exhibitions demonstrate how Geldzahler and his peers were all serving as what literary scholar James English calls "agents of intraconversion." Regardless of the particular qualities of the art that each advocated, they determined and facilitated the rules of artistic and non-artistic capital intraconversion, innovating how their exhibitions functioned as "instruments of cultural exchange."[9] Acknowledging that Geldzahler was much more similar to his late sixties peers than prevailing frameworks have allowed, I finally propose that Geldzahler's scandal as a celebrity curator provided a strategic function for the art field in the 1960s–70s. He was, in effect, a scapegoat, and his fall could preserve the belief in an artistic field conceived as an autonomous "world apart," as Bourdieu put it, even when his and other exhibitions of the time manifest how imbricated the artistic field already was.[10] Attacking the curator as celebrity amounted to an evasive tactic that preserved belief in an idealized sense of artistic autonomy when nothing else, such as the relative vanguardism of the artwork or the

[9] James F. English, *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 10–12.

[10] Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 59.

curator's status as a creative author, could sublimate the blatant and strengthening force of negotiated exchanges between art and commerce shattering, and structuring, the artistic field. In turn, this similarity to his contemporaries will be marshalled to demonstrate a disparity of treatment within the histories of art and exhibitions, less in order to exonerate Geldzahler than to problematize a generation of curatorial pioneers who have not been regarded critically enough.

Origins and Realization of *NYPS*: The Centennial Celebration and the Installation

NYPS was not just Geldzahler's first major curatorial project, or the Met's first contemporary art exhibition, it was also the inaugural exhibition that launched the museum's 18-month long Centennial Celebration. The Met reached the 100-year anniversary of its founding on April 13, 1970. Almost exactly four years before *NYPS* opened to the public and began the Centennial, then-director James Rorimer, trustees of the museum, and other senior leaders initiated their multi-year project to plan and execute programs that could mark the milestone anniversary.

At the very outset, Centennial planners crafted ambitious fundraising, programming, and publicity goals that, in various ways, exceeded the status quo and involved the entire museum. "During the years that led up to this opening event, virtually every Museum staff member was involved in some way in creating and executing the array of exhibitions, publications, and educational and social activities that the celebration comprised," notes Linda Sipress in the museum's self-written 1972 report on the institutional campaign.[11] As the Centennial developed, the celebration became much more than a birthday event, especially with the appointment of two

[11] Linda Sipress, *The History of the Centennial Celebration of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 12. This self-published account by the museum provides a broad overview of the Centennial's planning, events, and major exhibitions. My account partly draws from this, as well as records related to the Centennial from the museum's archives.

important players in 1966: Thomas P. F. Hoving, who would become the museum's director after James Rorimer's sudden death in May of that year, and George Trescher, who would oversee all the details as the Secretary of the One Hundredth Anniversary Committee.[12]

Hoving, Trescher, and the Centennial pursued novel forms of publicity and media promotion, commercial enterprise, and financial sponsorship that triggered no less than a wholesale transformation of the museum's position across artistic, economic, and social fields. The activities and goals they devised had little past precedence in the realm of the museum. The Centennial helped naturalize and make conventional what has since become familiar museum industrial operations, such as blockbuster exhibitions, publicity-driven corporate underwriting, and product development and retailing of artwork-derived consumer goods.[13] Unavoidably, the Centennial Celebration became the formative context for *NYPS*. While Geldzahler and his

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[12] Hoving's name is without a doubt more familiar than Trescher's to art historians. His directorship would prove a transformational decision for not just the Met but also the field of museum management. Over his ten-year tenure, the Met became known for revolutionizing (or irrevocably changing as some would describe it) the relationship between museums and commerce. In particular, Hoving is often thought to be one of the primary figures that made the "blockbuster exhibition" a dominant form of exhibition-making in the late twentieth century, especially with *Treasures of Tutankhamun* (1976). In part, the Centennial, which took place ten years before *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, gave Hoving an opportunity to try out his first experiments in the convergence between museum and commerce.

According to archival records, George Trescher met with Rorimer before the director's passing, and Rorimer had told his colleagues of his intention to select Trescher for the post. Public relations and magazine publishing was Trescher's training before joining the Met, having worked for Time, Inc, and on periodicals such as *Life* and *Sports Illustrated*; Letter from J. Richardson Dilworth to Roswell L. Gilpatric including George Trescher professional biography, February 16, 1966, Box 3, Folder 5, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York; Letter from James J. Rorimer to Roswell L. Gilpatric, May 4, 1966, Box 3, Folder 5, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

At the time of his death in 2003, Trescher had accomplished a long career in fundraising that his position at the Met ostensibly launched. After the Centennial, he opened his own fundraising firm in 1972, George Trescher Associates, and became known as New York City's "Benefit Guru" and "Master Fundraiser." See Richard Severo, "George Trescher, 77, Master of Fund-Raising," *New York Times*, June 6, 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/06/nyregion/george-trescher-77-master-of-fund-raising.html.

[13] For more on the blockbuster exhibition, see Richard E. Spear, "Art History and the 'Blockbuster' Exhibition," *The Art Bulletin* 68, no. 3 (September 1986): 358–359; S.J. Freedberg et al., "On 'Art History and the 'Blockbuster' Exhibition'," *The Art Bulletin* 69, no. 2 (June 1987): 295–298; Brian Wallis, "Museum Blockbusters: The Art of Big Business," *Art in America* 74, no. 6 (1986): 28–33. Thomas Hoving's memoir about his ten-year directorship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art also provides a personalized account of his direct hand at the creation of the blockbuster exhibition form, see Thomas Hoving, *Making the Mummies Dance: Inside the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

celebrity was targeted by many critics as the embodiment of a scandalous penetration of the artistic field by non-artistic capital, which I will discuss later, it was in fact the Centennial Celebration that established the deeper and pervasive ground for the exchange between art and commerce, impacting not just Geldzahler and his exhibition, but transforming the entire museum.

The Centennial Celebration

Centennial planning officially began with a brainstorming meeting on October 27, 1965. Attendees included Rorimer, Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., the museum's Board President; Thomas Hoving, who at the time was Curator of the Cloisters; Theodore Rousseau, Curator of European Paintings; Dietrich von Bothmer, Curator of Greek and Roman Art; and Harry S. Parker, special assistant to Rorimer. Minutes from this meeting, as well as subsequent others, show that planners put quite nearly everything on the table: from exhibitions, events, and media production to commercial ventures, and academic, as well as community programming.

Demonstrating the museum's unrivaled excellence was a consistent objective in their early conceptualizations. "The greatest exhibition ever held in the Western hemisphere," summed up the planner's initial conception for the role exhibitions should play in celebrating the museum's anniversary. Ideas included a show of the "greatest gifts to the MMA," a record of the great exhibitions of the Metropolitan through the 100 years," as well as an exhibition that could "display 100 treasures of the Metropolitan," alongside loans from all over the world.[14] In addition to exhibiting art objects, the planners envisioned a Centennial that could provide a "great gathering of distinguished personalities from all over the world," including "great visitors:

[14] Minutes on Meeting Held in Director's Office, October, 27, 1965, Box 3, Folder 5, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

President Johnson, Mrs. Johnson, statesmen, UN, mayors of cities," that could be coordinated with the "Department of State to encourage heads of states to visit US during 1970."[15]

The Met also sought to extend its cultural wealth and prestige beyond its walls. They imagined "mobile units" of traveling exhibitions that could be sponsored by General Motors to roam the streets of New York City. Planners also discussed how the Met could coordinate exhibitions with other museums to complement the anniversary program.[16] If the Centennial sought to celebrate and attract attention to the Met's history and its superior standing, planners also bet that extending a hand outward would create a magnetic attraction.

Advertising, media coverage, and the back-and-forth exchange of financial sponsorship and corporate publicity also emerged as a crucial strategy to etch the Met's reputation in the wider sociocultural psyche. Months prior to their first preliminary meetings, Houghton wrote to Rorimer in April 1965 and anticipated:

> On April 13, 1970, the Metropolitan Museum of New York will be one hundred years old. On April 12, 1970, the New York Life Insurance company will be one hundred twenty-five years old [...] This is a happy, close coincidence [...] on the occasion, should not the New York Life Insurance pay some great tribute to the great museum of New York and our country?[17]

Such "happy, close coincidences" with corporations were points of convergence the Met sought out in the business world, as the museum formulated mutually beneficial and income-generating partnerships with the private sector. With the 1968 exhibition *The Great Age of Fresco*, the museum embarked on what Sipress termed a "'dress rehearsal' for Centennial exhibitions." *The Great Age of Fresco* included support from the Olivetti corporation, an experience that

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Letter from Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. to James J. Rorimer, April 21, 1965, Box 3, Folder 5, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

“encouraged the Museum to seek corporate support for Centennial events.” In addition, Sipress remarks:

> […] the print and broadcast advertising and the retail promotion done for The Great Age of Fresco set a pattern for later shows, as did the press material created for this exhibition. Television was accommodated as never before, enabling the Museum to learn how best to handle this important medium.[18]

Alongside these publicity- and fundraising-motivated partnerships with private corporations, Centennial planners also envisioned the museum assuming the role of producer. They thought up an array of potential products, including a commemorative stamp published by the US Postal Service, a Centennial Medal in a limited edition run, and posters and flags designed by "great artists" who could compete for the museum's commission to design them.[19]

Another notable venture was an idea for the Met's Costume Institute, which planners predicted would be of interest to the fashion industry. The “[g]reatest fashion show" could line up the best of international fashion and charge tickets, proceeds of which would support the Costume Institute. Besides collaborations with fashion companies, they also brainstormed posters with airline companies, an Eastman Kodak-sponsored blow-up image in Grand Central Station, department store shop windows inspired by the Met's collection, and General Motors naming a car after the museum—all ideas designed to transmit a message of the Met across the city and the nation, far beyond the realm of art.[20] These commercially-driven activities sought to widen and popularize the institution's profile, turning the Met's celebration (and the reputation the celebration sought to elevate and profit upon) into a sign available for easy, rapid, and proliferate dissemination, sale, and consumption.

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[18] Sipress, *The History of the Centennial*, 15–16.

[19] Minutes on Meeting Held in Director’s Office, October, 27, 1965, Box 3, Folder 5, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[20] Ibid.

All told, the museum's senior leadership resolved that the Centennial should be a large-scale news-making event, an occasion that would draw an unprecedented amount of attention befitting its birthday milestone. To achieve this goal, planners also discussed the need to "line up the press well in advance" and to develop a multi-channel strategy that would include "professional press," "popular press," the arrangement of "special issues," television coverage, and also film, the latter of which could be distributed across networks, schools, and clubs. The priority given to media attention sought to make the Met's 100th "more than an anniversary." The planners wanted to position the Met's milestone as synonymous with "the coming of age of American culture."[21] The publicity-driven, promotion-oriented ideas the planning committee initially considered put the museum on a path wherein the veritable success of the Centennial Celebration would be measured not exclusively or even primarily by scholarly art historical contributions or showcasing of artistic excellence, but the degree to which the museum would be visited, talked about, supported, reported on, and its image and prestige reproduced in the media and by the public.

While focusing on a museum's self-promotion may seem conventional or even prosaic now, it is worth underscoring how this was not as much a given in the 1960s. The Centennial planners' investment in exhibitions, events, products, and sponsorships trumped other potential investments in the museum's future. In a 1993 oral history, Roswell Gilpatric, who served as the honorary Chairman of the One Hundredth Anniversary Committee, noted that what the Centennial became could have been otherwise. He retrospectively remarked:

> In the light of hindsight, I sometimes thought we might have overdone it—spending four million dollars with nothing to show for it after you got through except the memory of a very interesting and well-received event. We had a major dinner for all the donors to the Museum. We had all kinds of social events in connection with the opening of shows and the like, but the question naturally

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[21] Ibid.

> poses itself as to whether—if we'd used that four million dollars for art acquisitions or for building—whether we would have had a more permanent benefit to the Museum.[22]

The distinction Gilpatric acknowledged between spending money on “a very interesting and well-received event” versus “art acquisitions or for building,” underscores how priorities that sound like the status quo now were much less so in the 1960s. The choices the Met made were symptomatic of the period’s unsettled competition between intangible and tangible realms of activity.

The decision of the Met Centennial planners to focus their energies on publicity and promotion instead of other priorities such as acquisitions, staff, or the physical facilities of the museum, resonates with Daniel Boorstin’s prescient account of media's transformation of American society in *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1961). Boorstin warned of the increasing dominance of illusion over reality and how such incursion of mediatized experience was changing lived or real experience. Forecasting what theorists such as Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson would later term simulacrum or hyperreality, Boorstin argued that society's "exaggerated expectations," such as a ceaseless demand for novelty and news, drove the production, flooding, and dominance of what he called "pseudo-events."[23] Unlike spontaneous or naturally occurring events, pseudo-events precede, dramatize, and complicate reality. Specifically interested in the workings of journalism and television media, Boorstin named as typical types of pseudo-events: the interview, the press conference, presidential debates, and the news leak.

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[22] Oral History Project interview with Roswell L. Gilpatric, July 20–21, 1993, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, 45–46.

[23] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1994); Fredric Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

To further explicate the pseudo-event, Boorstin's book tells the hypothetical story of a hotel anniversary, in which the owners of the hotel turned to a public relations counsel in order to increase their prestige and grow their business. [24] The counsel's advice rejected staff changes or building and room improvements. Instead, the counsel recommended that the hotel owners "stage a celebration of the hotel's thirtieth anniversary." Boorstin writes:

> A committee is formed, including a prominent banker, a leading society patron, a well-known lawyer, an influential preacher, an "event" is planned (say a banquet) to call attention to the distinguished service the hotel has been rendering the community. The celebration is held, photographs are taken, the occasion is widely reported, and the object is accomplished. Now this occasion is a pseudo-event […][25]

The hotel anniversary is designed to "make news happen" not unlike the Met's Centennial Celebration. Boorstin posits a pseudo-event as one that is planned, whose purpose is to be reported, contains an ambiguity about what the pseudo-event really means or what effects it actually has, and, finally, they are typically tautologically designed self-fulfilling prophecies.[26]

Following Boorstin's insights, one can confidently say Met's Centennial Celebration was a pseudo-event, with the museum leaders dreaming from the outset a tautological scenario in which the Met would demonstrate its excellence through the self-orchestrated production of a news-making event. Sipress's institutional account of the Centennial confirms how the planners' initial brainstorm remained consistent throughout. "It is interesting to note that many of the ideas proposed at [the October 27, 1965] gathering did eventually contribute significantly to the

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[24] Boorstin borrows the story of the hotel anniversary from Edward L. Bernay's *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923)

[25] Boorstin, *The Image*, 9–10.

[26] Ibid.

celebration," she remarks.[27] The Centennial's four-year planning and preparation ultimately came to fruition as a massive undertaking.

The calendar for the components of the Centennial Celebration ran from the opening of *NYPS* in October 1969 through March 1971. In the area of exhibitions, the Met realized *NYPS* and four other "major Centennial Exhibitions," as well as fifteen smaller exhibitions, several of which toured from the Met to domestic and international venues.[28] Public programming related to exhibitions and the Centennial at large included galas, lectures, symposia, concerts, films, and dance performances. The museum accomplished its hope for large gatherings by inviting professional associations like the American Institute of Architects and the American Association of Museums, among others, to organize their annual meetings around the Met's Centennial.[29] There was also a "Centennial Tour" program that brought over 1,000 patrons and trustees from some fifteen other museums around the country to enjoy the celebration. These tours also presumably offered the opportunity for other museums to learn the "ins and outs" of what the Centennial was doing and how to replicate a similar enterprise for their institutions.[30]

Five special programs covering the Centennial aired on CBS and NBC, which totaled four hours of television airtime. In addition, the week before *NYPS* opened the CBS Early Evening News produced and aired five-minute segments, one dedicated to each of the five major Centennial exhibitions. Eighteen books were published and distributed by trade publishers, five color posters produced, and artist Frank Stella was commissioned to produce the so-called

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[27] Sipress, *The History of the Centennial*, 14.

[28] In chronological order of their runs, the five major Centennial exhibitions were: *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970* (October 19, 1969–February 8, 1970), *The Year 1200* (February 12–May 10, 1970), *19th-Century America* (April 16–September 7, 1970), *Before Cortes: Sculpture of Middle America* (September 3, 1970–January 3, 1971), and *Masterpieces of Fifty Centuries* (November 14, 1970–June 1, 1971).

[29] Sipress, *The History of the Centennial*, 3–4.

[30] Ibid, 5–6.

Centennial Medal. Even an LP was recorded. Entitled "Centennial Fanfares," the record contained brass, winds, and percussion fanfares that were commissioned by the museum and created by composers Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Walter Piston. The fanfares rang at the opening of each exhibition, and remained in posterity as a record sold to visitors for $1.95.[31]

Sipress' accounting indicates the museum paid for these and many other activities by achieving the following fundraising goals:

> A dozen private donors gave $1,600,000; one thousand Centennial Sponsors gave $1,000,000; and 2,300 Centennial Members gave $230,000. Twenty grants from corporations for special exhibitions amounted to more than $750,000, and more than eighty other corporations and foundations contributed $100 to $10,000 each to support other Centennial projects. Approximately $4,000,000 was raised by the Museum for expenses of the celebration.[32]

Finally, glittering social events kept the Centennial Celebration in the news over its nearly twenty-month schedule. Alongside opening festivities for each of the exhibitions, there was the "Benefactors Dinner," held at the very beginning of the Centennial Celebration and included the announcement of the Lehman Family's decision to leave the Lehman Collection to the museum. A Centennial Ball was also held for the museum's patrons in April 1970 to celebrate the actual 100th birthday (Figures 3.7–3.8). Shortly thereafter, museum planners realized their original hope for the attendance of dignitaries, particularly when First Lady Pat Nixon opened *19th Century America* on April 12, 1970.[33]

In the case of *NYPS*, the pseudo-event forces of the Centennial Celebration intersected with the exhibition in several ways. Firstly, the exhibition actually grew from a small ancillary

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[31] Ibid, 8–10.

[32] Ibid, 11. Calculating for inflation, the museum's $4M sum amounts to approximately $27M today.

[33] Ibid, 48.

offering to one of the five major, headlining exhibitions. In the early brainstorming stages, planners initially considered an idea to "sponsor an exhibition of great living artists" that could be put on "outside the museum."[34] Later, they thought of a subsidiary exhibition of contemporary American art inside the museum that could complement a large survey focused on the Department of American Painting and Sculpture, on the order of 100 works by twenty or so artists.[35] Ballooning into the independent, large-scale Centennial exhibition it actually became, *NYPS* evolved with the development of the Centennial.[36] The broader pseudo-event shaped both the literal exhibition, as well as ancillary functions *NYPS* facilitated for the museum's publicity and financial machinations.

A primary material factor that contributed to the making of *NYPS* was the exhibition's particular funding scheme. Hoving and Trescher, with assistance from the public relations firm Marshall & Bloom, secured a $147,000 grant from the Xerox Corporation for the sole purpose of supporting *NYPS*. With it, Xerox became the exhibition's lone corporate sponsor and the museum's first American corporate underwriter—what the museum described as "the conjunction of a great museum and an enlightened corporation." The brochure for *NYPS* plainly promoted the museum, the corporation, and their emblematic private-public partnership:

> In supporting "New York Painting and Sculpture", Xerox Corporation becomes the first American company to sponsor a major exhibition in the Museum's 100-year history. The company's own period of major development is contemporary,

[34] Minutes on Meeting Held in Director's Office, October, 27, 1965, Box 3, Folder 5, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[35] Precursors to *NYPS* get mentioned throughout the minutes of the Exhibition Committee. See Exhibition Committee Meeting Minutes, May 1967–1969, Box 20, Folder 5, Joseph V. Noble Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[36] To the extent that I'm aware, there is a gap in the archival records pertaining to the Centennial's exhibition planning: between fall 1965/winter 1966 and spring 1968. I have not been able to ascertain exactly when Hoving and Centennial planners asked Geldzahler to make *NYPS* one of the five feature Centennial exhibitions.

> and its record of leadership and innovation makes it a particularly appropriate sponsor of so ambitious an undertaking.[37]

Although Olivetti had served as the museum's technical first corporate sponsor, Hoving positioned Xerox's gift as a new paradigm-making model of artistic and cultural support for the US business community in particular. Hoving foregrounded such a premise, writing in the cover letter of the grant prospectus prepared for Xerox CEO C. Peter McCologh's consideration: "I would like to add here that the Museum's Trustees and I regard the Centennial as a time when partnership between the Museum and leading American corporations can become an effective force in our society."[38] Based on budget documentation tabulated just before the exhibition's opening, Xerox's grant covered nearly all of the costs associated with mounting the exhibition, which totaled around $150,000.[39]

Organizing a contemporary art exhibition like *NYPS* at the Met also meant the institution's historical reputation, symbolic status and power would shape the exhibition's rhetorical premise and set the parameters for its cultural stakes as an exhibition. Especially given the museum's longstanding conservatism toward contemporary American art, and its superlative as the nation's most important museum collection, the Met placed its canonizing function at the

[37] Exhibition Brochure, October 1969, box 12, folder 8.5, Henry Geldzahler papers, Beinecke Library. The museum received another large corporate gift from Olivetti for *Before Cortes: Sculpture of Middle America*, which they secured and announced after *NYPS* closed. Olivetti's sponsorship was publicized with a June 1970 press conference held at the United Nations and included U Thant, UN Secretary General. According to Sipress, "The United Nations was chosen as the place for this announcement because all parties, including the Secretary General, felt that the interest of a foreign-based business firm in a project undertaken by an American cultural institution was internationally significant. See Sipress, *The History of the Centennial*, 86.

[38] Letter from Thomas Hoving to C. Peter McCologh, May 8, 1968, Box 4, Folder 9, Thomas Hoving records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[39] Special Exhibition Budget Estimate Draft Number 3, October 10, 1969, Box 27, Folder 7, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, new York. Calculating for inflation, Xerox's grant was nearly 1 million dollars. The budget documentation for *NYPS* also included costs associated with travel, events, and advertising, and commercial products, making the total cost approximately 350,000 according to the documents.

fore of an exhibition they billed as “A First for the Metropolitan Museum.”[40] Especially in their public pronouncements, as well as in his essay for the exhibition, the Met and Geldzahler unabashedly accepted their history-writing task. “The extent to which even the most radical Modern Art is continuous with and dependent on tradition can be revealed as never before when that new art is exhibited alongside the art of the past,” insisted Geldzahler about the distinct advantages of exhibiting contemporary painting and sculpture in the Met’s hallowed halls.[41] On how he crafted the exhibition, Geldzahler wrote:

> As curator, my guiding principles in deciding which artists to include in the exhibition "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970" have been the extent to which their work has commanded critical attention or significantly deflected the course of recent art. These "deflectors," as they may be called, are those artists who have been crucial in redirecting the history of painting and sculpture in the past three decades. My aim has been to choose works of quality and stature by those artists who have posited the major problems and solutions of our immediate tradition.[42]

Remarking on the exhibition’s 43 artists, Geldzahler also reflected, “Not even at the height of the High Renaissance, Impressionism, or Cubism has anything like this number of artists finally seemed crucial to the development of the art of their time…and it is this sense of plenitude I hope to recreate in the current exhibition.”[43] In rhetorical terms, *NYPS* promised to demonstrate how New York supplanted Paris as the center of the modern art world, and how postwar American art constituted the United States’ own renaissance.

In private, Geldzahler described a selection process that prioritized his own individual experience and viewpoint. In an oral history recorded with the Archives of American Art (AAA) in January 1970, shortly after *NYPS* opened, he shared:

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[40] Exhibition Brochure, October 1969, box 12, folder 8.5, Henry Geldzahler papers, Beinecke Library.

[41] Henry Geldzahler, ed. *New York Painting and Sculpture 1940–1970* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1969), 23.

[42] Ibid, 23–24.

[43] Ibid.

> I went back over the fifteen years that I'd been looking at this art closely and made lists and lists of artist and just eliminated the names that didn't strike me as continuing to look as interesting as I thought they were. In other words, it was sort of a "this is your life" I suppose. There were artists whose work I had admired very much at the time […] But under the aspect of the whole period of three decades I could imagine picking one or two or even three paintings by them but I couldn't see them in seven or eight or nine paintings. And what I wanted to do was not to have so much mini-retrospectives as to show the artists in sufficient depth to give an idea of what their achievement has been. I found that I was limiting myself to forty-three artists over a period of thirty years […] Ten years from now I'll probably change my mind about a dozen of those people but I took my list around to Dick Bellamy to Clement Greenberg, to Frank Stella, to Michael Fried, to Walter Hopps, to the people that I respect most and we talked back and forth. In a few cases I changed my mind about something.[44]

The curator's personal papers, containing records related to *NYPS*, attest to the manner in which he mined his own memory and personal experience—his exhibition research files primarily consist of exhibition histories of the artists he focused upon.[45] In search of "which Pollocks had moved me, which de Koonings, etctera," Geldzahler also shared with AAA that he "went through all the monographs, all the catalogues, all the back issues of Art News, Artforum, Arts, Art International and just kept making notes…was just tracking things down."[46] Despite Geldzahler's publicly articulated curatorial claims (reinforced by the museum's own rhetoric) that *NYPS* would offer "an evaluation, a sorting out of major themes and figures"—rhetorically encoding ideals of scholarly judgment and historical authority—a decidedly personal impulse defined the selection process Geldzahler embarked upon.[47]

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[44] Paul Cummings, Oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 27 January 1970–23 February 1970, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 21. 64–65

[45] NY Painting and Sculpture Exhibition Histories, 1969, box 1, folder 14, Henry Geldzahler papers, Beinecke Library.

[46] Cummings, Oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 66.

[47] Geldzahler, *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*, 25.

A final key intersection between the Centennial and *NYPS* were the galleries that planners made available for the exhibition. For three of the Centennial's major exhibitions, planners decided to empty and refurbish the Met's second-floor European Paintings Galleries. The veritable heart of the museum, these galleries were temporarily re-designated the "Centennial Exhibition Galleries."[48] "The juxtaposition of grand and intimate spaces provides a setting for works of art of every scale," Geldzahler explained about the special opportunity to display the works of *NYPS* in this environment. "Contrary to prevalent opinion, paintings by such artists as Jackson Pollock and Morris Louis demand the same natural light in which we are accustomed to seeing Rembrandt and Monet." Totaling an approximate 52,000 square feet, Geldzahler also argued that the Met's then-unmatched square footage, with its "grand, rhythmic progression," provided an experience no other NYC museum devoted to modern and contemporary art could match.[49]

The Installation

NYPS officially opened to the public on October 19, 1969 and ran for four months, closing on February 8, 1970. A total 256,235 visitors saw the exhibition.[50] The exhibition consisted of 408 works by 43 artists spread across 36 galleries. Photographic documentation

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[48] Sipress, *The History of the Centennial*, 16.

[49] Geldzahler, *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*, 22. The other two major Centennial Exhibitions that the museum presented in the Centennial Exhibition Galleries were: *19th-Century America* and *Masterpieces of Fifty Centuries.* According to coverage in *Time*, the 35-gallery installation was "a space that would easily accommodate the entire Museum of Modern Art," see "From the Brink, Something Grand," *Time*, October 24, 1969, 84, Academic Search Complete.

[50] For comparison's sake, *NYPS* came in third in attendance after *Masterpieces of Fifty Centuries* (691,572 visitors) and *Before Cortes* (319,6l8 visitors). The exhibitions *19th Century America* (255,531 visitors) and *The Year* 1200 (230,059 visitors) followed behind *NYPS.* Sipress's report also indicates the museum had roughly 6 million visitors a year at this time.

from the museum's archives and a floor plan make it possible to reconstruct the primary features of Geldzahler's installation and to recover a sense of the exhibition's experience (Figure 3.9).

The exhibition ostensibly began as the visitor exited the museum's Great Hall and climbed the central Grand Staircase (Figure 3.1). *Mobile* (1963) by Alexander Calder floated in the barrel vault above, its white steel shapes playfully moving in contrast to the solemnity and solidity of the classicizing architecture. At the top of the staircase, two monumental X-like forms greeted the visitor. The first was *Becca* (1965) by David Smith whose burnished, shimmering steel arms reached towards the exhibition's archway threshold. And immediately behind *Becca*, rivulets of yellow, blue, black, and red paint streamed downward. Spanning 20 feet across, Morris Louis' *Alpha Delta* (1960) emphatically exceeded the arch's frame. Although the exhibition's entrance assembled painting and sculptures by multiple artists with contrasting and evocative arrangements of line and color, the overarching installation structure for the remainder of the exhibition inside presented nearly all of the artists one-by-one.

Most of Geldzahler's chosen artists had either a full gallery or half of a gallery to themselves. He designed the installation so that each artist enjoyed a singularly-focused presentation of their works.[51] Such a monographic organization stemmed in part from Geldzahler's selection process, which as discussed above, saw him whittle down his chosen artists to those whose achievements, Geldzahler felt, had remained durable and substantive—"seven or eight or nine paintings" not just "one or two or even three," he said. On the

[51] The complete list of artists were, in alphabetical order: Josef Albers, Milton Avery, Alexander Calder, John Chamberlain, Joseph Cornell, Stuart Davis, Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Burgoyne Diller, Dan Flavin, Helen Frankenthaler, Arshile Gorky, Adolph Gottlieb, Philip Guston, Hans Hofmann, Edward Hopper, Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Ellsworth Kelly, Franz Kline, Gabe Kohn, Roy Lichtenstein, Morris Louis, Robert Morris, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Isamu Noguchi, Kenneth Noland, Claes Oldenburg, Jules Olitski, Jackson Pollock, Larry Poons, Robert Rauschenberg, Ad Reinhardt, James Rosenquist, Mark Rothko, George Segal, David Smith, Tony Smith, Frank Stella, Clyfford Still, Bradley Walker Tomlin, Andy Warhol.

installation's monographic impulse, Geldzahler succinctly stated, "It was really a series of rooms or half-rooms devoted to Americans who had accomplished something during the period."[52]

The exhibition's circulation moved clockwise from the entrance, and the progression of single-artist or two-artist galleries flowed in mostly chronological order. Two central axes cut down the middle of the overall floorplan, but the circulation did not really permit the viewer to go through these axes and diverge from the intended path around the perimeter. Artists presented in single artist galleries included (following the order of the galleries): Arshile Gorky, Mark Rothko, Hans Hoffmann, Barnett Newman, Morris Louis, Ellsworth Kelly, Kenneth Noland, Helen Frankenthaler, Frank Stella, Josef Albers, Ad Reinhardt, Joseph Cornell, Jules Olitski, Larry Poons, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Dan Flavin (Figures 3.10–3.15).

Galleries with two artists interjected this monographic sequence. Yet even in these galleries there were rarely intentional juxtapositions of works by different artists side by side. Those who shared two-artist galleries or "half-rooms" included: Jackson Pollock and David Smith, Robert Motherwell and Adolph Gottlieb, Clyfford Still and Franz Kline, and Willem de Kooning and Philip Guston (Figures 3.16–3.17).

A small selection of sculptures appeared throughout the galleries, and Geldzahler also dedicated one gallery to Minimal sculpture (giving the exhibition its most contemporary artists). In her review of *NYPS*, Lippard riffed off of Geldzahler's exhibition title calling it "the New York painting (and sculpture) show."[53] Her parenthetical additions were meant to criticize how the "treatment of sculpture was most notable for its absence," among several other faults she found in the exhibition. "The little sculpture that got into the exhibition was installed up against the wall and/or against painting like substitutes for potted plants, or set on badly made, ill-

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[52] Cummings, Oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 73.

[53] Lucy Lippard, "Museo, Museas, Museat," *The Hudson Review* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 7.

proportioned bases," observed Lippard.[54] Her acerbic assessment aside, the exhibition and archival documentation bears little contrary evidence that proves otherwise regarding the sculpture. Painting was Geldzahler's privileged interest.

Despite the exhibition's monographic impulse, each artist's respective installation was not necessarily monographic in a conventional sense. The visitor did not encounter an installation that strove for an authoritative picture of a given artist's oeuvre. Instead, the works Geldzahler specifically chose to represent an artist were those that had left not just a visual-scholarly impact, but also something more. In general, Geldzahler's installation for an artist made omissions or emphases from the artist's corpus, without explanation, and scrambled any conventional terms—like chronology or formal change—that could give the ensemble a discernable sense of objective arrangement. Geldzahler "wanted [NYPS] to be as lush and beautiful and historically important as [he] could make it," and his single artist installations also betrayed his personally inflected choices, striving to construct an all-encompassing experience of the artist rather than an orderly arrangement of their oeuvre.[55]

Consider, for example, Ellsworth Kelly's installation. Kelly actually enjoyed two galleries that showcased his paintings, sculptures, and drawings, with a total of 43 artworks. The viewer first saw Kelly's painted aluminum sculpture *Black White* (1968) (Figure 3.18). Standing resolutely in the center of Kelly's first room, almost alien-like, the sculpture's dynamic tilt formed by the joining of a black quadrilateral with a white triangle also obstructed the view of the gallery's surrounding walls. The opening vista made a stark transition for the viewer who just left a chromatic symphony of *Veils* and *Unfurls* by Morris Louis (Figure 3.15). *Black White* moved the visitor centripetally around the room, where they encountered a symphony of another

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[54] Ibid, 11.

[55] Cummings, Oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 40.

kind on the walls. All along the gallery's perimeter, side-by-side, the walls displayed Kelly's plant drawings—delicate black lines of pencil or ink that described schematic outlines of plant specimens, such as avocado, gingko, and oak. *NYPS* was the first time Kelly had ever shown these drawings in public. Contrasting solid black and white planes in the sculpture with delicate black lines on white paper in the drawings—abstract, elemental shapes beside the natural outlines of plants—Geldzahler staged the viewer's first encounter with Kelly's work in such a way that exceeded the artist's simplistic affiliation with postwar abstraction.

The second Kelly gallery repeated a similar play of views, whereby an evocative, perhaps, confounding first view evolved as the spatial experience unfurled. Into the next gallery, with the tilted *Black White* behind them, the viewer confronted in the middle of their field of vision an upright, almost floating blue rectangle (Figure 3.19). As they moved further and around, they then discovered the white painted aluminum piece on the ground that formed the 90-degree angle that holds the blue plane up in the sculpture *Blue White Angle* (1966). To the right, the thirteen panels making up *Spectrum V* (1969) formed a kind of *allée* of canvases, echoing the blue rectangle. The components of *Spectrum V* also moved the visitor down the second gallery to view the remaining works in the Kelly installation (Figure 3.20).

Notwithstanding his verbal pronouncements that mimicked an expert objectivity—technical sounding ideas, such as "deflectors," or the liberal invocation of notions such as "works of quality" and the museum's role of "evaluation" or "sorting out of major themes and figures"—Geldzahler also admitted, in his catalogue essay, "This exhibition represents my view of the historic impulse that produced such continued excitement and high achievement in the past three decades."[56] He registered, if subtly or unconsciously, an ambivalent, uncertain edge

[56] Geldzahler, "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970," 25.

between objectivity and subjectivity, historical evaluation versus personal viewpoint, which did not cut squarely for many critics. As discussed in greater depth later in the chapter, inclusions and exclusions of certain artists dominated the scandal over the exhibition. In addition, the selection of artworks and the installation strategy, discussed here, also raised consternation about the appropriateness of the artworks Geldzahler selected for a given artist.

For example, critic Hilton Kramer took particular aim at the presentation of Kelly's artworks. Kramer insisted Geldzahler made mistakes by showing the artist's drawings and also the other works in general:

> It apparently did not occur to Mr. Geldzahler that if an entire gallery of Ellsworth Kelly's drawings required a place in this exhibition, then Willem de Kooning's drawings—and Arshile Gorky's too—required similar. Not that the selection of Mr. Kelly's work gives anything like a coherent account of his career—far from it. Mr. Geldzahler simply has no eye for the way this artist's work has developed—nor for many another.[57]

Bracketing whether Kramer's critique did or did not have merit, it is important to recognize what Geldzahler's installation essentially sought to accomplish. Insofar as Kelly's installation represents the kind of experience *NYPS* created for many of its artists, key features of Geldzahler's installation strategy included: designing and constructing dramatic encounters with galleries as a whole and with single artworks, emphasizing similarities or contrasts based upon the perceptual determinants of the work(s) rather than chronological or other technical characteristics, and leveraging the single-artist structure to create settings that communicated the artist's contribution as a single signature.

The sources of curatorial inspiration Geldzahler named around the time of *NYPS* and also later in his life offer some context for his installation decisions. As his first major exhibition, Geldzahler, in fact, had relatively limited prior experience installing artworks. Geldzahler named

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[57] Hilton Kramer, "A Modish Revision of History," *New York Times,* October 19, 1969.

Rene d'Harnoncourt as one direct influence, professionally and curatorially. Not only did Geldzahler and d'Harnoncourt closely collaborate on the NEA's early initiatives, Geldzahler learned from The Museum of Modern Art director some curatorial "tricks of the trade," so to speak:

> I went to his office very often. I'd sit there for hours and watch him on the telephone, watch him with his papers, watch him planning the installation of the Picasso sculpture show, which had a great influence on the way I planned the installation of the New York Painting and Sculpture Show.[58]

Geldzahler also explained that the lessons from d'Harnoncourt's installation planning included learning about the "method of building three-dimensional models and having maquettes for each piece and moving them around for months in advance," a strategy Geldzahler had not been aware of before.[59]

According to Michelle Elligott's research on d'Harnoncourt's "art of installation," d'Harnoncourt continually experimented with a consistent set of strategies, including: experimentation with vistas in a gallery and open vistas across galleries, controlling the visitor's movement or flow, a preference for "groupings" based on visual and cultural "affinities," as well as a keen interest in assessing what d'Harnoncourt called the "visual weight" of a work's physical or emotive reality (Figure 3.21).[60] After completing *The Sculpture of Picasso* (1967) exhibition, d'Harnoncourt reflected:

> The most important thing about installation is that preparing an exhibition is serving the artist and an installation is no good if the installation impinges or

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[58] Cummings, Oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 66. Geldzahler goes on to credit d'Harnoncourt for teaching him how to negotiate between different constituencies, remarking "But I think most important, I was able to see how he dealt with avant garde artists on the one hand and with trustees on the other; always with a courtliness, a gentleness, and an understanding of the whole picture which was unique. It was an education."

[59] Ibid, 38.

[60] Michelle Elligott, *René d'Harnoncourt and the Art of Installation* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2018).

> becomes more important than the works of art. The whole purpose of displaying something is, in a sense, to help the communication between the work of art and the public, and the only good installation is one where people forget the installation and remember the work of art.[61]

Although many critics criticized Geldzahler's installation as one that "impinges or becomes more important than the works of art," which I will discuss later, Geldzahler evidently learned several lessons from d'Harnoncourt's example. In *NYPS,* the choreography of the viewer's movement into, through, and out of galleries, as well as Geldzahler's own emphasis on formal affinities—sympathetic and contrasting—that structured the viewer's encounter with the artworks, evince d'Harnoncourt's method.

Later in life, Geldzahler also credited another MoMA curator, Dorothy Miller. On Miller's series of "Americans" shows, Geldzahler reflected in 1984:

> I suddenly realized that the avatar for the Underknown concept was the series of Americans shows that Dorothy Miller mounted at the Museum of Modern Art in the forties, fifties, and sixties. These exhibitions had a profound effect on me, as a young curator, and indeed on the psychological climate in which new art is introduced.[62]

Geldzahler also implicitly affirmed Miller's model in his oral history interview from 1970, when he said that he agreed with critic Thomas Hess, who reviewed *NYPS* and said the exhibition should have been called "43 Americans," a tacit reference to Miller's widely known series.[63] Indeed, Geldzahler stated part of his intention with *NYPS* was to "recapitulate the experience that

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[61] Ibid, 68.

[62] Henry Geldzahler, "Underknown," in *Underknown* (New York: The Institute for Art and Urban Resources, 1984), n.p.

[63] Hess's original quote reads, "The exhibition [*NYPS*] really and only is a beautiful assembly of works that should be called "43 Americans" in Thomas Hess, "Editorial: Fun City Festival," *ARTnews*, December 1969, 23. Geldzahler discusses Hess' review and his tacit agreement with the alternative title in Cummings, Oral history interview with Henry Geldzahler, 73.

[he] had had over fifteen years of looking at art."[64] He also did so by mimicking Miller's own artist-by-artist strategy.

For example, in *Sixteen Americans* (1959)—the exhibition in which Geldzahler first saw Stella's paintings, and also when he says he began to fully appreciate the import of Johns, Rauschenberg, and Kelly—Miller dedicated one gallery to each of the exhibition's artists (Figures 3.22–3.23).[65] Six years after his formative encounter with Miller's *Sixteen Americans*, Geldzahler served as the commissioner for the American Pavilion at the 1966 Venice Biennale, and he tried out the installation methods he gleaned from Miller and d'Harnoncourt (Figure 3.24). In retrospect, Geldzahler considered the Venice Biennale a "dry run" that foreshadowed the later *NYPS*. There, the American Pavilion featured single-artist installations of Helen Frankenthaler, Jules Olitski, Ellsworth Kelly, and Roy Lichtenstein, all of whom shared a status as mid-career painters "involved with color," according to Geldzahler's premise for the Biennale exhibition.[66]

Returning to the *NYPS* installation, galleries dedicated to four pre-war artists, as well as artists associated with Pop and Minimalism made exceptions to the prevailing rules of the monographic organization. With a selection of works by artists Milton Avery, Joseph Cornell, Stuart Davis, and Edward Hopper, Geldzahler grouped this older cohort as figures who "created a ground floor" for the American avant-garde (Figure 3.25).[67] Geldzahler also hoped their

[64] Cummings, Oral history with Henry Geldzahler, 40.

[65] Geldzahler describes seeing *Sixteen Americans* in Ibid, 73.

[66] Ibid, 40.

[67] An exception, Joseph Cornell did receive a single gallery adjacent to the group. Correspondence in the archive indicated the gallery of Joseph Cornell's work replicated a gallery of Cornell works Walter Hopps had previously devised, and which Geldzahler saw and subsequently asked his fellow curator to redo for *NYPS*. Geldzahler writes in the exhibition catalogue's acknowledgments, "I am grateful to Walter Hopps for securing and installing the Joseph Cornells." Geldzahler, *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*, 6. To the extent I am aware, there are no

inclusion would "provide the museum viewer, who couldn't accept any of the newer art, with a door that he or she could come through."[68] Secondly, artists associated with Pop art (Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist, George Segal, and Andy Warhol) and Minimal art (Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Robert Morris) did not entirely receive the singular treatment of the majority others (Figures 3.26–3.28).[69] On one hand, their inclusion indicated Geldzahler's confidence in their established place in American art of the postwar period. On the other hand, their group-based treatment, within a show of so many singularized presentations, effectively diminished their standing. Their installations as a crowded motley crew of artists betrayed the curator's own sense that the achievements of the postwar period, up until that point, laid more with abstract painting than the relatively recent activities in assemblage, pop, and the changing and expanding forms of sculpture in late sixties practice.

The Scandal of *NYPS* and the Curator as Celebrity

Nine Pollocks. Ten Hoffmans. Twelve de Koonings. Twenty-two David Smiths. Forty-two Ellsworth Kellys. Zero by Louise Nevelson. The names and numbers that could schematize Geldzahler's exhibition became fodder for the scandal that erupted after *NYPS* finally opened. Repeated on television, in newspapers, and in magazines in the United States and abroad,

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photographs of this installation and I have not been able to assess the exact nature of the replicated installation. According to the exhibition's checklist, there were 22 works of the artist included.

[68] Geldzahler, "An Interview with Henry Geldzahler," in *Making It New: Essays, Interviews and Talks* (New York: Turtle Point Press, 1994), 12.

[69] Geldzahler did install a corner piece by Dan Flavin in its own gallery. In her review, Lippard credits the artist for this decision, not the curator, "The only exception to the general fate of recent sculpture was Dan Flavin, who clearly insisted upon, and received, better treatment than his colleagues, so that his room was a high point." To the extent I am aware, the available records do not indicate whether or not Lippard's assertion was accurate, see Lippard, "Museo, Museas, Museat," 10.

pseudo-statistical enumerations of who was in or who was out supplied a steady injection of grease for the gears of publicity that converted scandal into attention. Dusk was falling on the Sixties and *NYPS* was the contemporary art world's newest *cause célèbre*.

Given the broader social and political tumult rocking the nation, perhaps, scandal was destined. The museum's opening celebration was postponed at the last minute after many of the exhibition's artists opted out in accordance with the "Moratorium of Art to End the War in Vietnam," part of the broader month-long nationwide Moratorium against the war.[70] Earlier in the year, the art world also saw its own homegrown agitations erupt around museums that represented traditional concentrations of political and economic power and racial hierarchy and exclusion.

On January 3, 1969, the artist Takis—with members of the recently formed Art Workers Coalition (AWC)—removed his own work from the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *The Machine at the End of the Mechanical* Age, thus inaugurating the AWC's actions for artist's rights. Following Takis' act of re-possession, AWC organized numerous campaigns through 1971.[71] Their activity culminated with demonstrations against the Guggenheim Museum and the controversial cancellation of Hans Haacke's solo exhibition. Penetrating its own hallowed domain further south on Fifth Avenue's "Museum Mile," the art world's unrest targeted the Met's institutional power more than once.

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[70] Hoving and the Metropolitan acceded to demands they observe the moratorium, including a direct appeal made by artist Roy Lichtenstein to the museum; see Roy Lichtenstein, "OBSERVE THE MORATORIUM," no date, Box 12, Folder 8, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York. The museum's wire announcing the postponement of the opening went out October 9, 1969 and read: "UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES OBLIGE THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM TO POSTPONE TO OCTOBER 16 THE RECEPTION HONORING THE ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITION NEW YORK PAINTING AND SCULPTURE: 1940–1970. WE HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN US AND THE ARTISTS ON THURSDAY EVENING THE 16TH FROM NINE TO TWELVE." See Memorandum, October 9, 1969, Box 27, Folder 7, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[71] Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 12–16.

Six days after Takis' removal, artist Benny Andrews convened the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition (BECC) for the first time in his studio on January 9, 1969. They came together to plan a protest action three days later outside the Met.[72] The group's target was *Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America, 1900–1968.* BECC's protest followed earlier negotiations and demonstrations the year before, during the exhibition's preparation. After Hoving and guest curator Allon Schoener refused to accept calls for revisions to the show—made by artists, scholars, and community members alike—the last option was public protest.

BECC targeted the exhibition's racist ethnographic portrayal of Harlem's denizens, the scholarly mistreatment of Harlem's comprehensive history and culture, and the museum's exclusion of Black art and artists. Their campaign demanded a series of institutional reforms that aimed to redress harms and avoid future mistakes, as art historian Bridget Cooks has explained:

> The BECC charged the Met with presenting a "more squalid, seamy side of life in Harlem" and accused the museum of giving up art for social science. The BECC demanded a change in the structure of the museum. They wanted Black people to be a part of the daily business of the Met as staff members in hopes that integration within the museum would solve the problem of exclusion of Black artists from the museum.[73]

Yet while *Harlem on My Mind* instigated critical attention on the failures of the museum as a whole—demanding urgent "change in the structure of the museum"—the scandal ignited by *NYPS* primarily aimed at a related but different kind of problem.

Rather than an institutional reckoning, Geldzahler drew the ire of voices across the art world denouncing *NYPS* and the curator. On top of being the exhibition's organizer and the head of the Met's then-newly created Department of Contemporary Arts, Geldzahler was also camera-

[72] Bridget R. Cooks, "Black Arts and Activism: *Harlem on My Mind* (1969)," *American Studies* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 25. See also Bridget Cooks, *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011); Susan E. Cahan, *Mounting Frustration: Art Museums in the Age of Black Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Darby English, *1971: A Year in the Life of Color* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[73] Cooks, "Black Arts and Activism," 25.

ready, perhaps too much so.[74] Enjoying a veritable celebrity in his own right, he was conveniently positioned for a media trial by fire. To be sure, Geldzahler appears to have done little to present himself as anything but the center of *NYPS*. However, critical attention that might or should have been directed at the Met was rained on the curator personally.

"This exhibition represents my view of the high achievements of the past three decades," Geldzahler declared to *Newsweek*, "fairness is not what I'm interested in, but quality."[75] Photographs published in the press depicted the curator in an equivalent authoritative guise: smoking a pipe as he pointed to examples of his luminary artist nominees or leaning with unbridled confidence against the glimmering steel surface of a David Smith sculpture (Figure 3.29–3.30).[76] Geldzahler personified the Met's monumental contemporary art exhibition, arguably, eclipsing the institution itself. When scandal erupted, then, a prevailing unanimity of observers followed the lead of the exhibition's unofficial moniker "Henry's Show." *NYPS* became Henry's mistake, handing down (albeit only superficially) its legendary and controversial reputation.

In relation to artist Hans Haacke, Bourdieu has discussed "scandal" in ways that are useful for substantively recovering the one that targeted Geldzahler. The sociologist has observed:

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[74] Geldzahler spent the early-to-mid 1960s as a curator in the Met Museum's Department of American Art. In 1967, after Thomas Hoving's appointment as director, the museum established a standalone Department of Contemporary Arts, over which Geldzahler became head, see "Metropolitan Museum Announces New Appointments and Staff Promotions," press release, June 15, 1967, Press Kits and Press Releases collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York, http://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16028coll12/id/16. In 1970, Geldzahler renamed the Department of Contemporary Arts the Department of Twentieth Century Art, which it was named for most of the subsequent decades, see Interdepartmental Memorandum, May 18, 1970, Box 21, Folder 6, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[75] David L. Shirey, "Super-Show," *Newsweek,* October 20, 1969.

[76] Photographs were part of a spread that accompanied Barbara Goldsmith, "How Henry Made 43 Artists Immortal," *New York Magazine*, October 13, 1969, 45–49, box 9, folder 346, Henry Geldzahler Papers.

> You prove that a person, almost alone, can produce immense effects by disrupting the game and destroying the rules, often through scandal, the instrument par excellence of symbolic action.[77]

While, here, Bourdieu is interested primarily in the artworks of a politically progressive artist—works that shed scrutinizing light on incursions of social and economic power in the artistic field, which typically cause scandal—his description of scandal as an "instrument par excellence of symbolic action" offers a broader point.

What are at stake in a scandal are not solely the characters and explicit disputes of the row, but also, implicitly, conditions of the symbolic or cultural realm that have been unsettled or disrupted. Regarding the place of scandal in media and celebrity culture, communications scholar P. David Marshall makes a similar point to Bourdieu's and frames the phenomenon this way:

> The construction of scandal is often a morality tale presented for wide debate and expansive parasocial gossip. Scandal represents a site where there is some kind of contestation over meaning and significance and the audience is drawn into forming conclusions about identities and actions that coalesce around issues.[78]

Following Bourdieu and Marshall's framing, if scandals indicate a deeper "contestation over meaning and significance," we need to ask: what were the specific terms of the scandal that targeted Geldzahler and *NYPS*, and what contested conditions of the artistic field do those terms reveal?

"Toy Dictator"

"I AM LOUISE NEVELSON. WHERE AM I?" reads a conspicuous sign in the cartoon that accompanied critic Ruth Berenson's review of *NYPS*, titled "The Metropolitan: Worst Foot

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[77] Pierre Bourdieu and Hans Haacke, *Free Exchange* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 84.

[78] P. David Marshall, "Introduction," in *The Celebrity Culture Reader*, ed. P. David Marshall (New York: Routledge, 2006), 12.

Forward" (Figure 3.31).[79] The sign hangs around Nevelson's neck, as if the artist were at a demonstration, like the one artists and other detractors actually staged outside *NYPS*. She stands in front of a large painting with iconic curving lines and stripes that meld into an image of its creator Frank Stella, who, unlike Nevelson, was included in the exhibition with numerous works, and was featured prominently in the show's coverage. The cartoon visualizes one of the major overarching issues in the *NYPS* scandal: acrimony over the exhibition's inclusions and exclusions.

Chronicling the talk at the Patron's Opening, editor Thomas Hess reported in *ARTnews*: "Newspaper critics chewed carpets; artists seethed. Almost everyone recited the names and categories of artists omitted from the show in the hushed indignant tones of readings from the list of Vietnam war dead."[80] A long list followed the opening lines of Hess' editorial:

> Allan Kaprow...Missing
> William Baziotes...Missing
> Larry Rivers...Missing
> James Rosati, Landes Lewitin...Not even included in the catalogue's list of artists missing from the exhibition.
> All non-Pop figurative painting...Missing
> Vicente, Cavallon, Brooks, Tworkov, Bluhm, Francis, McNeil, Jenkins, Resnick, Parker, Crampton, L.P. Smith, Sander, Liberman, Grillo, Youngerman, Ortman, Nakian, Hague, Pavia, Kiesler, Lassaw, Lipton, Ossorio, Ferber, Hare, Lippold, Stankiewicz (but the list is endless)...All missing.
> Women artists (a phenomenon in recent American Art: Mitchell, Blain, Krasner, E. de Kooning, Schapiro, Sterne, Freilicher, Wilson, Drummond, Ryan, Lindeberg, Follett, Nevelson, Bourgeois, Dehner, Marisol, Frank, Hesse—but the list is endless)...All but one missing
> Artists who don't sell well...Missing
> Ary Stillman...Missing
> But the list is endless...[81]

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[79] Ruth Berenson, "The Metropolitan: Worst Foot Forward," *National Review*, December 16, 1969, 1282.

[80] Thomas Hess, "Editorial: Fun City Festival."

[81] Ibid.

Translating the exhibition's exclusions into a somber dirge, Hess's editorial parroted the chatter and mimicked the ink spilled over these so-called victims. But he also demurred on the brouhaha that endlessly named missing artists: "There is something ludicrous, even embarrassing, in comparing a soldier killed in a tragic war with an artist omitted from a group show," remarked Hess.[82] This more essential point—a plea to acknowledge that any ruckus over exclusions was frivolous—was a minority stance, however. Many commentators squarely evaluated *NYPS* as a series of choices to be doubted.

"Equally damaging to our confidence in Mr. Geldzahler's judgment is the number of artists who are omitted from the exhibition altogether," Kramer opined in the third of his series of excoriating reviews in the *New York Times*, "The omission of William Baziotes and Richard Pousette-Dart from the first Abstract Expressionist generation is high-handed and indefensible."[83] Like the drawing from Berenson's review above, Nevelson was named repeatedly throughout the press as one of the exhibition's most shocking omissions. Rumors also circulated that her dealers Arnie Glimcher and Fred Mueller hotly contested her exclusion to Geldzahler directly.[84] Art critic Emily Genauer shared the contempt over Nevelson's snub, and she asked:

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Kramer, "A Modish Revision." Hilton Kramer wrote three reviews, the first was a longform account of the "New York School" its legacy in the more recent art of the sixties, and criticism regarding Geldzahler and his not yet opened exhibition, see Hilton Kramer, "30 Years of the New York School," *New York Times*, October 12, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. The second was a more condensed and focused version of his criticism of Geldzahler and the circumstances of the exhibition, see Hilton Kramer, "Ascendancy of American Art," *New York Times*, October 18, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. The third completed upon the exhibition's opening, see Hilton Kramer, "A Modish Revision," *New York Times*, October 19, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. I discuss some of Kramer's focus on Geldzahler later in the chapter.

[84] A copy of a telegram from Fred Mueller in the Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives suggests the rumors were true. In it, Mueller wrote to Thomas Hoving, "IT IS INCOMPREHENIABLE [sic] THE [sic] LOUISE NEVELSON IS NOT IN THE METROPOLITAN CENTENNIAL SHOW OF THE AMERICAN FROM 1940 TO 1970. SHE IS THE MAJOR AMERICAN INNOVATOR OF ASSEMBLAGE AND ENVIROMENTAL [sic] ART OF OUR

> One would like to know, for instance, what behind-the-scenes friction could have resulted in an enormous survey of 40 years of our painting and sculpture excluding even a single work by Louise Nevelson, hailed and exhibited the world over as one of the three or four major talents we've produced?[85]

While these critics expressed outrage about the exclusion of certain artists, the exhibition's most patent and damning exclusions of women (Helen Frankenthaler was the sole woman artist) and artists of color (Isamu Noguchi was the sole artist of color) was left to be raised by voices outside the mainstream media like the AWC.[86] Their leaflet (Figure 3.32), which summoned artists to join them in protest against *NYPS*, asked in its opening lines:

> WHY DOES HENRY'S SHOW HAVE NO BLACK ARTISTS, AND ONE FEMALE ARTIST? WHAT KIND OF ESTABLISHMENT HISTORY IS THIS? IS GELDZAHLER A RACIST MALE CHAUVENIST [sic]? WE ARE BEING SHOWN ONE INDIVIDUAL'S DISTORTED VIEWS.[87]

Despite the differences in their grievances—and their normally opposite positions on the art-politics spectrum—Kramer, Genauer, and AWC, among others, all shared one similar conclusion in fact: Geldzahler was the curatorial judge in error, producing an exhibition riddled with selection biases and mistaken omissions.

The accusations that Geldzahler did not have the proper fitness for curatorial judgment partly focused on his lack of scholarly objectivity, which was apparently trumped by his

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TIME." Telegram, September 16, 1969, Box 4, Folder 9, Thomas Hoving records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[85] Emily Genauer, "The New York Artists, 1940 to 1970, at the Met," *International Herald Tribune*, October 25-26, 1969, The Metropolitan Museum of Art historical clippings and ephemera files, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York. Genauer's syndicated review was printed in other outlets under the headline "Turning A Museum into a Playground."

[86] Kelly Baum discusses Geldzahler's racial bias, as exemplified by the exclusion of Black artists in *NYPS* and a letter that Geldzahler crafted in response to the furor over his exclusionary curating. Neither records in Geldzahler's papers nor the Metropolitan Museum archives indicate for certain whether the letter was ever disseminated. See Baum, "A Seat at the Table," 220. For the letter, Henry Geldzahler, "A Statement to Black Artists," see box 4, folder 109, Henry Geldzahler Papers, Beinecke Library.

[87] $1.50 FOR CULTURAL DEPRIVATION, 1969, Box 27, Folder 7, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

personally motivated advocacy. “The very size of this endeavor [*NYPS*] suggests the need of very special talents in organizing,” argued Kramer:

> A certain intellectual tact, a critical judiciousness, a firmly established perspective of inviolable intellectual distinterestedness—these would seem to be the minimal requirement. In practice, however, the exhibition has little intellectual commerce with—indeed, it shows little or no awareness of—such ideals of detachment and generosity.[88]

Kramer’s extensive listing of prerequisite ideals asserted that Geldzahler was ill fit to be a proper curator. Multiple voices across the media further argued that Geldzahler’s personal preferences took the place of the “inviolable intellectual disinterestedness” that Kramer so implored. “But as a judge, he is obliged to keep a certain detachment—and it is on this score that he is most often criticized,” *Time* magazine reported, “Relentless in promoting artists he likes, Geldzahler is equally inflexible in ignoring those he does not.”[89] Barbara Goldsmith writing in *New York Magazine* wholly agreed. Rather than pretending to be a scholarly or historical endeavor, Goldsmith proposed *NYPS* take on a different title: “The show is simply Geldzahler’s choice. He could have called it ‘Painters I Like.’”[90]

Geldzahler’s personality, as well as a reputation defined by close friendships with certain artists, substantiated these allegations of bias and subjective prejudice. Although the easy access Geldzahler enjoyed across rarified corners of the art world—“at home in the scruffy lofts of Canal Street and the elegant appointments of the Dakota”—could be praised in some instances, his reputation as a “friend” or “intimate” was now a liability.[91] Some critical voices especially

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[88] Kramer, “A Modish Revision.”

[89] “Dictator or Fantasy?,” *Time*, October 24, 1969, Academic Search Complete.

[90] Goldsmith, “How Henry Made 43 Artists Immortal.”

[91] “Dictator or Fantasy?,” *Time*, October 24, 1969, Academic Search Complete.

called attention to Geldzahler's catalogue essay, which they argued laid bare an objectionable partiality.

Names and lists of events and venues, rather than traditional-sounding art historical analysis, dominated Geldzahler's essay. Consider, for instance, the following passage when Geldzahler highlights the importance of the art dealer Betty Parsons:

> Betty Parsons' first gallery, the Wakefield, was in a bookstore. She opened in 1940 and showed Walter Murch (1941), Alfonso Ossorio (1941, 1943), Joseph Cornell (1942), Saul Steinberg (1943), Constantine Nivola (1943), Theodore Stamos (1943), and Adolph Gottlieb (1944). Between 1944 and 1946 as director of the Mortimer Brandt Gallery, she gave one-man shows to John Graham, Theodore Stamos, Hedda Sterne, Alfonso Ossorio, Hans Hofmann, Mark rothko, and Ad Reinhardt. In her continuing capacity as director of the Betty Parsons Gallery she has been responsible for presenting the committed art public with some of its most memorable moments, among them Pollock's 1948 exhibition in which he showed pictures such as *Cathedral* (illustrated page 269), a painting that announced his most radically innovative period (Pollock had shows at Parsons in 1948, 1949, 1950, and 1951.)[92]

Much of the essay reads like this laundry list or a kind of insider's accounting of who showed where and when. Only in the essay's final five pages can the reader find a more conventional form of art historical narrative, where Geldzahler rehearses a conventional overview of movements and their stylistic features, highlighting the achievements of "his" artists.

Geldzahler's writing was beheld less as an essay and more like a "love letter to the New York art establishment," in the words of Kramer.[93] His apparent penchant for name-dropping also prompted critic David Bourdon to comment in *Life*:

> [the] essay brims with irrelevant prattle about other New York museums, about art magazines and galleries, mass media, the Venice Biennale, the New York real estate industry and tax laws—and is alarmingly uninformative about the art…He [Geldzahler]

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[92] Geldzahler, "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970," 31.

[93] Kramer, "30 Years of the New York School."

> devotes more space to Olitski's "complex" gallery affiliations, for instance, than he does to Olitski's art.[94]

The essay seemed to reveal unwittingly whom the curator counted in his own affiliations of partiality.

In her review, "The Metropolitan: Worst Foot Forward," Berenson also warned of what such disqualifying partiality meant in practice. "By giving a free plug to his five favorite art merchants, Mr. Geldzahler lays himself and the Metropolitan open to charges of commercialism," the critic insisted.[95] Painter David Hare summed up the scrutiny over Geldzahler's judgment most explicitly. When asked by the *Times* how he felt, as an artist, about *NYPS*, Hare responded, "Henry's interested in going out to dinner and meeting famous people and being in. It's awfully difficult to discuss the show in terms of whether the selections are good or not since they have less to do with art than with Geldzahler's career."[96] Ultimately, the scandal defined that career and the curator in terms of fame and friendship, instead of work and achievement.

The chorus of suspicion about Geldzahler's appropriateness as the organizer of this momentous exhibition at the Met embroiled the curator in what literary scholar James English has classified as a "judging scandal."[97] In his examination of literary prizes, English observed a consistent rhetoric of prize commentary that conventionally emerges around the event, very often

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[94] David Bourdon, "Modern Masters Amid the Old," *LIFE*, October 1969, Box 12, Folder 10, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[95] Berenson, "The Metropolitan: Worst Foot Forward," 1282–1283.

[96] David Hare quoted in Grace Glueck, "Deflecting Henry's Show," *New York Times*, October 19, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

[97] English, *The Economy of Prestige*, 192.

in the form of scandal. “Such scandals consist rhetorically of howls of outrage, fastened onto any particular gaffe or embarrassment of the moment,” English explains,

> […] but ultimately directed at the mediating institution as such, which is accused of furthering the encroachments of the marketplace, or of politics, or of personal connections, onto the artistic field, and hence of diluting what ought to be pure cultural capital with economic, political, or social capital.[98]

The acrimony over Geldzahler’s selection exemplifies the hallmarks of the rhetoric English has delineated in his study. *NYPS*—an exhibition created within the formative forces of Boorstin’s “pseudo-event”—sat at the juncture of artistic and non-artistic fields not unlike a literary prize. And with the firestorm over Geldzahler’s choices and his curatorial fitness, the detractors continuously posed the curator as an actor who was at best contaminated, at worst corrupted; his apparently individual failures explaining the breakdown of so many norms of the artistic field, purely conceived.

Critical takedowns of Geldzahler, decrying the curator’s “aesthetic disposition” or questioning his “meager credentials,” correspond to English’s insights regarding the outrage that can follow instances when “pure” cultural capital is seen to be “diluted” by other forms of capital from outside the field. The consistent reference to his personal life in the mountain of criticism also indicates an overwhelming feeling in the art establishment that a “risible lack of habitus” compromised Geldzahler’s function as a curator.[99] In other words, rather than conforming to the conventions of the traditional curator, whose persona, writing, or exhibition should signify scholarly objectivity and fidelity to the independent values of art and culture, Geldzahler appeared to represent only “encroachments of the marketplace, or of politics, or of personal connections.” According to the scandalized naysayers, Geldzahler’s identity and personal life

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[98] James English, “Winning the Culture Game: Prizes, Awards, and the Rules of Art,” 112.

[99] English, *The Economy of Prestige*, 192.

corrupted his work and ultimately his standing, revealing the real stakes of *NYPS*: not art, but the curator's personal fame, social connections, and power.

Stepping back from the judging scandal at face value, the fact that there were such strong concerns over selection choices as well as Geldzahler's fitness for judgment means that observers embraced the stakes of cultural legitimation and canon formation that Geldzahler and the Met tried to achieve through *NYPS*. When large-scale abstract paintings vanquished old master paintings in gilded frames or "mod" Lucite benches replaced the decorative trappings of the museum's sacred space, observers saw the etched names and historical patina that traditionally signified artistic canon superseded by the signifiers of the modernist white cube and a cast of new artist heroes. Between sincerity and hyperbolism, Geldzahler and Centennial planners wanted *NYPS* to establish art history's newest heroes (with the Met as the ultimate arbiter). The Xerox's Corporation's advertisement for *NYPS* made these implicit cues of canonization explicit, writing in their ad copy: "…the Met has moved Rembrandt, Botticelli and friends out of their usual corners—and moved in a unique exhibition of 43 contemporary masters."[100] Their tagline anchored a photograph in which Noguchi's *White Sun* (1966), atop a pedestal, obtrusively blocks the view of the painted bust of Homer in Rembrandt's *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* (Figure 3.33). The museum's stagecraft and the exhibition's promotional bravado—designed to set the canonizing stakes of the exhibition—yielded the desired results.

Displacement, substitution, and Oedipal overthrow suffused other reporting on *NYPS* and its scandal. "Her halls are now crowded with the confusing bright mysterious works of the avant-garde. The Rembrandt portrait may stare down on Andy Warhol filing past," wrote critic William Wilson in the *Los Angeles Times*. "It has taken 100 years for the kids from Greenwich

[100] "Xerox (advertisement)," *New York Magazine*, December 1, 1969, Google Books New York Magazine Archive.

Village to get into art's palace."[101] “Unsuspecting visitors are stunned,” Christine Tree reported in the *Boston Globe*, “43 new and unpronounceable names like ‘Noguchi,’ ‘Oldenburg,’ ‘Rosenquist’ and Rauschenberg’ have dislodged the untouchables: Raphael, Rembrandt, van Eyck, Holbein, Turner, Cezanne, and company.”[102] In these terms, Geldzahler’s exhibition was a turnover of old with new art historical titans. The canonizing of America’s postwar avant-garde was the exhibition’s defining function. Indeed, journalists were not alone in their keen interest into the game of legitimation *NYPS* appeared to manifest.

Art historian Sam Hunter wrote an approving letter to Geldzahler shortly after the exhibition opened. In it, Hunter expressed his feeling that *NYPS* had bettered the Museum of Modern Art’s Abstract Expressionist permanent collection survey held a few months beforehand. Regarding the installation of *NYPS*, Hunter closed the letter by sharing an anecdote from a conversation he had with artist Barnett Newman:

> In talking to Barney Newman, I asked him whom he had replaced among the masters from the past installation. He said Degas, obviously disappointed; he had hoped to succeed at least Rembrandt![103]

Quip or joke notwithstanding, this anecdote of Newman’s disappointment over “whom he had replaced among the masters from the past installation,” in the Met’s permanent collection of European paintings, reveals that the exhibition's conferral of canonical recognition even held some interest by figures at the most “serious” center of the art world.

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[101] William Wilson, “New Masters Join Old at an Art Palace,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 17, 1969, Box 12, Folder 10, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[102] Christine Tree, “The Met upstages Broadway,” *Boston Sunday Globe*, November 9, 1969, Box 259, Folder 2, The Metropolitan Museum of Art historical clippings and ephemera files, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[103] Typed letter from Hunter to Geldzahler, no date, Box 4, Folder 9, Thomas Hoving records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

The anointing of “43 contemporary masters” that many invested or disputed in the exhibition shows how *NYPS* represented—and was especially entangled inside—what Bourdieu calls the “illusio” of cultural practice. He writes:

> The struggles for the monopoly of the definition of the mode of legitimate cultural production contribute to a continual reproduction of belief in the game, interest in the game and its stakes, the *illusio*—of which the struggles are also the product. Each field produces its specific form of the *illusio*, in the sense of an investment in the game which pulls agents out of their indifference and inclines and predisposes them to put into operation the distinctions which are pertinent from the viewpoint of the logic of the field, to distinguish what is *important* (‘what matters to me’, is of *interest*, in contrast to ‘what is all the same to me’, or *in-different*).[104]

Acrimonious debate over inclusions and exclusions amidst the high stakes of canonization that *NYPS* appeared to entail—whether one bought or did not want to buy into such circumstances—amounted to the struggles over the “mode of legitimate cultural production” which shape how we believe and participate in the artistic field, and how the conditions of artistic practice are continually (re)produced.

For the minority of supporters of *NYPS*, Geldzahler and the Met’s displacement of Degas with Newman or Rembrandt with Noguchi was indicative of what the traditional *illusio* of cultural practice is all about, representing the normal functioning of what artistic achievement looks like and how recognition of that achievement is bestowed. For those who disapproved, Geldzahler’s alleged lack of scholarly rigor, the suspicion of “behind the scenes friction,” and his supposed penchant for choosing artists he likes, or his friends, and ignoring others meant that *NYPS* ran counter to a traditional *illusio*, specifically their “belief in the game, interest in the game, and its stakes.” The scandal over the selections hung Geldzahler in the balance between

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[104] Bourdieu, *Rules of Art*, 227–228.

reputable scholar and "toy dictator," in the words of *Time*.[105]

Of course, all exhibitions, with varying degrees of impact, represent and (re)produce certain beliefs and interest in the artistic game, and determine the values and desires we have of that game. But, in the case of *NYPS*, the beliefs and values that make the artistic game appeared to be the main point of the exhibition. *NYPS* could not be treated simply as a survey of postwar American painting and sculpture. "The collective belief in the game (*illusio*) and in the sacred value of its stakes is simultaneously the precondition and the product of the very functioning of the game," Bourdieu further elaborates, "it is fundamental to the power of consecration, permitting consecrated artists to constitute certain products, by the miracle of their signature (or brand name), as sacred objects."[106] Critics of Geldzahler's judgment disputed the exhibition's "power of consecration." The scandal questioned whether *NYPS* constituted a proper manifestation of the artistic field or an accurate representation of the beliefs and values of the *illusio* of cultural practice.

"an esthetic—political—commercial—power combine"

Competing visions of this artistic field under contestation emerged outside and inside the Met on the night of the Patron's Opening, October 16, 1969. Outside, the museum's plaza was the stage for Guerilla Art Action Group's (GAAG) first performance art protest action. GAAG sought to "protest the increasing grip and manipulation by big business" that they argued *NYPS* represented and profited from. In turn, Geldzahler was their main target as the primary agent of this condition. And GAAG's Jean Toche and Jon Hendricks' challenged "Henry Geldzahler, the

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[105] "Dictator or Fantasy?," *Time*, October 24, 1969, Academic Search Complete.

[106] Bourdieu, *Rules of Art*, 230.

creator and organizer of this exhibition, to take a public stand about these issues."[107] They referred to Geldzahler as a "false concept" and framed *NYPS* as "a sani-pak cultural pastiche of the last 20 years, benefiting only the money-power collectors and dealers."[108] In the end, Geldzahler neither appeared before nor answered to GAAG's demonstration.

GAAG's grotesque-inflected performance proceeded. Hendricks as "the curator" assaulted Toche "the artist" with a crescendoing onslaught of food and liquids (Figure 3.34). The abject scene so shocked arriving party attendees and other bystanders that police were summoned to break up the performance. The protagonists and plot of GAAG's performance dramatized who they believed were the harming ("the curator") and harmed ("the artist") parties at stake in *NYPS*.

AWC called for its own protest the same night. As mentioned above, the AWC's leaflet "$1.50 for Cultural Deprivation" questioned "ONE INDIVIDUAL'S DISTORTED VIEWS" and Geldzahler's racist and sexist biases that led to an exhibition that excluded woman and Black artists. The AWC also sounded the alarm on the Met's then-rumored plans to charge $1.50 for museum admission, writing:

> ON JAN. 1970 WE WILL PAY $1.50 ADMISSION TO SUPPORT MORE OF THESE INDIGNITIES, SHOULD THE EMERGING CULTURAL EXPLOSION BE LIMITED ONLY TO THOSE WITH $1.50 IN THEIR HANDS? THESE ARE THE SAME OLD INJUSTICES. THE MET IS OUT OF TOUCH WITH WHATS REALLY HAPPENING LETS [sic] STOP THIS NOW! SUPPORT THE ART WORKERS COALITION.[109]

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[107] Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche, "Number 1: October 16, 1969: action in front of Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y.C., ridiculing the exhibition 'New York Painting & Sculpture: 1940-1970'," in *GAAG The Guerilla Art Action Group 1969–1976: A Selection* (New York: Printed Matter, Inc., 1978), n.p.

[108] Ibid.

[109] $1.50 FOR CULTURAL DEPRIVATION, 1969, Box 27, Folder 7, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York. Grace Glueck reports on the AWC's protest outside the museum in Grace Glueck, "Metropolitan Museum Opens Big Centennial Show," *New York Times,* October 19, 1969, Box 12, Folder 9–10, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

NYPS exemplified the kinds of elitism, commercialization, and economic and racial inequity that AWC attacked throughout certain sectors of the artistic field.

After *NYPS*, AWC also produced their *One Blood Dollar* (ca. 1970), in which they mimicked Geldzahler's signature as the "Treasurer" of THE UNITED STATES ART WORLD (Figure 3.35). Geldzahler was joined on the *One Blood Dollar* with MoMA President and Governor of New York Nelson Rockefeller, who took the place of the fake bill's "President." Media magnate and CBS head William Paley was also designated the "Comptroller" of the *One Blood Dollar*. The AWC's *détournement* constellated Geldzahler with political, financial, and media power; he was part of a triumvirate that embodied what art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson, in her study of art workers, has called "the collusion between state and cultural power."[110] Geldzahler's *NYPS* exemplified the problems that AWC diagnosed with museum institutions writ-large: "their exclusionary practices, their corporate affiliations, and their elitist management."[111]

Perhaps only implied in the suspicions over Geldzahler's personal character and curatorial fitness, these activists explicitly diagnosed a broader artistic field penetrated by nefarious forces of money and social or political power. Lippard, who was also a leading figure of the AWC, decried what Xerox's sponsorship meant for art and culture in her review. She called *NYPS* a "financial and esthetic lollapalooza," and argued that the exhibition revealed how, "the Metropolitan, and Xerox, like so many others, consider contemporary art the 'light touch,' fair game to be handled by lighter-weights, a good gimmick for the Centennial year and an

[110] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 22.

[111] Ibid.

advertising campaign."[112] Under such conditions, Lippard and AWC saw economic and social capital curtailing artistic freedom and producing conditions that forced an artist to "behave himself," "show the right attitude" or "Keep Culture Clean," as the *One Blood Dollar* also mocked.

Activists were not the only ones to hold this negative vision of an artistic field contaminated by its heteronomization. Writing before *NYPS* opened, critic John Canaday feared:

> Only one opening on Saturday, looks, by advance reports, like a booboo on the grand scale. It is "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970" an inadequately masked declaration of the museum's sponsorship of an esthetic – political – commercial power combine, promoted by the museum's Achilles' heel, Henry Geldzahler.[113]

Canaday believed that *NYPS*, as an "esthetic - political - commercial - power combine," would displace properly esthetic interests and sacred values of pure culture with financial and political ones, especially due to Geldzahler as the museum's "Achilles' heel." Certain aspects of *NYPS*, such as Xerox's sponsorship or Stella's Centennial Medal, make it hard to disagree entirely with these critics' feared visions of an artistic field in decline.

Xerox's well-advertised corporate sponsorship did not hide the exchange of cultural prestige and commercial support underlying *NYPS*. The campaign to garner sponsorship from Xerox began in winter 1967. Trescher worked closely with Frank Marshall and Phillip Bloom, the principals of Xerox's chosen public relations agency Marshall & Bloom Associates [hereafter M&B]. Serving as the broker between the museum and Xerox's CEO C. Peter McColough, M&B guided Trescher and Hoving through the solicitation process and brokered the terms that made Xerox the Met's first American sole corporate underwriter of an exhibition.

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[112] Lippard, "Museo, Museas, Museat," 13–14.

[113] John Canaday, "Happy Birthday – Are You Relevant?," *New York Times*, October 12, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

NYPS was deemed a suitable product for Xerox given the exhibition's focus on contemporary art and the worldwide recognition of the painters and sculptors who made "New York the art capital of the world."[114] These were superlatives that bore some resonance with a company considered to be at the vanguard of its own digital printing revolution.[115] After weeks that saw the Met and M&B exchange multiple drafts, Hoving submitted the grant prospectus to McColough on May 8, 1968 seeking $145,000 dollars ($1M in today's terms).[116] Hoving wrote that *NYPS* would demonstrate the Met's new commitment to contemporary art by "lend[ing] prestige and authority to the modern art movement" and to prove its "intense interest in acquiring recent art of the highest quality."[117]

Hoving's two stated aims would also help the Met keep other promises made to McColough and Xerox. Namely, Hoving assured Xerox that the "momentous exhibition" would likely touch "countless millions" through press and television and attract not only national but also worldwide attention.[118] Xerox capitalized on the museum's anticipated "millions" with a series of terms focused on publicity of their contribution and promotion of their corporation. These terms included the Xerox name being announced first, taking precedence before any other corporate sponsor, that the company should be mentioned in all materials produced by the museum, and the company's expectation that every effort would be made to reference its

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[114] A Proposal to the Xerox Corporation from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, May 8, 1968, Box 4, Folder 9, Thomas Hoving records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[115] Letter from Thomas Hoving to C. Peter McColough, May 8, 1968, Box 4, Folder 9, Thomas Hoving records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[116] Correspondence in the Joseph V. Noble records indicate Marshall & Bloom reviewed documents multiple times before proposal was finalized and submitted. See Correspondence, April–May 1968, Box 20, Folder 5, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[117] A Proposal to the Xerox Corporation from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, May 8, 1968, Box 4, Folder 9, Thomas Hoving records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[118] Ibid.

sponsorship in external press coverage.[119] The museum and corporation's publicity-driven exchange of cultural "prestige and authority" for financial support kicked off a year before *NYPS*, on October 17, 1968, when Hoving, Geldzahler, McColough and Gilpatric announced the gift standing in front of Jackson Pollock's *Autumn Rhythm* (1950) before a packed audience of reporters (Figures 3.36–3.37).[120]

The Met's production of a Centennial Medal was also symptomatic of the exchange between art and commerce that *NYPS* activated (Figure 3.38). Although small—literally and figuratively relative to the full gamut of the Centennial—the artist-produced medal had a larger life of its own in fact. A "Medal and Flag Design Committee" convened in May 1967 to discuss plans for these commemorative items. Trescher, the committee's chair, opened the discussion by emphasizing that the medal and flag designs could "have many uses besides the usual ones of honorary gift, award for contribution, or souvenir for sale."[121] Citing recent examples such as the Unisphere symbol from the '64 New York World's Fair or the double-Y symbol from Expo '67, Trescher challenged his committee to conceptualize the medal and flag as a locus of a graphic identity—a design that would be destined for additional uses such as "information sheets, stationery, flags, matchbooks, etc."[122] In essence, the Committee wanted the production of a commemorative medallion that was also a logo.

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[119] Interdepartmental Memorandum from Trescher to Hoving, September 5, 1968, Box 13, Folder 2, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[120] Trescher's records include a series of photos from the press conference. See Box 13, Folder 16, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[121] Medal and Flag Design Committee Meeting, May 17, 1967, Box 20, Folder 7, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[122] Ibid.

Geldzahler joined the committee's second meeting in June '67, when they asked him to recommend artists who could be right for the medal commission. Discussions of the medal design's multiple uses continued, expanding to "plastic buttons" which they projected would sell in the thousands, newly designed staff ID cards, and a design that could be emblazoned on other novelty items and souvenirs.[123] The Committee also thought the future design could replace the museum's iconic "Leonardo M." In order to replace Leonardo, the committee invited twelve living artists, who represented multiple generations; they were: Josef Albers, Alexander Calder, Naum Gabo, Morris Graves, Robert Indiana, Roy Lichtenstein, Jacques Lipschitz, Richard Lippold, Seymour Lipton, Isamu Noguchi, Georgia O'Keefe and Frank Stella. Requests for design were sent out to the artists under the director's name in July 1967.[124]

Hoving's invitation explained how the medal project was poised to represent the entire Centennial. He wrote:

> Among the many events now being planned are exhibitions, publications, convocations of scholars, and reopenings of large sections of the Museum now closed for remodeling. Equally important as these plans, however, are experiments and innovations that I am anxious for the Museum to undertake during this period—forward steps that will improve our communications with the public and other cultural institutions in this city, the nation, and the world. To commemorate this occasion we plan to commission a medal which would serve as a symbol of the Museum and reflect its goals as it looks to its second century.[125]

The future medal was meant to be fully integrated with a communications and publicity strategy, driving the museum's pursuit of a new institutional identity. General design parameters followed: the museum's name would have to be lettered as well as the dates 1870-1970, marking

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[123] Medal and Flag Design Committee Meeting, June 7, 1967, Box 20, Folder 7, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[124] Invitation letters to artists, July 26, 1967, Box 20, Folder 7, Joseph V. Noble records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[125] Ibid.

the Centennial's timespan. They requested a design that would "be used in other forms than a medal, it should be rendered with a view to reproduction in two dimensions, in relief, or as a three dimensional sculptural object." Six artists accepted the invitation and the museum ultimately chose Stella.[126]

The artist's "Stella M" proved an effective choice (Figure 3.38). Stella was young yet well accomplished. His inclusion in *Sixteen Americans* in 1959 at the tender age of 23 astonished many observers. Reminiscent of works from his late Sixties protractor series, such as *Hagmatana II* (1967), which Geldzahler slated to include in *NYPS*, the Stella M featured two multi-colored cascades of regular circular stripes curving inward to form an M shape. The medal itself was fabricated in rhodium-plated bronze, produced in a limited run of 3000. As the Centennial planners hoped, the Stella M also took on other manifestations.

The Met converted the Stella M into an endless series of formats and uses. An embossed white version became the symbol for all official Centennial letterhead (Figure 3.39). There was an official Centennial poster that used the design, which included a print run of an artist-signed edition (Figure 3.40). Stella's M also easily synonymized with full-scale painting, including one that featured as a backdrop for a press photograph of Hoving published in *Home Furnishings Daily* (Figure 3.41).[127] Completing this circuit of communication and publicity, *Vogue* featured

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[126] 100th Anniversary Medal Project, no date, Box 2, Folder 20, Thomas Hoving records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York. According to the list, the six artists who accepted the museum's invitation were: Josef Albers, Robert Indiana, Roy Lichtenstein, Richard Lippold, Seymour Lipton, and Frank Stella.

[127] Photograph published in Carolyn Flieg and Charles Kriebel, "The Met's Yearlong Birthday," *Home Furnishings Daily*, October 17, 1969, Box 12, Folder 11, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

the museum's commissioned artist-designer in their November 1969 issue that followed the opening of *NYPS* and the launch of the Centennial (Figure 3.42).[128]

Lippard, in fact, opened her review of *NYPS* with a scrutinizing look at the Stella M, remarking in no uncertain terms that it indexed a deeper problem underlying the exhibition as a whole:

> The visitor to the New York painting (and sculpture) show at the Metropolitan Museum this winter was forewarned by a huge and ubiquitous poster-like logo designed by Frank Stella (it is hard to tell what his design was; whether this is a used painting or a commercial emblem; the problem is not merely scale). In addition, sales desks in the museum offered an enamelled [sic] Stella paperweight of the same pattern. Even though this artist has in the past lent his work to the adornment of fur coats and needlepoint chair covers, such exploitation of the commodity function of art boded badly for the seriousness of an exhibition purporting to have the say above all other says on the history of New York's phenomenal rise to first art city of the world.[129]

For this critic, the Centennial Medal—and, potentially, the entire exhibition—was just another chapter of the "exploitation of the commodity function of art." Her moral outrage equated the design's easy translatability into commercial or promotional use as a disqualifying ground for *NYPS*. If an Achilles' heel of a curator, a large corporate donation, or an artwork as commodified logo were representations of the exhibition, *NYPS* offered a fearful vision of an artistic field that no longer looked like a zone of pure art and culture, but rather, one transformed by an endless series of exchanges between artistic, commercial, and journalistic capital.

"Giants do not paint pictures"

In contrast with GAAG and AWC's protestations or Lippard and Canaday's fears, however, the attendees of the Patron's Opening responded differently to *NYPS*. Inside the

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[128] Clipping from *Vogue*, November 1969, Box 12, Folder 9, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[129] Lippard, "Museo, Museas, Museat," 7.

museum, the event constituted a picture of an artistic field that stood ready to synthesize the conventionally disparate values of art, media, celebrity and commerce. Photographs taken by Bruce Davidson offer one sense of this emergent transition.

Standing at attention, a middle-aged bartender looks straight into the camera, his brow furrowed and lips pursed during a momentary break from the throngs of guests who milled about the Centennial Galleries to celebrate *NYPS* (Figure 3.43). Kenneth Noland's *17th Stage* (1964) frames the bartender's face just so, the painting's signature chevron uniting the bartender with his counterpart. At another station, two other bartenders move swiftly to make drinks, one pouring and the other moving too fast for the camera's exposure (Figure 3.44). In front of Clyfford Still's *1957-D no. 1* (1957), their black tuxedos echo the two bodies of textural black in the painting's center.

The partygoers these first two photographs only hinted at appear in another. In this third photograph, a man takes an ambitious bite out of his snack, his pinstripe suit mimicking the lines of Stella's large tondo painting in the photo's background; the painting's own border encircling the man's bald head (Figure 3.45). Another photograph shows us the picked-apart remains of what was an elegant, silver-plated spread (Figure 3.46). A long table dominates the photograph, obliquely disappearing into the image's vanishing point, leading the eye to tiny clues of more paintings by Stella in the same gallery.

Davidson was hired to take pictures for the Centennial Celebration. And his pictures from the *NYPS* Patron's Opening evince a keen, at times, parodic eye for the dual interests of the event: between the exhibition versus the social scene that the exhibition attracted. For many of the partygoers inside the museum, the artworks of *NYPS* served less as monuments of a postwar

American avant-garde and more like backdrops in a supporting role—artworks seamlessly integrated with the fashionable, exclusive community the exhibition event catalyzed.[130]

The party that opened *NYPS* also animated the scandal surrounding the exhibition. Press photographs from the party circulated widely, several making the front page of the *Village Voice* in a spread captioned, "People at an Exhibition" (Figure 3.47).[131] Journalistic coverage shared related interests with Davidson's documentary eye, paying close attention to the synthesis of normally dialectical figures and norms. "There were drag queens mingling with society matrons, rock 'n' roll blasting through the halls where Rembrandt and Velazquez once reigned in hushed glory, and costumes ranging from fringed buckskin to China Machado chic," reported *Time*.[132] Art and fashion, downtown and uptown, hippies and financiers, artists and patrons, young and old, new money and old money: the apparent breakdown of these conventionally opposed sectors by the exhibition and event drew an interest parallel to the literal exhibition itself.

And thus, many observers were fascinated with the glittering world *NYPS* had instantiated. Who was a part of the community that gathered around *NYPS* and how did that art world work? Society and gossip columnist Aileen Mehle—better known by her pen name Suzy Knickerbocker and column "Suzy Says," which reached a reported reader audience of 30 million in syndication over 100 newspapers—relayed much of the excitement of the scene from the Patron's Opening:

> The blast at the Metropolitan Museum for the staggering opening of "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970" certainly got the first of five Centennial

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[130] My observation here takes inspiration from Thomas Crow's important account of the use of Jackson's Pollock's painting in fashion spreads for *Vogue*, see Thomas Crow, "Fashioning the New York School," in *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 39–48.

[131] "PEOPLE AT AN EXHIBITION," *Village Voice*, December 11, 1969, front page, Box 12, Folder 10, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[132] "From the Brink, Something Grand," *Time*, October 24, 1969, 84.

> exhibitions off the ground. Way off. The opening was a combination of the East Village and the upper East Side, and everyone from Arthur Houghton to Andy Warhol agreed it was smashing. You can't beat that. […] The grand guru of modern art and the man responsible for the whole show was Henry Geldzahler, poured into a blue velvet suit made just for the occasion.[133]

Mehle and other chroniclers tell us that for many members of the art world gathered inside the Met, the so-called penetration or contamination of the artistic field was a reality to be embraced and celebrated, not feared.

The interest paid to the "people at an exhibition," (rather than the pictures at the exhibition) index a reshaping of the relationship between canonicity and celebrity, cultural capital and journalistic capital that was endemic to the period. When voices like Mehle reported on figures such as Geldzahler, Houghton, or Warhol, this who's who that populated journalistic reporting on *NYPS* became what cultural studies scholar Graeme Turner calls a "site of media attention and personal aspiration."[134] They were celebrities. The particular focus on the celebrities of *NYPS* exemplifies the boundary crossing of the public and private self that Turner argues is constitutive of celebrity's discursive regime:

> In practice, the discursive regime of celebrity…crosses the boundary between the public and the private worlds, preferring the person, the private or 'veridical' self as the privileged object of revelation […] We can map the precise moment a public figure becomes a celebrity. It occurs at the point at which media interest in their activities is transferred from reporting on their public role (such as their specific achievement in politics or sport) to investigating the details of their private lives.[135]

In the case of *NYPS*, media attention "transferred" from, for instance, an artist's painting to their appearance. Consider more of Mehle's column:

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[133] Aileen Mehle "Suzy Says 'Twas Smashing," *Daily News*, October 20, 1969, Box 12, Folder 9, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[134] Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London: Sage Publications, 2014), 6.

[135] Ibid, 8.

> Helen Frankenthaler, the only woman with paintings in the show was refreshing in black […] Roswell Gilpatric, chairman of the centennial committee, was engrossed in conversation with C. Peter McCologh who is president of Xerox, the corporation which underwrote the exhibit. Andy Warhol was hovering about in a black bow tie and a black leather jacket. Andy exhibited the portrait of Ethel Scull, shown publicly for the first time. Ethel, who has lent many works to the show, wore a black velvet flowing military coat and borrowed a dime from an unknown upon arriving. Maybe that's how she gets the money to buy all that art.[136]

Details of artists' private lives complemented or, perhaps, competed with their specific achievements—not just Frankenthaler's paintings but that she was "refreshing in black." Crucially, Mehle's column also remarked pointedly about a careerist anxiety the exhibition also incited. Reading between the lines of the "smashing" revelry of celebrity, the gossip columnist observed:

> With all of the brass of the art world present (including the artists for a change) someone said the evening was a "career crisis" party. If you weren't invited your career in contemporary art is—well, you don't have one.[137]

The import of the social world around *NYPS*—the celebrities that the scandal's media attention both constituted and thrived on—added new terms of "personal aspiration" based on celebrity's discursive regime. The Patron's Opening seemed to suggest that an artist's career and achievement was not only defined by what they created, but also their participation in a celebrity created by and for the media.

This stellification of the artist—or the making of an artist into a celebrity—also instigated negative scrutiny over Geldzahler's exhibition installation.[138] On top of the complaints over Geldzahler's judgment or the "esthetic - political - commercial - power combine" he appeared to

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[136] Mehle, "Suzy Says."

[137] Ibid.

[138] I follow the use of the verb, to stellify, from Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 246n11.

represent, there was also heated debate over how Geldzahler presented his chosen artists and artworks. The loudest denunciations argued that the gestalt of the exhibition—in particular, the multiplicity of works given to an artist and the ways the works were installed—substantiated the disqualifying characteristics that the scandal pinned on the curator.

In a lengthy review published in *The New Yorker*, critic Harold Rosenberg argued that Geldzahler's style of installation betrayed the rhetorical emptiness of *NYPS*. “In making his show so big, Geldzahler serves no useful purpose," the critic declared, "he has employed quantity to force assent.”[139] The numerous quantities of a single artist's artworks particularly perturbed Rosenberg. On the two-gallery installation devoted to Kelly, Rosenberg especially pointed out how the installation had confounded his eye:

> At the Metropolitan, more works than ever before by contemporary Americans are being offered in one place at the same time, but whatever be the advantage of encountering forty-two Ellsworth Kellys, it is offset by the fatigue that this experience induces, particularly in a spectator disappointed by the quality of the nine Pollocks that represent that artist’s share in Geldzahler’s “vital tradition.”[140]

Such a concern over the apparent redundancy and illogical imbalances of the exhibition led Rosenberg and others to surmise that “curator” was not an accurate term for the person responsible for the installation.

Moments such as Kelly’s spread over two galleries, a gallery flowing with Morris Louis veils, or a fleet of Stella protractors, for instance, prompted naysayers to malign Geldzahler as something akin to a decorator. “The whole experience, except for certain dutiful inclusions from the near past, recalls a superior interior decorating job,” declared Katherine Kuh, “Everything is placed correctly; everything is splendidly lighted and labeled. All we miss is the runway with

[139] Harold Rosenberg, “École de New York,” *New Yorker*, December 6, 1969.

[140] Ibid.

exotic models posturing in maxi or mini costumes."[141] Like Davidson's photographs, Kuh saw postwar American painting turned into the components of a stage for a fashionable set. Rosenberg similarly placed Geldzahler in the realm of the decorative, analogizing Geldzahler with a "bricklayer" based on the installation of works by Stella: "The result is comparable to the kind of rhythmical patterning with which bricklayers decorate a façade," wrote Rosenberg. "Using pieces of this sort, Geldzahler has created some rooms with brilliant decorative effects" (Figure 3.12).[142] In essence, evaluations like these, which claimed *NYPS* was merely a "super interior decorating job" or the mundane labor of a "bricklayer," imagined Geldzahler's installation as a project unbefitting a proper curator.

The pile-on continued with accusations that Geldzahler also defied the boundaries of the curator's role by usurping the place of the artist. Genauer called *NYPS* "Mr. Geldzahler's playground" suggesting that the exhibition was more like child's play than a serious museum effort. Her widely syndicated review included a press photo that found its way among multiple media outlets (Figure 3.48).[143] In it, Geldzahler, Kelly, and assistant James Wood huddle together in demonstrative discussion. Around the standing trio, Kelly's abstract canvases lean on the wall with art handler's gloves and a clipboard lying on the floor. The photo captures them in the midst of installing Kelly's 42 works: curator and assistant wearing suits befitting museum employees, following the direction of the casually dressed artist at center. The image connotes collaboration and teamwork. And published next to the headline, "Turning the Museum into a

[141] Katherine Kuh, "Hooked on Bigness," *Saturday Review*, November 22, 1969, Box 12, Folder 9, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[142] Rosenberg, "École de New York."

[143] Emily Genauer, "Turning the Museum into a Playground," *Newsday*, October 1969, Box 12, Folder 10, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

Playground," the photo illustrated the idea that Geldzahler, Kelly, and the exhibition's other artists were just kids "playing" around, not at all engaged in mature art historical seriousness.

The alleged excesses of Kelly's number of works and the photograph of Geldzahler and Kelly working together also substantiated an accusation that Geldzahler was foolishly masquerading as an artist. Genauer claimed:

> I think what's wrong with Geldzahler is that he's a frustrated artist. He approaches the exhibition the way a painter does his canvas, uncertain how it will evolve, unworried about 'mistakes' because they may turn out to be fruitful for later efforts.[144]

Her diagnosis that Geldzahler was a "frustrated artist" particularly relied on a quote the curator shared about his curatorial process. "I feel a show is only worth doing," Geldzahler explained," if the curator doesn't know what the show will look like when it's finished—and I really don't know yet for sure."[145] Here, Geldzahler framed his process as one that did not predetermine its ends strongly. For Genauer, such process-oriented language could only compute as a position within the realm of the artist. Whether or not Genauer and other detractors were right, the photograph of Geldzahler, Wood, and Kelly also attests that in close collaboration with artists, the galleries in *NYPS* were more than conventionally planned installations of wall-bound art exclusively conceived by the curator.

Although loud, these negative opinions about Geldzahler's installation were not unanimous. John J. O'Connor of the *Wall Street Journal* raised some doubts about the exhibition's merits but ultimately concluded, "[*NYPS*] is, however, an impressive sometimes

[144] Ibid.

[145] Geldzahler quoted in Shirey, "Super-Show," 80.

dazzling display…a kind of environmental happening in itself."[146] What some critics saw as nicely decorated rooms, O'Connor saw, admirably, as totalizing experiences akin to a happening. Further instances of positive praise shared similar transcendent notions of beauty or idealist perfection. "This room is held together not by scholarly point-making, but by an exuberant sense of joy," wrote Paul Richard in the *Washington Post*.[147] Collector John de Menil even entered the fray of the debate to support the beleaguered curator. "In case the bastards wouldn't publish this letter," wrote Menil to Geldzahler, when he shared a copy of his eventually published letter to the editor in the *New York Times*.[148] Menil called *NYPS* a "masterly installation of works which are all significant…Geldzahler's show reflects the point of view of a man of taste who knows his field."[149]

Fundamentally, the rancor over the installation parallels the competing visions of the artistic field on the night of the Patron's Opening—the contestation between an artistic field compromised by its heteronomization with economic and journalistic capital versus an artistic field welcoming that heteronomization. But in the case of the installation, what was at stake was not just whether Geldzahler did the installation rightly or wrongly, or whether it was all his mistake. Like a Rorschach test, the installation either offered a vision of an artist that enjoyed his traditional autonomy and independence or a vision of an artist transformed by the exhibition's

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[146] John J. O'Connor, "Henry's New York," *Wall Street Journal*, November 17, 1969, Box 12, Folder 10, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[147] Paul Richard, "New York's Art Furor," *Washington Post*, October 20, 1969, Box 12, Folder 9, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[148] Letter from John de Menil to Henry Geldzahler, October 29, 1969, Box 13, Folder 3, George Trescher records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

[149] John de Menil, "Art Mailbag: The Man Knows His Field," *New York* Times, December 14, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. The patron's praise is, perhaps, not surprising given the similar sensibility Geldzahler's installation shares with the manner of installation John de Menil and Dominique de Menil would become famous for. I am not yet certain if *NYPS* played any role in the way they conceived of their now iconic style.

exchanges of non-artistic capital. The latter contaminated view of the artist's status was the deepest concern for many of the negative voices, especially Rosenberg's.

For Rosenberg, the installation signaled a deeper glorification of the artist as celebrity that was tantamount to a manipulation of the artist, and he blamed Geldzahler's "adherence to a star system."[150] *NYPS* appeared to undo the traditional consecration of the artist—their autonomy, and the special myths and values that we hold about them. He also insisted that the exhibition obscured the community and solidarity forged in the postwar American artists' collective alienation, which he thought fundamental to the origins and purposes of the American avant-garde. Rosenberg wrote:

> Out of this pioneer situation, forced upon them by world catastrophe, came the great, flawed art of Gorky, de Kooning, Pollock, Rothko, Gottlieb, David Smith, Still, Newman, Hofmann, Kline, Guston, and a dozen others—individuals bewildered, uncertain, and straining after direction and an intuition of themselves. No description could be less relevant to these artists than Geldzahler's reference to Gorky, Pollock, and Smith as "giants." *Giants do not paint pictures, they roll boulders down hills.*[151]

According to what Rosenberg saw and read from the exhibition, *NYPS* made its artists into singularized, empty personalities that shared little except a false and facile notion of "greatness." And in line with the rhetoric of the scandal writ-large, Geldzahler was the culprit of this mistreatment and misrepresentation of the artist.

In fact, Rosenberg situated Geldzahler outside the proper boundaries of the artistic field and inside the one of journalism, TV, and movies. The critic observed:

> To engage in arguments about the inclusions and omissions of Geldzahler's extravaganza is to fall into a trap prepared in advance in order to provide meat for "Henry's" public relations—a field in which he has been doing sufficiently well […] The press kit for the show contains a glossy of Geldzahler in shirtsleeves, as

[150] Rosenberg, "École de New York." Emphasis added.

[151] Ibid.

> if here were a movie director on location […] In the past few years, art in America has given birth to a new type: the Swinging Curator.[152]

To be fair, Rosenberg considered Geldzahler the tip of a longer spear in which "American vanguardism" was now in the hands of "competent art managers and communicators," he regrettably reasoned.[153] Mentioning the 1969 Sao Paulo Bienal organized by Gyorgy Kepes, Maurice Tuchman's Experiments in Art and Technology at LACMA, and Andy Warhol's exhibition at the Rhode Island School of Design, among others, Rosenberg expressed skepticism about a tendency he described as museums asking "a critic to 'do' a show and the critic then ask[s] artists to 'do' pieces for the show." He feared such a "trend":

> In the movies and TV, a critic-artist whose medium is other artists is called a producer. With the myth of the artist brushed aside by the showman who fits paintings and sculptures into his schemes, the only aspect of modern art that has steadily advanced in New York is its crisis. For obvious reasons, the curator-producer who covets the spotlight will favor artists of non-temperamental character and works in which personality has been reduced to a minimum.[154]

Adding up Geldzahler's media-friendly reputation, the alleged "rhetorical emptiness" of *NYPS*, and his allegedly decorative installation method, Geldzahler was Rosenberg's paradigmatic curator turned into "critic-artist" or "curator-producer."

Despite the compelling force of Rosenberg's insights, his polemic against what he saw as the artistic field's penetration was, arguably, contingent to the time he wrote. His impassioned cries of decline and crisis, perhaps, lack critical purchase now. Instead, in the present, we could understand them as a shocked reaction to an encounter with fame—as scholar Leo Braudy has

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[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

described the cultural phenomenon. But it was not just Geldzahler's fame, rather it was the artist's. On the experience of encountering fame, Braudy writes:

> Famous people glow, it's often said, and it's a glow that comes from the number of times we have seen the images of their faces, now superimposed on the living flesh before us—not a radiation of divinity but the feverish effect of repeated impacts of a face upon our eyes.[155]

Nine Pollocks. Ten Hoffmans. Twelve de Koonings. Twenty-two David Smiths. Forty-two Ellsworth Kellys. For Rosenberg, along with many other detractors, the effect of the "glow" from the "repeated impacts" of the artist's works in *NYPS* was not awe but horror.[156] Geldzahler's installation indexed an artistic field transformed by greater integration with media, corporate money, and social power, leaving artists to be either reduced or elevated (depending on how one felt about the situation) into stars.

In total, the scandal of *NYPS* projected the curator as celebrity even over the artists. Beholding and indicting Geldzahler in terms of celebrity served to explain a broad range of problems—debatable inclusions and exclusions stemming from his alleged failure to be an impartial or objective curator; the highly integrated exchange between museum and corporation, art and commerce; and the mistreatment of normally vaunted artists into trivial stars or celebrities in their own right. The scandal's interest in Geldzahler's private relationships, or more

[155] Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 6.

[156] In two other illuminating reviews, critics Lawrence Alloway and Gregory Battcock similarly observe the artist's individualized elevation, but do not respond to it as a moment of crisis, like Rosenberg. Alloway considers the treatment of the artists as symptomatic of the ascendance of American art into "the world's orthodoxy," see Lawrence Alloway, "ART (review of *New York Painting and Sculpture*)", *The Nation*, November 24, 1969, 582, The Nation Magazine Archive, EBSCO. Battcock argues that if the exhibition has a "style of extravagance" or emphasizes Abstraxt Expressionism's "decadence, glamour, romanticism, poetry, and arrogance," he sees it less as Geldzahler's doing and more a sign of the movement's actual character, "Abstract Expressionism appears to have been a big to-do about very little indeed." See Gregory Battcock, "Re-Evaluating Abstract Expressionism," *Arts Magazine*, December 1969–January 1970, 46–48.

precisely friendships, especially mobilized that aspect of friendship C.S. Lewis terms a "school of vice," because "[Friendship] is ambivalent. It makes good men better and bad men worse".[157] Insofar as critics deemed the exhibition a product of the curator's compromised partiality and bias—"Painters he likes"—they implied Geldzahler sat at the throne of what Lewis describes as a "self-appointed aristocracy" or "coterie." According to Lewis a coterie is what becomes of friendship when it leans towards vice, when friendship succumbs to "its congenital liability to a particular disease." As he explains:

> The common vision which first brought us [friends] together may fade quite away. We shall be a *coterie* that exists for the sake of being a *coterie*; a little self-elected (and therefore absurd) aristocracy, basking in the moonshine of our collective self-approval.[158]

Alongside his media-friendly personality, Geldzahler's reputation of being an artist's friend served as proof of how *NYPS* went wrong, the vices of friendship substantiated the scandal's projection of the curator as celebrity.[159]

Yet, as my recovery of the scandal has also endeavored to show, what all of the uproar points to is a destabilizing shift in the organization of cultural production, specifically a re-negotiation of the relationship between artistic, economic, social, and journalistic fields. In the case of *NYPS,* Geldzahler's own literal negotiation of the relationship between artistic and economic and journalistic fields was, quite simply, an open, welcoming embrace of the exchange between cultural prestige, corporate resources, and mediatized recognition. But he was certainly

[157] C.S. Lewis, "Friendship," in *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960), 94–95.

[158] Ibid, 101.

[159] Banerjee Mitali and Paul Ingram's recent analysis of the social networks forged by artists working in abstraction in the early 20th century offers a compelling account of the way an artist's fame or recognition have as much to do with "peer networks" or "personal and professional relationships" than creative output. Friendship is a primary relationship in the peer networks their analysis mapped and evaluated. See Banerjee Mitali and Paul Ingram, "Fame as an Illusion of Creativity: Evidence from the Pioneers of Abstract Art" (August 1, 2018), HEC Paris Research Paper No. SPE-2018-1305, Columbia Business School Research Paper No, 18-74, https://ssrn.com/abstract=3258318 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3258318.

not solely responsible for that shift. He was more a functionary of the museum's broad agenda than the pivotal "Achilles' heel" people saw (or wanted to see). Despite such a reality, the deeper contestation that *NYPS* triggered over the kind of artistic field we should desire—the beliefs, interests, and stakes we should hold about art and artists—emerged in scandal, as a morality tale that posed its villain in the curator as celebrity and its victim, the autonomous artistic field.

Scapegoating the Curator as Celebrity, or Evading the Waning of Artistic Autonomy

Remembering Geldzahler upon his death in 1994, then-chairperson of The Museum of Modern Art Agnes Gund named one of Geldzahler's primary curatorial decisions in *NYPS*. Gund remarked, "We are just getting around to doing what he did in 1970 here. Devoting whole rooms to a single artist."[160] She was referring of course to Geldzahler's installation where most of the thirty-six galleries contained only one artist. Gund praised his method, implying not only that the individual attention he paid to the artist was pioneering but also that such devotion of space (and attention) offered an important model to emulate. What she also subtly registers is the controversy Geldzahler's method courted at the time of the exhibition. In contrast, as this chapter has shown, Geldzahler's focus on generous displays of individual artists was one of several flashpoints in the scandal over his exhibition, triggering detractors to decry the quantity of works such devotion to the artist evidently required and to fear the cult of celebrity the exhibition seemed to construct.

By way of conclusion, I want to exploit this instance of hindsight to consider Geldzahler and *NYPS* from a wider and retrospective historical vantage point. Gund was not correct entirely when she named Geldzahler as ahead of his time. In the watershed year of 1969, *NYPS* in fact

[160] Hogrefe, "Geldzahler Memories: A Jester with Vision."

shared schematic similarities with better-known exhibitions of the time, including the devotion of space to a single artist. Yet the evaluative shift Gund implies about this strategy—from controversy to appreciation, or de-legitimation to legitimation—is striking. Geldzahler's curator peers have arguably come to exemplify the innovation and achievement Gund once credited to Geldzahler, while he has not been credited for it. What makes Geldzahler different?

The prevailing legacy of *NYPS* has made the exhibition look like a knot of scandalous controversy, explained by Geldzahler as a celebrity: a curator who was not adequately artistic or scholarly, compromised by money, friendships, and stardom. As this chapter has argued, the curator as celebrity also personified a negative vision of the artistic field more fully integrated with, and transformed by, non-artistic capital. Yet when we consider aspects of contemporaneous exhibitions, it becomes clear that Geldzahler participated in curatorial practices and cultural economic forces that were far more pervasive, more collectively experienced, than is acknowledged.

Consider, for instance, Genauer's accusation that Geldzahler egregiously pretended to be an artist. By no means was he the only curator at the dusk of the Sixties to hear this kind of response to an exhibition of their making. "There is a total style to the show, a style so pervasive as to suggest that Lucy Lippard is in fact the artist and that her medium is other artists," surmised critic Peter Plagens regarding Lippard's 1969 exhibition *557,087* in Seattle, WA.[161] Lippard's curatorial method, which consisted of producing works by artists according to their instructions, made Plagens wonder whether the conventional distinction between the artist as producer and

[161]Peter Plagens, "557,087," *Artforum* (November 1969). Quoted here from Andrea Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 69. Catherine Morris also discusses accusations of Lippard being an artist in her essay on the curator in Catherine Morris and Vincent Bonin, eds. *Materializing "Six Years": Lucy Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012).

curator as scholar or presenter had collapsed. What for Genauer and Plagens were two curators exceeding their traditional roles could also be understood not so much as shortcomings of individuals but as a ceding of the conventional terms of curatorial control.

Geldzahler's professed openness to an exhibition making process that had no predetermined ends speaks to a mode of exhibition making that involved artists in an integral manner. Such a ceding of the exhibition making to the artist, or including them in the process, also resonates with meta-reflections Marcia Tucker and James Monte articulated after completing *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* (1969). They recognized a turn in method whereby "normal curatorial procedures" made increasingly little sense, as Monte aptly described:

> During its [*Anti-Illusion*] organization, we discovered that the normal curatorial procedures of seeing and then selecting or rejecting works to be included could not be followed […] we discovered that the bulk of the exhibition would be comprised of painting and sculpture which we had not seen and would not see until perhaps one week before the opening date of the show.[162]

Monte's discovery that he no longer would see, select, and reject works in advance meant that he and Tucker had to adopt a different role because they were essentially organizing "exhibitions in which the general conditions are proposed to the artists and the decisions about specifics are left entirely to them," to use the words of their peer curator Seth Siegelaub who forged a similar curatorial path.[163]

Such working conditions also transformed the place or function of the gallery or museum space, in turn. In her study of the history of exhibition making at MoMA, specifically *Information* (1970) and *Spaces* (1969), art historian Mary Anne Staniszewski characterizes the

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[162] James Monte and Marcia Tucker, *Anti-Illusion: Procedures and Materials* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1969), 5.

[163] Seth Siegelaub, "On exhibitions and the world at large: Seth Siegelaub in conversation with Charles Harrison," *Studio International* (December 1969). Quoted here from Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," 69.

proliferation of single artist galleries as a shattering of MoMA's earlier use of the museum space as a kind of laboratory for a "plurality of individual sites and installations." As such, she writes:

> [they] were, in a sense, inscribed within the signatures of the artists. The framework for the artists' work expanded, both in its physical space and in its ideological domain. The installation design, previously the responsibility of the Museum as an institution, was now incorporated within the creative dimensions of the artist's pieces.[164]

Curator Jennifer Licht, in organizing *Spaces*, and Kynaston McShine, in presenting *Information*, extended the boundaries of the proverbial studio through a privileging of the creative artist that expanded their authority over galleries that previously were the province of the curator. More recently, in her study of Harald Szeemann and his exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969), art historian Caroline Jones makes a related observation. With his own individualizing installation strategy, which Jones also attributes to *Attitudes*, Szeemann became:

> […] a curate for souls, as well as producer, director, creative assembler, and manager of a 'temporary world,' offering a theatrical platform to the experience of purely individual views.[165]

A "plurality of individual sites," the "experience of purely individual views," these assessments arguably could describe the "room" and "half-rooms" Geldzahler dedicated to the majority of his selected artists. Of course, it would not be accurate to say that the traditional forms of painting and sculpture in *NYPS* are like the post-minimal, post-studio, conceptual art of *Spaces, Information*, or *Attitudes*. But Geldzahler's method similarly inscribed each room with the "signature of the artist." Geldzahler also ceded the space of the gallery to the artist's "ideological domain."

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[164] Mary Anne Staniszewski, The *Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 276.

[165] Caroline Jones, *The Global Work of Art: World's Fairs, Biennials, and the Aesthetics of Experience* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 177.

If, as Andrea Fraser has claimed, these methods were "new curatorial practices emerging around conceptual and other 'dematerialized art'," a byproduct of which was "a new level of identification among artists, critics, and museum professionals," the schematic similarities of *NYPS* with these other exhibitions bears two potential implications.[166] With gallery installations like Ellsworth Kelly's or Frank Stella's in *NYPS*, and the overall reception of the exhibition as one that prized individuals—this was usually a negative, scrutinizing evaluation—we could say that Geldzahler's exhibition was inflected by forces similar to the "new curatorial practices" attributed to figures such as Lippard, McShine, Szeemann, and others. Moreover, to the extent that Geldzahler accomplished something similar with "traditional" paintings and sculptures suggests, in turn, that these new curatorial practices may have less to do with the changing form of the art object and more to do with changes in the artistic field art large. Namely, that the "new level of identification" between artist and curator is, perhaps, a primary force driving the change in curatorial practice, and not a byproduct, as Fraser has argued. Finally, there was clearly something about *NYPS* that positioned Geldzahler's exhibition in a way that disallowed appreciation of its similarities with strategies embraced by his contemporaries.

Curatorial process or installation methods were not the only aspects Geldzahler and his peers shared. Just over a month after the Met and Xerox announced the company's donation underwriting *NYPS*, Siegelaub wrote to the head of public relations at Xerox, "We are presently in the process of producing a book which will be printed by your Xerox Systems Center in New York City."[167] The curator was hoping to convince the company to underwrite "The Xerox

[166] Andrea Fraser, "What's Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere? Part II," in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 68–69.

[167] Quoted in Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), 203n14.

Book," a group show of his devising, which utilized the book form as the manifestation of the exhibition. Xerox ultimately declined the opportunity, and the costs of the intended xerography process could not be found, so Siegelaub was forced to use a regular printing press, and hold onto the currency of Xerox in name alone.[168] Szeemann, in a second instance, however, was successful in his dealings with another large corporation, Philip Morris.

Szeemann and the Kunsthalle Bern relied on corporate largesse to realize a number of his exhibitions. For *Attitudes* in particular, Szeemann worked with public relations firm Ruder & Finn to orchestrate the exchange between the cache of contemporary art and the funds Philip Morris Europe could donate to realize the curator's ambitions. Jones describes their exchange this way:

> [Szeemann] wrapped Ruder & Finn into an aegis of curatorial autonomy and authorship that could still be 'cool,' because Philip Morris products were the accouterments of intellectuals and cineastes, not yet cancerous cowboys. Corporations in turn wanted the sign of Szeemann's autonomy as guarantor of the consumer's freedom to choose among "attitudes" (and brands) of the present. What was being packaged was the excitement of innovation parlayed by a European cultural institution and its hip young curator, for citizens and leaders otherwise 'wary' of American products.[169]

Yet in this particular exchange between art's "excitement of innovation" with profits from "American products," "Szeemann's autonomy" appears to have remained intact. Or as Claudia di Lecce has framed this partnership, "The company's support of 'When Attitudes Become Form' can be seen as an early and emblematic example of the new relationship developing between corporate marketing strategies, on the one hand, and support for contemporary

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[168] Alberro discusses this in his chapter "Xerox Degree of Art," in *Conceptual Art*, 130–151.

[169] Jones, *The Global Work of Art*, 180.

art practices and exhibitions, on the other."[170] In the case of *NYPS* for contrast, the same type of transaction that the Met and Xerox accomplished was seen at nearly every turn of the scandal as a sign of art's capitulation to corporate capital, not as an opportunity for "support." Geldzahler appears less as a figure who leveraged a new, if contentious, mechanism of artistic patronage and more as a mistaken curator who created a "financial and esthetic lollapalooza."

Indeed, what I seek to draw out from these schematic, retrospective comparisons are a series of similarities coupled with a dramatic disparity of evaluation. What were problems in Geldzahler's scandal have become in the aftermath of the 1960s indicators of innovation for his curator peers, or at the very least repressed aspects that do not amount to a disqualifying scrutiny in the longer legacy of reception. Yet drawing out these similarities and disparity of evaluations helps reveal what these exhibitions and curators shared: a waning of artistic autonomy. Whether it was the relationship between the artist and curator, the studio and museum, the artistic field and economic and journalistic fields, Geldzahler and many of his peers experimented with how the exhibition functioned as an "instrument of cultural exchange," in the words of English. In turn, these curators could be termed "agents of intraconversion," as English explains:

> The administrators, judges, sponsors, artists, and others involved in a prize are thus themselves to be understood as agents of intraconversion; each of them represents not one particular, pure form of capital, but a particular set of quite complex interests regarding the rules and opportunities for capital intraconversion.[171]

Looking beyond the style of artworks championed by each curator, or the institutions with or within which each operated, Geldzahler and his peers shared an imperative to re-negotiate the

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[170] Claudia Di Lecce, "Avant-garde Marketing: 'When Attitudes Become Form' and Philip Morris's Sponsorship," in *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form 1969',* ed. Christian Rattemeyer (London: Afterall Books, 2011), 229.

[171] English, *The Economy of Prestige*, 11.

structural organization of cultural production in the 1960s–70s. As primary "agents of intraconversion" (and also subjects of the process), they confronted the task of rewriting the rules for how artists and non-artists interacted with one another and how artistic and non-artistic capital could be exchanged, leveraged for their curatorial pursuits, and rationalized against the beliefs and values of the artistic field, which were in tandem flux. If, in fact, Geldzahler and his curator peers share more than we have realized, how should we explain Geldzahler's disparity?

One difference was, certainly, the artworks or artistic practices featured in *NYPS*. In the prevailing art historical accounts of the 1960s, especially at the end of the decade when Geldzahler's exhibition opened, artistic practices such as Postminimal art, Conceptual art, and post-studio strategies resemble something like the struggle Bourdieu described with a "highly autonomous sub-field of restricted production" staking its position in "opposition to the sub-field of large-scale production."[172] Yet, while these artistic tendencies altogether shared an opening up of the autonomous artwork to the situated, contingent context of contemporary life, politics, and the real space of the exhibition or institution, their historical privileging has arguably relied upon a conception of Bourdieu's "dualist framework of cultural production." Like the proverbial right-bank versus left-bank, a conventional framing of *Information* and *Attitudes* for example might assert that these exhibitions delivered a set of vanguard practices against the orthodoxy of preceding postwar forms like Abstract Expressionist and Color Field painting. In other words, what is primarily important about these exhibitions is their *relative* vanguardism; this is a reputation that takes precedence over (and, perhaps, minimizes) the intraconversions of artistic

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[172] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, Or: The Economic World Reversed," trans. Richard Nice, *Poetics* 12. No. 4/5 (1983): 334.

and non-artistic capital that were also at stake throughout corners of the artistic field—from Siegelaub's independent organizing to the Kunsthalle Bern to the Met.[173]

To a lesser, although arguably still meaningful extent, Geldzahler's peers were also able to maintain position as artistic, creative, or authorial figures *inside* the artistic field. Whether for circumstantial reasons such as his limited record of writing or, most crucially, the scandal that cast him and his celebrity as diametrically opposed to being a serious scholar and author, Geldzahler could not enjoy the discursive privilege that comes with holding an authorial position in the artistic field. Szeemann courted controversy and scandal, too, very notably with *Documenta V*. But when artist Robert Smithson charged Szeemann's endeavor as a form of "cultural confinement" and Smithson's fellow comrades of American artists declared in protest, for instance, "IT IS THE RIGHT OF AN ARTIST TO DETERMINE WHETHER HIS ART WILL BE EXHIBITED. IT IS THE RIGHT OF AN ARTIST TO DETERMINE WHAT AND WHERE HE EXHIBITS," what was in dispute were the various thematic claims Szeemann and his team of curators imposed as creative curator-authors, as well as the imposition itself.[174] In slight, but important, contrast, the very point of projecting the curator as celebrity was to disqualify Geldzahler's place outright—to cast him *outside* the artistic field. Geldzahler's peer curators may have been famous, some similarly notorious, but they maintained privileges of authority and creativity that could still count as belonging to the artistic field.

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[173] Julian Myers-Szupinska's account of *Attitudes* and Szeemann's relationship with Philip Morris is an important exception to the priorities of the prevailing discourse I assert here. Myers-Szupinska argues that the exchange between the museum and corporation manifest itself in the very nature of the exhibition, not just as the material grounds for the exhibition's creation. Myers-Szupinska writes, "Rather than bracketing the exhibition's patronage as something not proper to its achievement, we might recognize instead the presence of the multinational corporation as the alien gene that volatilized its genetic structure […]," see Julian Myers-Szupinska, "*Attitudes* and Affects," in *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes*, ed. Jens Hoffmann (San Francisco: Wattis Institute for Contemproary Arts, 2012).

[174] See Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement," *Artforum*, October 1972, 39; "The Undersigned Affirm [protest advertisement]," *Artforum*, June 1972, 92.

Yet accounting for their shared status as agents of intraconversion, the subtle differences in their exhibitions, and Geldzahler's strong disparity of negative exclusion, I would finally propose that Geldzahler was effectively a scapegoat. A scandal that projected the curator as celebrity was more than the production of enticing art world gossip or the drumming up of controversy during a tumultuous historical period. Scapegoating the curator as celebrity served a strategic function: to uphold belief in the *illusio* of cultural practice when nothing else, like a relative vanguardism of artistic practices or the curator's status as a creative author, could keep such sacred investments intact.

Although many of the major curators of this period were subject to and played with processes of intraconversion, which transformed how exhibitions operated as instruments of cultural exchange, *NYPS* did not have any mitigating trade-off that could sublimate the reality of this artistic field in transition. Geldzahler's projection as a celebrity offered a last fail-safe figure to evade the waning of artistic autonomy, despite the fact that the re-negotiation of the artistic field's relationship to economic and journalistic fields was already happening throughout the artistic field, even in arenas considered to be at the forefront of vanguard, experimental practice.

Given these terms, perhaps, it would be more accurate to say that the curator as celebrity deftly eased exchanges of artistic and non-artistic capital. Such a "contaminated" or "compromised" status continues to mark curatorial figures in order to absorb the "badness" of art's integration with commerce and media and to spare a full-fledged confrontation with the ways the artistic field and its artists function more and more like the star system and celebrities so many decried in 1969.[175] As scapegoat, Geldzahler fell on his sword. And even though the

[175] Consider, for example, Klaus Biesenbach, who currently serves as Artistic Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. In a book review for the *London Review of Books*, Hal Foster names Biesenbach as a "standout figure" of the "flashy exhibition-maker…who is more likely to appear in the celebrity pages than art magazines." Foster proposes the curatorial figure, since Geldzahler's time of the 1960s, has split into two main

vice of friendship was used to disqualify him, Geldzahler, in fact, may have fulfilled the terms of a most time-honored joke about friendship: "A friend will help you move house. A good friend will help you move a body." The re-negotiation of art and artist's more integrated relationship with commerce and media in the time of *NYPS*—tantamount to the death of a sacred vision of an autonomous artistic field—was made easier when there was Geldzahler, a mere celebrity, to blame.

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camps: one that Biesenbach represents and the other represented by figures such as Okwui Enwezor and Lynne Cooke, who "produce ambitious theme shows à la Szeemann and König." On how today's flashy exhibition-maker is distinct, Foster continues: "Life-styling of this sort is depressing: such 'curationism' has little relation to scholarship, let alone to criticism (both are decidedly uncool), and little of the sense of service to patrimony or public that still motivates some curators in Europe […] Szeemann and König came up against a rigid system that they worked to free up; the new breed of exhibition-makers appears content not only to inhabit that loosened system, but to be the 'agents' (as they like to say) of its exploitation by the fashion, music and entertainment industries." In a sense, Foster's diagnosis is symptomatic of the same, arguably, false distinctions between Geldzahler and his peers this conclusion seeks to surface. See Hal Foster, "Exhibitionists." Review of *Ways of Curating*, by Hans Ulrich Obrist and *Curationism*, by David Balzer. *London Review of Books*, June 4, 2015, accessed March 20, 2020. https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v37/n11/hal-foster/exhibitionists.

Conclusion

Curator as the Artist's Friend: Notes on the Negotiation of Artistic Autonomy

Despite the fact that an artist's last name, enunciated on its own, remains the veritable zenith of artistic achievement and stature, I started to notice some time ago the curious prevalence of its complementing pair: the artist's first name. David. Barbara. John. Jeff. Glenn. Andrea. Felix. Fred. Cindy. Simone. First names abound in the spaces where the contemporary art world meets for its work. But unlike the function of the artist's last name, uttering the artist's first name on its own seems designed to signify something more about the speaker than the artist, especially how that artist's first name is sounded.

On one hand, the first name uttered with resolute certainty bespeaks exceptional familiarity, probable intimacy, as if the speaker's relation to the artist had climbed a professional-personal summit. At such height, "Trust me. I *know* them. And they know *me*. We are friends," is the subtext intertwined in the confident enunciation. On the other, the first name uttered with hesitation signals a corollary uncertainty of relation. Perhaps, the speaker is not quite familiar enough with the artist, rendering questionable the privilege to name them so. Or maybe the speaker's presumption even violated the artistic field's decorum—often a recapitulation of the entire full name quickly amends the erroneous sounding of the first. I would contend that these plays with the first name dance alongside "the poles of designation and description" that Michel Foucault scrutinized in the functions of "[t]he proper name and the

name of an author."[1] They index how much friendship—literal relations of friendship and ideas held about friendship—predicates more and more our authority to speak about, to write on, to participate with art and artists. For Henry Geldzahler, friendship as the ideal form of one's relationship to the artist, and, in turn, art, would not have been a problem at face value. In fact, Geldzahler proposed this very mode of relation in a short essay he wrote for *The Hudson Review* in Spring 1965.[2]

Entitled "The Art Audience and the Critic," Geldzahler's essay outlined guiding principles for the critic's role and relationship to the artist, which he applied as well to other ancillary figures including art historians and curators. Partly based on his understanding of the historical arc of art's transformation beginning in the late 19th century, he proposed the proper location of the critic, historian, or curator was inside what he called the artist's "coterie." His essay posited that ancillary figures of the artistic field should be friends with the artist in order to do their critical work. Written three years after his impassioned defense of the artist at the "Symposium on Pop Art," which was reviewed in Chapter 1, the criteria Geldzahler laid out in his essay also appears to have formalized the claims he had only articulated informally at The Museum of Modern Art in 1962. What we see moving from Symposium to essay is that Geldzahler invokes coterie or friend to concretize his earlier call "to stay alert and sensitive to what the artist is doing, not to tell him what he is doing."[3]

The essay's first lines situate Geldzahler's artist-centric vision of art criticism within a Greenberg-inflected notion of modernism invested in art's self-reflexive inquiry. Geldzahler

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[1] Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, edited by Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 121.

[2] Henry Geldzahler, "The Art Audience and the Critic," *The Hudson Review* 18, no. 1(Spring 1965): 105–109.

[3] "A Symposium on Pop Art," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 7, April 1963, 37.

authoritatively begins by declaring, “The history of Modern Art is also the history of the progressive loss of art’s audience. Art has increasingly become the concern of the artist and the bafflement of the public.”[4] What Geldzahler means by the public’s bafflement is, however, not just the avant-gardist shock of the new. He contextualized such bafflement within a longer historical trajectory, evaluating the progressive loss of audience as one measured against the loss of the artwork’s original legibility by the group of elites and patrons who made up art’s traditional historical audience. Insofar as “the artist of the Renaissance, Baroque, and eighteenth century knew for whom he was painting,” Geldzahler argued, works of art were legible through a “shared body of knowledge” and enjoyed by an “educated, enlightened, and enfranchised class of art connoisseurs.”[5] Geldzahler had in mind the allegorical narratives or text-based iconographies, which tied artworks, the written word, and their comprehension closely together.

Geldzahler reasoned that when the artwork “began to look in upon itself, upon its own inner necessities and mechanics,” the professional critic emerged as “a necessary buffer between the painter and the public.”[6] At this point of the essay, it sounds like Geldzahler is discussing a conventional account of the critic and the public in the nineteenth century bourgeois public sphere. However, he subsequently makes a particular departure. Another audience, not “the public,” becomes Geldzahler’s primary concern and constitutes the originary locus for his ideal critic’s proper place and role.

According to Geldzahler, other artists emerged after the progressive loss of audience triggered by Modern Art’s inward attention. “It is undoubtedly true that the best audience, and in a sense the only audience, for Impressionist painting in its early years was the artist,” he

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[4] Geldzahler, “The Art Audience and the Critic,” 105.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid, 106.

reasoned. Geldzahler first steps aside from the familiar problem of criticism—conventionally concerned with the role critics play evaluating works of fine art for a bourgeois public sphere. Instead, in the terms of his essay, Geldzahler reasoned that modernist self-criticality was not solely limited to the artwork. He claimed that the artist's and the artwork's self-reflexive inquiry also meant that the proper audience became even more attenuated to those in direct proximity to the artist's activity. He writes:

> The most important developments in the art of this century in their logical and inevitable sequence (inevitable of course only after the fact—and unpredictable before) are open and available, at first, only to the narrow but passionately interested audience for art made up largely of the painters and their immediate coterie. It has been the increasing concern with the basic elements of painting, the painter's vocabulary, with no concessions to an hypothetical audience out there that seemed unable or prepared to care anyway, that has slimmed and attenuated the public for art to an alert and interested few attuned to the closest scrutiny of formal variations and adjustments that seem slight or non- existent to the inexperienced, but are deeply meaningful and rich to those who have done the work of looking.[7]

This new specialized audience group of "painters and their immediate coterie" no longer shared the terms of the historical humanist canon but rather "have done the work of looking" and possessed passion, care, and shared concern over the "painter's vocabulary."

So, to delineate the proper role of the critic, Geldzahler's formalist modernism looked askance from the public's alienation and focused on the formation of a smaller audience, who closely watched and supported the artist's sovereign self. "The good critics of the past hundred years have been the audience for art, the artist themselves and their writer friends," Geldzahler subsequently asserts.[8] If the true audience for the modern artwork could only be directly proximate to the artist, then, the proper critic should count themselves belonging to "the coterie,

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid, 106–107.

the artists' friends."[9]

Geldzahler argued that only from the coterie, only as a friend to the artist, could critics play the proper intermediary role between the creating artist and the larger public. "The critic speaks to the audience out front and points to the painting behind him. He is an unfortunately necessary link in the communication between the artist and the public."[10] Here, Geldzahler returns his discussion to the more familiar concerns regarding the professional critic. The "audience out front" is distinct from the earlier "passionately interested audience" of "painters and their immediate coterie." After outlining the critic's intermediary position between public audience and art/artist, Geldzahler continues with a meandering discussion on the limits of any verbal enterprise that seeks to describe visual artworks. "Paintings lead to paintings; words never do," he dictates. Yet he also allows for some potential usefulness of a critic who may help explain, "Words, unaided pictorially, can summarize and organize visual information, and in this the critic is helpful," concedes Geldzahler. Ultimately left with an unresolved tension between the essential impossibility but minor utility of a critical enterprise, Geldzahler reiterates his artist-centric argument and leaves the reader with a simply stated conclusion: "The critic, curator, or historian of modern art can only point."[11]

"To point" stands in stark contrast with the other verbs that may come to mind for the role of the critic, historian, or curator. To frame, to explain, to evaluate, to interpret, to demystify, to decry, to praise, to judge. None of these are the thrust of Geldzahler's conception of the critic's proper role. "The Art Audience and the Critic" relinquishes these possibilities, elevating the single gesture of pointing to the artist and their artworks. Pointing calls attention to them. It

[9] Ibid, 107.
[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid, 109.

prioritizes them. "To point," simplified the crux of what Geldzahler called for at the symposium, "The critic's highest goal must be to stay alert and sensitive to what the artist is doing, not to tell him what he should be doing."[12] Three years later, then, pointing became the gesture that defined how to stay alert and sensitive to what the artist does. "The artist's friend" was the defining figure who would fulfill that role.

Geldzahler was "the curator as the artist's friend" and his personal experience undoubtedly informed his claims. He proposed friendship with the artist as the authorizing and legitimating ground for ancillary figures who serve a mediating role between the artist and others. Friendship also guaranteed the artist's primacy in such negotiation—like a good friend, his essay implied, the work of the critic, historian, and curator should only point (prioritize, support, and defer) to the standpoint of the artist.

Despite his apparent faith in friendship, Geldzahler's activities throughout the Sixties, as this dissertation has analyzed, provide a less straightforward picture of friendship's place in the artistic field. The course of his life and work led him to negotiate over and over the relationship between artists and nonartist others, and artistic and nonartistic fields, more broadly. Whether in his leadership of the NEA Visual Arts Program or his exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970* (*NYPS*), Geldzahler's status as the artist's friend indexed an array of discourses, processes, and, at times, conflicts that were key symptoms of a changing structural organization of cultural production.

Geldzahler's negotiation of art and government entailed equating the artist and the poor in order to rationalize and deliver the federal government's aid to the arts. As director of the NEA Visual Arts Program, Geldzahler appropriated features of the poor and powerlessness from the War on Poverty to model a needy, powerless artist and to design programs that adhered to the

[12] "A Symposium on Pop Art," 37.

policy conditions of the larger Great Society era. Examining the ways his initiatives converged with these conditions also showed how Geldzahler's negotiation inherited the same misrecognitions of "opportunity" and "empowerment" that were symptomatic of the period. His convergence reasserted, perhaps, even strengthened the fallacy of a sovereign, self-determined artist despite the fact that programs like the Museum Purchase Program and *Legal Protection for the Artist: A Study for the National Endowment for the Arts* profoundly shaped what an artist's agency could and could not look like. Geldzahler's divergence from empirical determinations of need also revealed the limits of his appropriation, wherein real indicators of political and material need did not translate into the NEA's activities, even though the rhetoric of need was emphasized throughout.

The controversy of *NYPS* embroiled Geldzahler in scandal. While the scandal fixated on the curator alone, what were really in dispute were the exhibition and museum's determined exchanges between the artistic field and economic, social, and journalistic fields. *NYPS* triggered a series of unprecedented intraconversions of artistic and nonartistic capital—between cultural prestige and corporate support, artwork and commodity, canonicity and celebrity—presenting a vision of the artistic field that no longer looked like an autonomous "world apart," which many detractors feared and many others welcomed.[13] Yet within a maelstrom of critique whereby some critics mourned this waning of artistic autonomy and others indicted the Met for its conservatism, racism, and sexism, the scandal overwhelmingly figured Geldzahler at the center, especially his celebrity, to explain what was wrong.

On one hand, we could conceive of Geldzahler's negotiation of art and commerce as one of embrace (or surrender)—at the Met, he facilitated many of the exchanges himself. Yet, in light

[13] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 59.

of the fact that Geldzahler was one among a generation of curator peers who also functioned as "agents of intraconversion," following James English's analysis, his negotiation also appears to have entailed being a scapegoat.[14] When the artwork's relative vanguardism or a curator's creative authorship could not mitigate or serve as trade-off for the advanced integration of art and commerce, Geldzahler's fall by scandal permitted the exchange to proceed while protecting a sacred vision of art and artists, if only in belief.

Throughout these two major spheres of activity, friendship was Geldzahler's through-line. Representations of Geldzahler, by artists Andy Warhol and David Hockney, showed how he became their friend. Warhol's memories and Hockney's paintings signified major features of friendship, including: shared activity, affection or the artist's welfare and happiness as motivation, and the co-creative self-formation forged in friendship. Subsequently, at the NEA, anecdotes of Geldzahler's mutual contact, his professed concern for the artist's needs and wants, as well as the premise that he enjoyed a unique knowledge of the powerless artist substantiated his role as program director. These ideas of friendship established the ground of Geldzahler's expertise and enabled him to become "the curator as professional reformer."

While friendship was primarily seen in its virtuous form at the NEA, it was the vices of friendship that detractors noted over and over during the scandal of *NYPS*. Insofar as the scandal blamed the exhibition's failures on Geldzahler, or "the curator as celebrity," the idea that his friendships rendered him objectionably partial served to expiate the museum's open embrace of economic and journalistic capital. Yet insofar as the scandal of *NYPS* was tantamount to Geldzahler's scapegoating, the blame the curator bore might also be understood as a sacrifice only a friend would make. The curator's scapegoating drew attention away from a changing

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[14] James F. English, *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 10–11.

status of the artist, away from central figures of the artistic field who were supposed to be consecrated by pure values of art and culture but were now also produced by money, social power, and stardom.

In total, "the curator as the artist's friend" reveals a complex negotiation of artistic autonomy wherein friendship with the artist set the rules, opportunities, and barriers for the exchanges that constitute the artist's and artistic field's imbricated relationship to political, social, economic, and journalistic fields. Whatever the exchange, it was the artist's status and friendship that provided terms for Geldzahler's negotiations, measuring, for example, whether the exchange reflected the artist's needs and wants or whether the negotiating agent could demonstrate justifiably their knowledge of the artist.

Even in the present, we can hear such ambition to use artist friendship as a kind of ethics and the basis of one's authority, especially when you listen to voices in contemporary art talk about the values or capacities that curators (and also administrators, collectors, patrons, other non-artist figures, etc.) should hold:

> Dan's [Byers] commitment to putting the interest of artists and their work first makes him an ideal curator for the museum.[15]
>
> Henriette [Huldisch] has an interdisciplinary perspective, deep knowledge and experience working with living artists.[16]
>
> Discussing what motivates him, [curator Ikechukwu] Onyewuenyi said he keeps in mind an edict from his old mentor, [curator] Adrienne Edwards, while both were working at Performa. "I follow artists," he said.[17]

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[15] Eva Respini quoted in Andrew Russeth, "Dan Byers Joins ICA Boston as Senior Curator," ARTnews, December 22, 2014, https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/dan-byers-joins-ica-boston-as-senior-curator-3336/.

[16] Mary Ceruti quoted in "The Walker Art Center Names Henriette Huldisch as Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs," Walker Art Center, September 30, 2019, https://walkerart.org/press-releases/2019/the-walker-art-center-names-henriette-huldisch-as-chief-curator-and-director-of-curatorial-affairs/

[17] "16 Influential Young Curators Shaping Contemporary Art," Artsy, accessed September 25, 2020, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-16-influential-young-curators-shaping-contemporary-art.

> Our job is to support the living artist.[18]

> "I learned that to be a real patron versus a collector, you have an opportunity to put the needs of an artist first—you want to do what's best for the artists in the world."[19]

These anecdotes—like joint "experience," to follow or "put the needs of an artist first," or access to a "deep" personal truth of the living artist—all imply virtuous ideals of friendships as an ethical framework that can regulate the proper functioning of curators, other ancillary figures, and, in turn, the artistic field. But how viable is this configuration of friendship, ethics, and authority? If friendship has a "school of vice," as C.S. Lewis observed, what potential problems are at stake in the model of "the curator as the artist's friend?"[20] What are the ways in which friendship with the artist can, but also, cannot set the terms for the negotiation of artistic autonomy?

In his essay, Geldzahler betrayed some awareness of a potential problem with his elevation of friendship and his proposition that critics and curators should be artist's friends. He very briefly admits, "This coterie aspect of criticism smacks of cabal but has proved necessary."[21] For Geldzahler, the benefits of artist friendship outweighed the costs and so the latter did not deserve further scrutiny. Geldzahler's unwillingness to attend to what those costs

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[18] Paul Ha quoted in Diane Toroian Keaggy, "Contemporary's outgoing director Paul Ha defined museum's personality," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, November 19, 2011, https://www.stltoday.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/contemporarys-outgoing-director-paul-ha-defined-museums-personality/article_cc083b04-4698-58bb-aee9-557303496a7d.html. The word "living" in front of artist was not, to my knowledge, a necessary or meaningful modifier for Geldzahler. Besides the story of complaints about him receiving too many phone calls at the museum, against which he defended himself by saying he could not help the fact that his artist were alive, Geldzahler doesn't seem to have ever felt the need to underline that his artists were living. In the recent past, however, "living" is a prevalent, almost overused, modifier, and its usage in the artistic field deserves further etymological scrutiny.

[19] Bernard Lumpkin quoted in Elizabeth Fazzare, "Cultured Collections with Bernard Lumpkin," Cultured Magazine, April 30, 2021, https://www.culturedmag.com/cultured-collections-with-bernard-lumpkin/.

[20] C.S. Lewis, "Friendship," in *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960), 94–95.

[21] Geldzahler, "The Art Audience and the Critic," 107.

might be is symptomatic of what philosopher Alexander Nehamas identifies as a major inheritance from the Aristotelian thinking on friendship: "that friendship is an unalloyed good, a flawless sort of love and one of life's greatest pleasures."[22] While the goodness of friendship determines many of the common sense assumptions we hold about friendship, Geldzahler "turn[s] away from friendship's darker, more painful, and more compromising sides," in the words of Nehamas.[23] Regarding what this presumption of friendship's goodness obscures, Nehamas writes:

> […] we ignore the fact that friendships, even good friendships, can sometimes be quite harmful. And we overlook the fact that even the best of friendships sometimes conflict with the morally right thing to do—when loyalty to a friend, for example, takes precedence over discharging one's duty to others. Friendship, I will argue, has a double face.[24]

That "double face," for C.S. Lewis, was friendship's ambivalence between a school of virtue and a school of vice. Together, Lewis and Nehamas' collective thinking suggests that a major problem of friendship's intersection with the artistic field has to do with the dilemma between a friend and others: the essential partiality of friendship.

According to Lewis, all friendships entail what he called "a sort of secession." Lewis explains, "To say 'These are my friends,' implies 'Those are not.'"[25] And in that distinguishing pointing to one's friends versus others, Lewis sees:

> Every real Friendship is a sort of secession, even a rebellion. It may be a rebellion of serious thinkers against accepted clap-trap or of faddists against accepted good sense; of real artists against popular ugliness or of charlatans against civilised taste; of good men against the badness of society or of bad men against its

[22] Alexander Nehamas, *On Friendship* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 12.

[23] Ibid, 5.

[24] Ibid, 5–6.

[25] Lewis, "Friendship," 94, 72.

goodness.[26]

When Geldzahler conceded in his essay that his proposition may "smack of cabal," he implies the "secession" of friendship might, in an extreme, negative form, become a kind of exclusion that functions more like a clique or faction. Such exclusion is what detractors of *NYPS* charged about Geldzahler's selection, projecting Geldzahler as the ringleader of the exhibition's cabal of celebrities. In the words of Lewis, they saw *NYPS* as "a self-appointed aristocracy," in which "corporate pride" or "corporate superiority" silenced, rejected, and disregarded those outside of Henry's circle of friends.[27] Consider Lewis's elaboration of this negative possibility:

> It will be obvious that the element of secession, of indifference or deafness (at least on some matters) to the voices of the outer world, is common to all Friendship, whether good, bad, or merely innocuous…The danger is that this partial indifference or deafness to outside opinion, justified and necessary though it is, may lead to a wholesale indifference or deafness. The most spectacular instances of this can be seen not in a circle of friends but in a Theocratic or aristocratic class.[28]

The distinction Lewis poses between "partial indifference or deafness to outside opinion" versus "wholesale indifference or deafness" resonates with Nehamas's own framing of friendship's essential partiality. He frames the issue along a spectrum from "legitimate distinction" to "illegitimate exclusion." Nehamas writes:

> The danger that friendship may lead from legitimate distinction to illegitimate exclusion is real and the cause of many problems for both individuals and groups, both young and old. But friendship can also be 'a school of vice' in another, more urgent way. A friendship may sometimes not simply permit or encourage but actually *require* attitudes or actions that can't be morally justified."[29]

The tension Nehamas names is another way to appreciate the nature of Geldzahler's negotiation.

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[26] Ibid, 94.

[27] Ibid, 97–98.

[28] Ibid, 95.

[29] Nehamas, *On* Friendship, 61.

Like a recursive structure, Geldzahler's negotiation continually grappled with the stakes of, and tension between, "legitimate distinction" and "illegitimate exclusion" at all levels of his activity. Recall, for instance, Alfred Frankenstein's criticism of Geldzahler's plans for the NEA. The critic's concern over the prominence of New York City and what Frankenstein diagnosed as an allegiance to "'leading' people" and "Madison Ave values" by "Geldzahler and Company" was a suspicion over who was being excluded by the NEA and whether such exclusions were justifiable.[30] However, it was the NEA's expressed interest in "the struggling artist"—their effort to elevate a previously ignored target of government assistance—which NEA Chair Roger Stevens cited in order to defend and legitimate Geldzahler's actions. Telescoping out, we can appreciate this same equivocal nature of artist friendship when manifold activities mounted in relation to "the artist" yielded what looks like a diametrically opposed state of activity and evaluation—between the legitimate distinction pursued by the NEA and the illegitimate exclusion manifest at the Met—all ostensibly around the same figure of Geldzahler and even some of the same friendships.

Embracing Nehamas' essential concern that the partiality of friendship may "*require* attitudes and actions that can't be morally justified," it is perhaps worth asking then, if "[t]he critic, curator or historian of modern art can only point," what is the constraint on such a function? When does Geldzahler's instruction "to stay alert and sensitive to what the artist is doing, not to tell him what he should be doing," entail a "wholesale indifference or deafness" to others in the artistic field? How do we reconcile loyalty to an artist as a friend, when the partiality of friendship may compel us to give them an unjustifiable priority over critics, curators, historians, educators, and other cultural workers of the artistic field? Indeed, to the extent that the

[30] Alfred Frankenstein, "A Question of Endowment Direction," *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, January 15, 1967. Box 16, Folder 10.30, Henry Geldzahler Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

contradictions and, at times, incoherence of Geldzahler's negotiations resonate with similar maneuvers today, it becomes apparent that in an artistic field where friendship is the latent organizing framework of the negotiation between artists and others, we have not yet determined how to avoid the dangers of "illegitimate exclusion" in friendship. Although Geldzahler's vision of the critic/curator held that as "artist's friends" we may better evaluate artists' works, without attending to the vices of friendship, we may elevate and favor the artist to the morally-suspect detriment of ancillary others.

Nehamas' discussion on the problem of friendship's essential partiality also asks whether there is a limit to the "usefulness of taking private friendship as a model for moral, political or social relations more generally."[31] While he acknowledges that feminist and queer theorists have productively shown how "friendships can be agents of social change," Nehamas warns the rules of an individual friendship should not be directly translated or applied when scaled up to dealing with large groups. He explains:

> If we must know directly the individuals we care for, impartiality has to take priority when we are facing groups too large and complex to be sustained by the bonds of personal affection and commitment.[32]

Considered within this framework, Geldzahler's defense of artists at the Symposium on Pop Art and his discussion of the role of the critic/curator in relation to the artist and the artist's friend in his subsequent essay can be understood as (arguably misguided) efforts to make an ill-advised and irreconcilable shift from individual to group. Geldzahler was translating his personal experiences with Warhol and Hockney, as well as other individual artists, to articulate a model of relation to the Artist for the entire artistic field. His scaling up presumed that what may apply to some individual artist friendships of his could apply to any and all artists. In the terms of his

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[31] Nehamas, *On Friendship*, 55.

[32] Ibid.

essay, Geldzahler's prescriptions also overlooked the different ecosystem of institutions, capital, and media, which defined the art world of the 1960s and starkly departed from the modernist origins his vision of the artist's friend drew upon. Finally, the critical assumptions motivating Geldzahler's elevation of the friend and friendship also throws into relief how "the artist" in "the artist's friend" ambiguously signifies between the scale of the individual and the group.

In a recently produced podcast, curator Helen Molesworth exemplifies this slippage of individual versus group, and the peculiar way invocations of "the artist" and friendship with artists typically rely on a monolithic conception. In the last minutes of an interview entitled "What Does an Art Curator Do," the interviewers ask Molesworth to quickly answer a string of final questions:

> Interviewer: Before I let you go, I want to do a little lightning round. Favorite snacks?
>
> Molesworth: Favorite snacks? Dates, nuts, and clementines.
>
> […]
>
> Interviewer: A friend who has really profoundly shaped your views about art and curating?
>
> Molesworth: […] Oh god, it's like everyone, it's like every friend I have, because I'm really lucky. I'm friends with artists. So there, I would just say like every artist I've ever had a conversation with, like, that's so deep.[33]

Molesworth's answer, "[…] it's like every friend I have, because I'm really lucky. I'm friends with artists," betrays a conventional confidence in friendship's virtuousness and the special privileges the curator believes it affords for knowing both artists and art.

Yet in a question that asked Molesworth to name "a friend," singular, it is perhaps revealing how she instinctively alludes to artists in general, unable or unwilling to name a

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[33] Helen Molesworth, "What Does an Art Curator Do," interview by Aminatou Sow and Ann Friedman, *Call Your Girlfriend*, May 28, 2021, audio, 41:30, https://www.callyourgirlfriend.com/episodes/2021/05/28/helen-molesworth-art-curator.

specific person. Molesworth in the present and Geldzahler in the past imagine "the artist" in monolithic terms. They fall into a structural trap similar to the one that the NEA's divergence from an empirical determination of need did—unwittingly privileging a totalizing conception of the artist that in its ambition to unify a group of people may do more harm by obscuring the differences within such a group.

Finally, Geldzahler, Molesworth and others who appeal to friendship with the artist or artists in general, like the anecdotes I quoted above, also abide a philosophical fallacy. According to his philosophical positing, Nehamas warns:

> […] affection, from the most intense to the most casual, can only reach so far. Not only impractical, devoting oneself seriously to a large number of people is also psychologically costly and confusing. Not only that: it is a fact that we can feel affection only for people with whom we are directly connected, to whom we are related as one individual to another [...] what is always needed is a concrete conception of another person. *Friendship—unlike charity and like erotic love—can't be impersonal. You can't love all the virtuous, whoever they happen to be* […] *It is impossible to love someone who is no more to us than an abstract presence.*[34]

In this light, although Frank Stella said that Geldzahler demonstrated "to love art is to love artists," we must recognize the extent to which Stella's sentiment, and others like it, is more platitude than workable principle. When friendship is assumed to be an "unalloyed good," leads to "illegitimate exclusion," or projects an impossible horizon of commitments to an abstract figure or group, the usefulness of "the curator as the artist's friend" as an ethical framework for the negotiation of artistic autonomy may be far more limited than conventional wisdom in the artistic field has fully realized.

Ultimately, this dissertation has analyzed Geldzahler's negotiations of art and artist's relationship to politics, commerce, and media in the 1960s to renew our understanding of the structural organization of cultural production since his time. Given the centrality of friendship—

[34] Nehamas, *On Friendship*, 50–51. Emphasis added.

as his primary mode of relationship to the artist and the organizing ground of his exchanges across the artistic field—the full complexity of Geldzahler's story also provides new ways for understanding how we conceive of the artist and engage their activity. Contending with the curator as the artist's friend is to interrogate specific dynamics of legitimacy and authority in the artistic field. Geldzahler's example shows us how the artistic field has mobilized friendship as an ethical framework that determines its broad functions and gives its agents a form of power predicated on an ideological relation to the central figure in the artistic field: the artist. As a mode of relation and kind of interaction, friendship can be used well or badly. The challenge is neither to condemn friendship nor seek some "safer" alternative mode. Instead, we can embrace friendship's entirety: pursue the promise it holds for improving the status of the artist, and at the same time resist its perils of ideological obfuscation and undemocratic exclusion that have been and remain its deleterious end.

Figure 0.1. Richard Avedon, *Henry Geldzahler*, 1965.

Figure 0.2. Cast photo for Claes Oldenburg, *Ironworks/Fotodeath*, February 1961.
Geldzahler in first row center, beside Oldenburg.

Figure 0.3. Geldzahler in Claes Oldenburg, *Washes*, 1965.

Figure 0.4. "People Are Talking About," *Vogue*, October 15, 1969.
Geldzahler at bottom right.

Figure 0.5. Pages from "Henry Here, Henry There…Who is Henry?," *Life*, February 18, 1966.

NEWSFORM

A Mixed Bag of Politicos, Pop Artists & Parisiens.

WHO went to Washington, D.C. and watched Perle Mesta serve pink champagne and flaming duck to Secretary of the Treasury John Connally, Mary Lou Whitney and Ted Kennedy among others, while in New York actress Ruth Ford hosted a beautiful dinner for playwright Tennessee Williams. At the Whitney Museum, pop artist James Rosenquist gathered with friends; The Adolph Schumans were honored at the Hotel de Ville's gala soiree in Paris.

Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Schuman

Painter Robert Rauschenberg

Art Collector Robert Scull

Claes Oldenburg

Hugh O'Brian, Jack Valenti

Suzy at Mesta party

Perle Mesta and John Connally

Anne Slater embraces Hugh O'Brian at Mesta party

Humorist Art Buchwald

Actress Anne Meacham and Tennessee Williams

Ethel Merman

Henry Geldzahler, a curator of the Metropolitan Museum

Pop Artist James Rosenquist

Figure 0.6 “WHO: A Mixed Bag of Politicos, Pop Artists & Parisiens”
Harper’s Bazaar, June 1972. Geldzahler at bottom center.

Figure 0.7. Dennis Hopper, *Andy Warhol, David Hockney, Henry Geldzahler, and Jeff Goodman* from *Out of the 60s*, 1963.

Figure 0.8. Frank Stella, *Henry Garden*, 1963.

Figure 0.9. Stills from Andy Warhol, *Henry Geldzahler*, 1964.

Figure 0.10. Alice Neel, *Henry Geldzahler*, 1967.

Figure 0.11. Marisol, *Double Portrait of Henry Geldzahler*, 1967.

Figure 0.12. David Hockney, *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott*, 1969.

Figure 0.13. George Segal, *The Farm Worker*, 1962–63.

Figure 0.14. Steve Schapiro, *Stella & Geldzahler Smoking*, 1965.

Figure 1.1. David Hockney, *Andy Warhol + Henry Geldzahler New York*, 1975.

Figure 1.2. David Hockney, *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*, 1977.

Figure 1.3. David Hockney, *My Parents*, 1977.

Figure 1.4. Bruce Davidson, [Henry Geldzahler on the Phone], 1968.

Figure 1.5. Andy Warhol, *129 Die in Jet*, 1962.

Figure 1.6. Andy Warhol, *Flowers*, 1964.

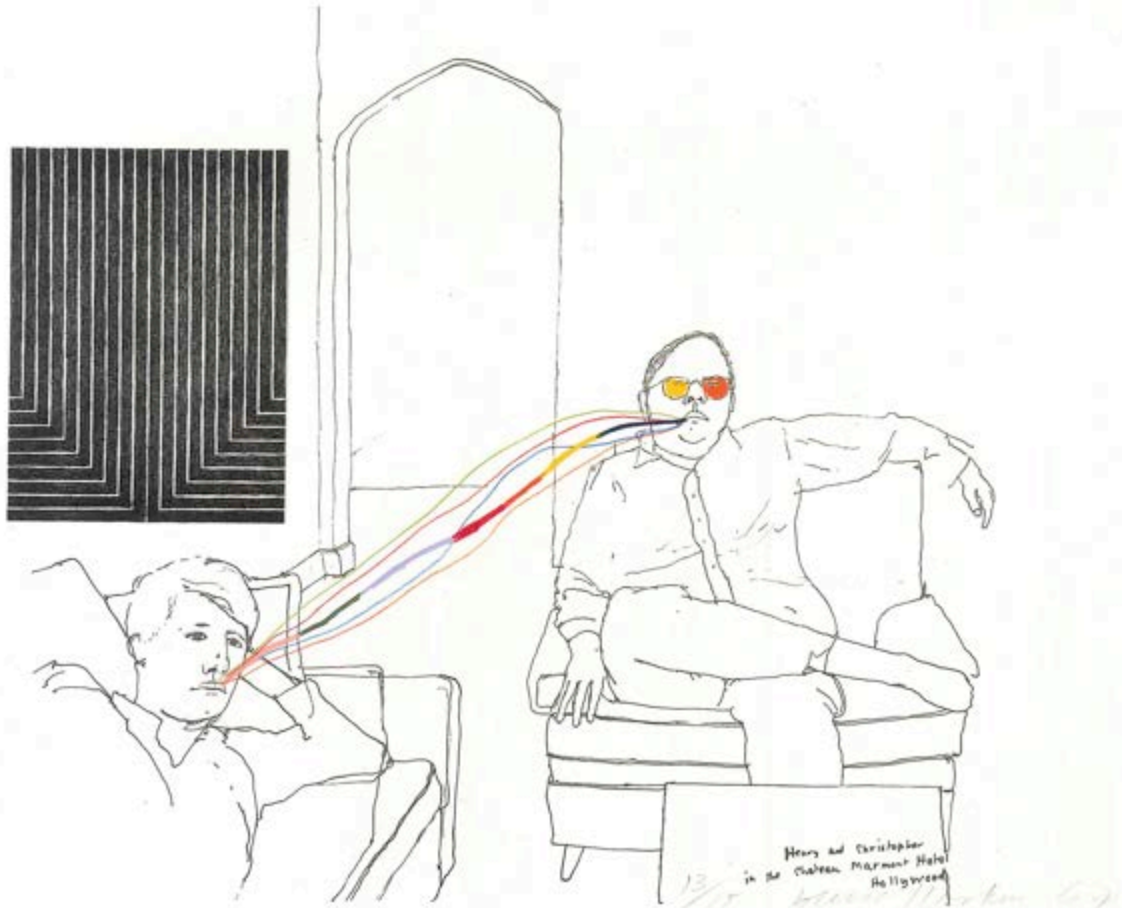


Figure 1.7. David Hockney, *Henry and Christopher*, 1967.

Figure 1.8. David Hockney, *Henry in Italy*, 1973.

Figure 1.9. David Hockney, *Henry Seated with Tulips*
from *Friends* (Gemini G.E.L. Portfolio), 1976.

Figure 1.10. David Hockney, *Henry Geldzahler* from *Long Island Sketchbook*, 1994.

Figure 1.11. David Hockney, *My Parents and Myself*, 1975.

Figure 1.12. David Hockney, *My Parents and Myself*, 1976.

Figure 1.13. David Hockney, *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy*, 1968.

Figure 1.14. David Hockney, *Mr and Mrs Clark Percy*, 1970–71.

Figure 1.15. Piero della Francesca, *The Baptism of Christ*, after 1437.

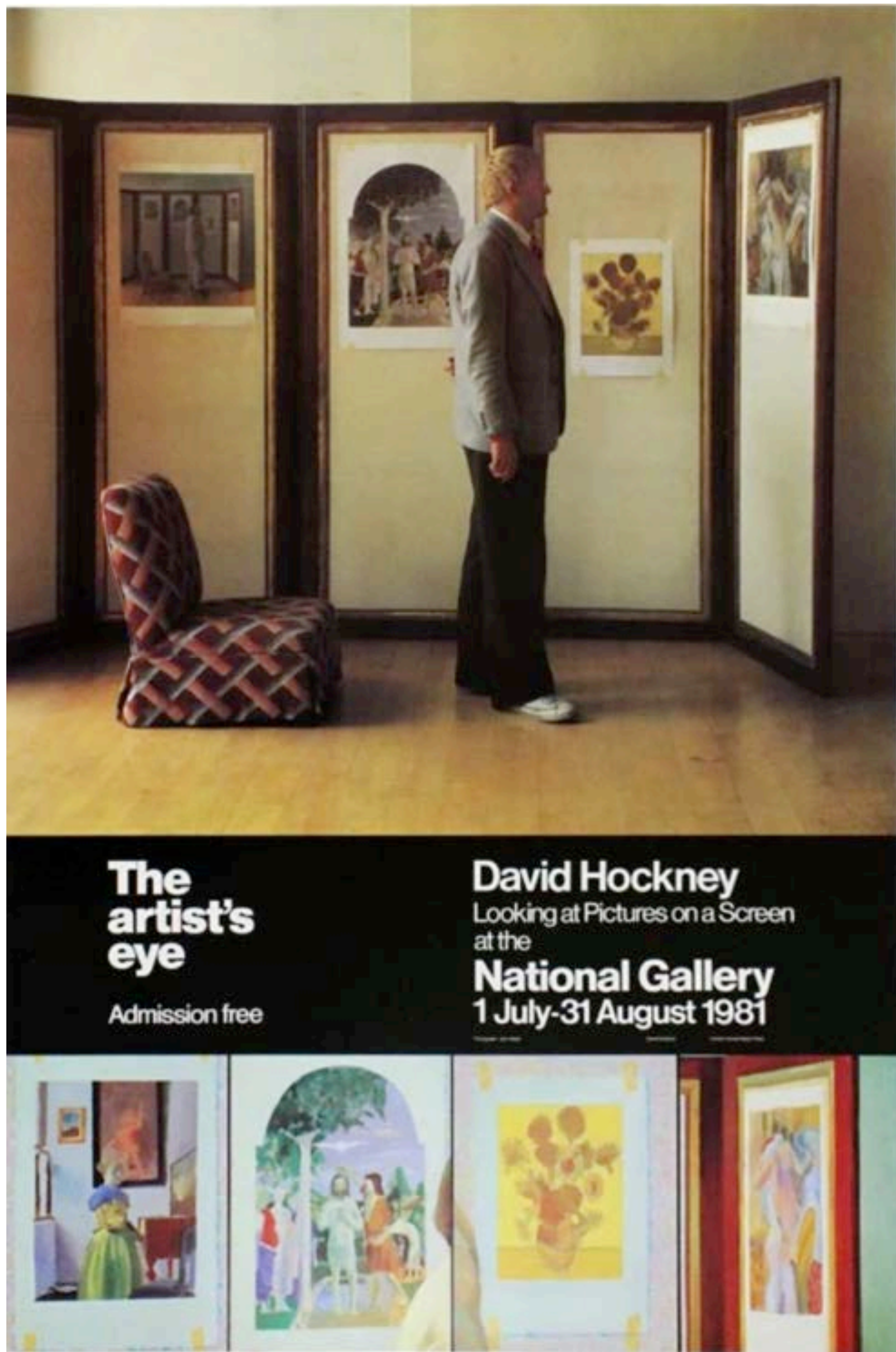


Figure 1.16. Poster for exhibition *The Artist's Eye*, National Gallery, London, 1981.

Figure 1.17. Geldzahler speaking at “Symposium on Pop Art,” The Museum of Modern Art, New York, December 13, 1962.

Figure 2.1. Yoichi Okamoto, White House Rose Garden Signing Ceremony for Arts and Humanities Bill, September 29, 1965.

Figure 2.2. Dedication of Alexander Calder's *La Grande Vitesse* (1969), Grand Rapids, MI, June 14, 1969.

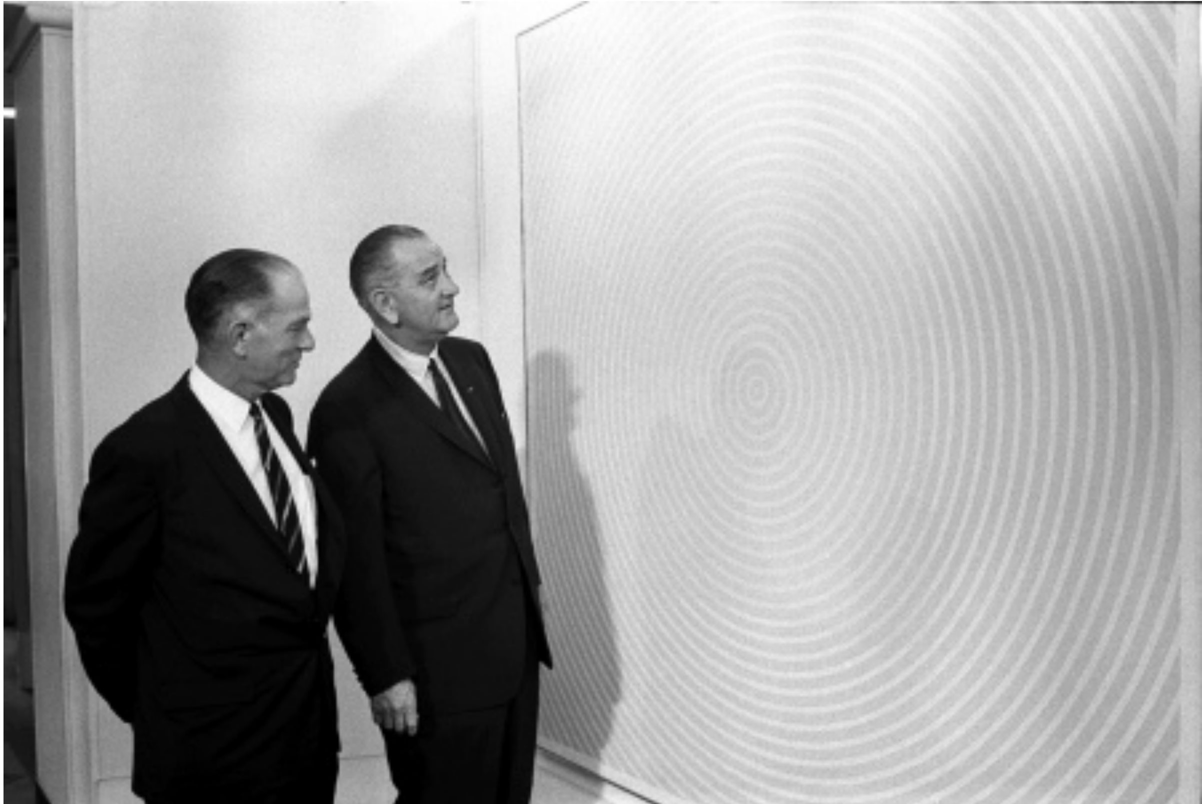


Figure 2.3. Yoichi Okamoto, Sen. J. William Fulbright and President Lyndon B. Johnson view Richard Anuskiewicz's *Squaring the Circle* (1963), White House Festival of the Arts, June 14, 1965.

Figure 2.4. Yoichi Okamoto. President Lyndon B. Johnson presents Ansel Adams with a bill signing pen, White House Rose Garden Signing Ceremony for Arts and Humanities Bill, September 29, 1965.

THE ARTIST'S RESERVED RIGHTS TRANSFER AND SALE AGREEMENT

The accompanying 3 page Agreement form has been drafted by Bob Projansky, a New York lawyer, after my extensive discussions and correspondence with over 500 artists, dealers, lawyers, collectors, museum people, critics and other concerned people involved in the day-to-day workings of the international art world.

The Agreement has been designed to remedy some generally acknowledged inequities in the art world, particularly artists' lack of control over the use of their work and participation in its economics after they no longer own it.

The Agreement form has been written with special awareness of the current ordinary practices and economic realities of the art world, particularly its private, cash and informal nature, with careful regard for the interests and motives of all concerned.

It is expected to be the standard form for the transfer and sale of all contemporary art, and has been made as fair, simple and useful as possible. It can be used either as presented here or slightly altered to fit your specific situation.

If the following information does not answer all your questions consult your attorney.

1

Figure 2.5. Page 1 from The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement, 1971 by Seth Siegelaub and Robert Projansky. Designed by Cris Gianakos.

Figure 3.1. Entrance to *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970* (hereafter *NYPS*), Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 19, 1969–February 8, 1970.

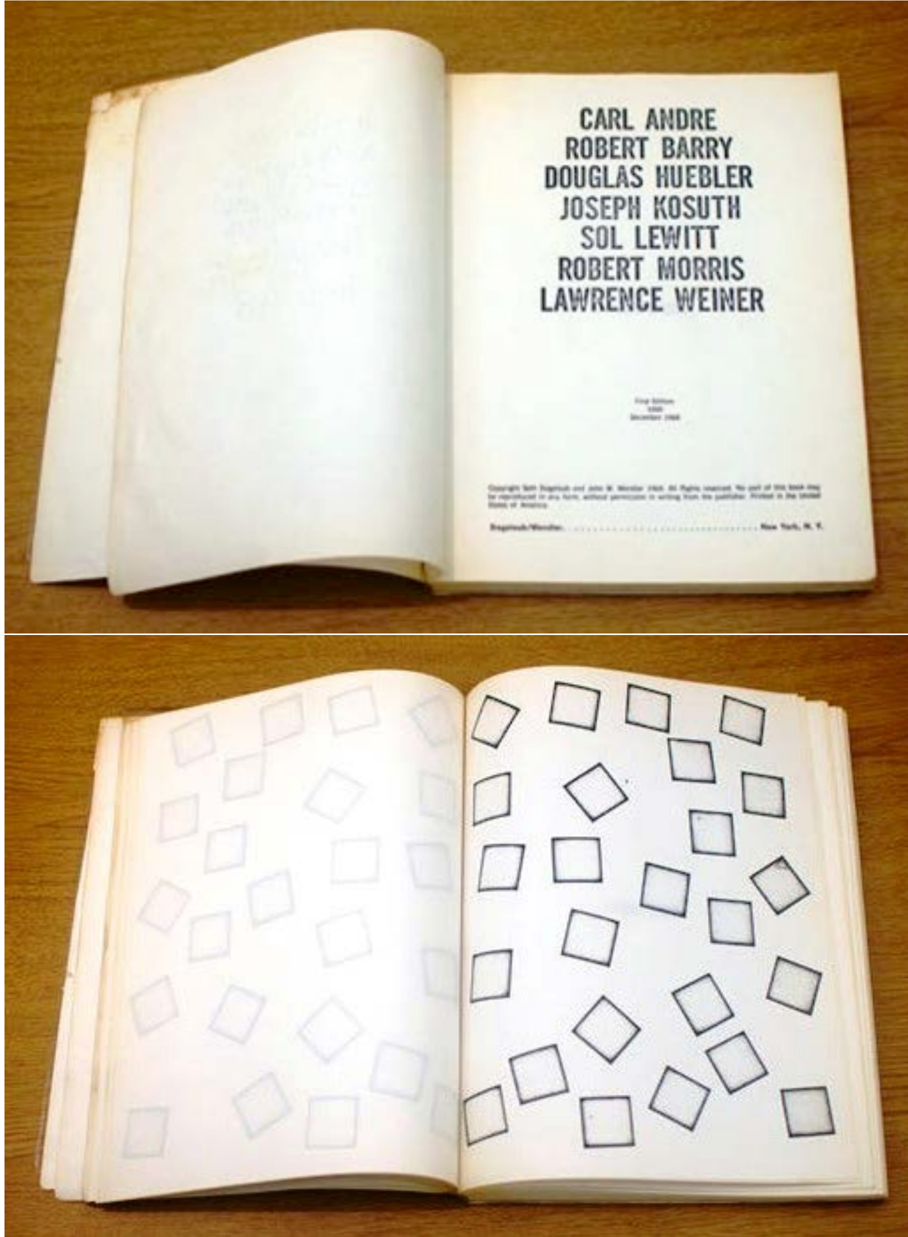


Figure 3.2. Pages from “The Xerox Book” (1969).

Figure 3.3. *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, March 22–April 27, 1969.

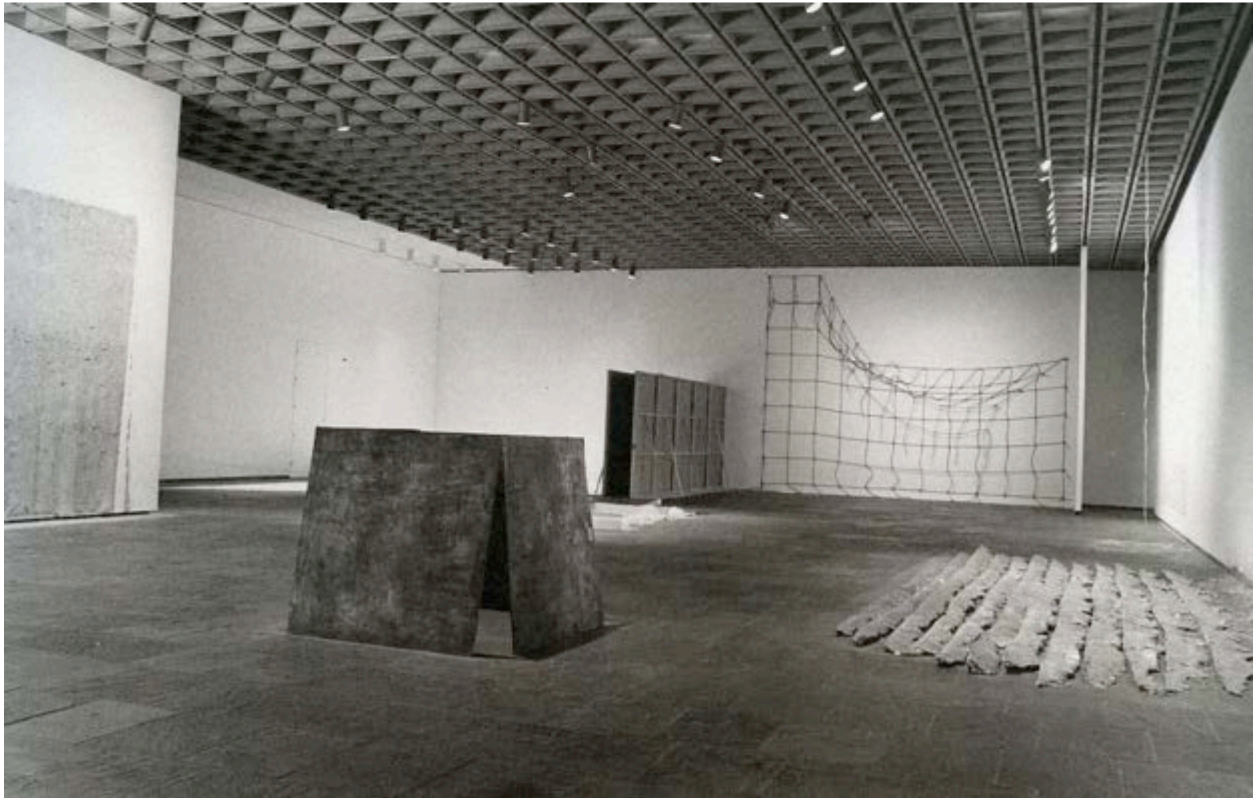


Figure 3.4. *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, Whitney Museum of American Art, May 19–July 6, 1969.

Figure 3.5. *557,087*, Seattle Art Museum, September 5–October 5, 1969.

Figure 3.6. *Information*, Museum of Modern Art, July 2–September 20, 1970.

Figure 3.7. Garry Winogrand, *Centennial Ball, Metropolitan Museum, New York,* 1969.

Figure 3.8. Garry Winogrand, *Centennial Ball, Metropolitan Museum, New York,* 1969.

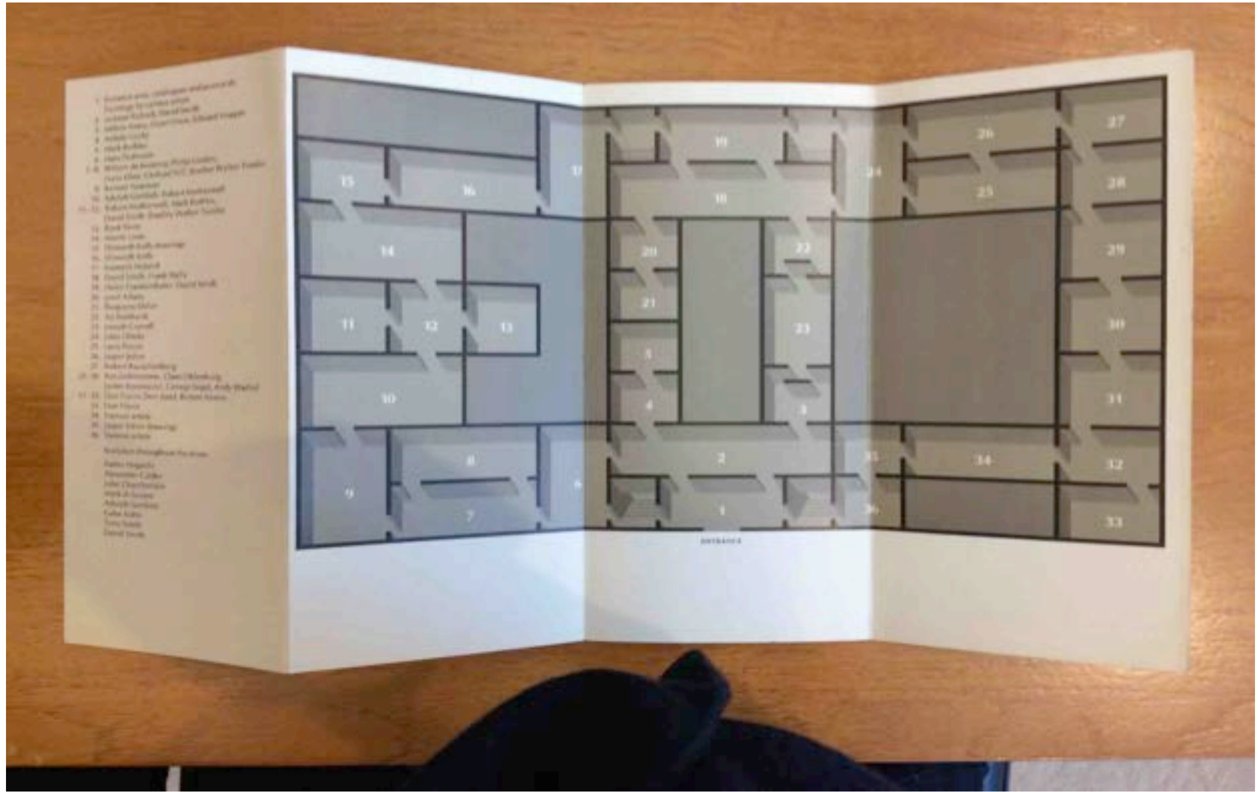


Figure 3.9. Floor plan from *NYPS* Brochure.

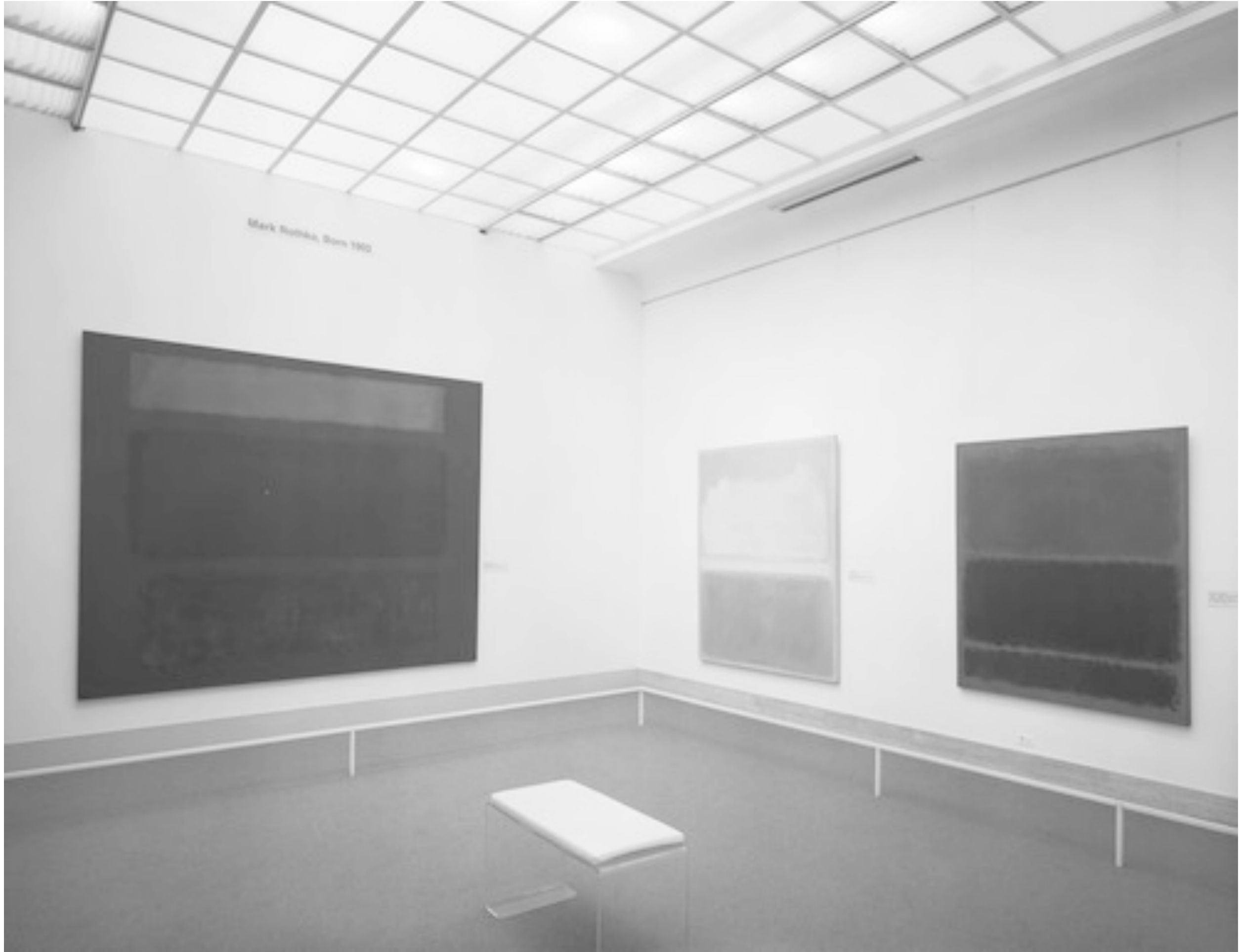


Figure 3.10. Mark Rothko gallery installation, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.11. Barnett Newman gallery installation, with view of Franz Kline gallery, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.12. Frank Stella gallery installation, with sculptures by David Smith, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.13. Helen Frankenthaler gallery installation, with sculptures by David Smith, *NYPS*.

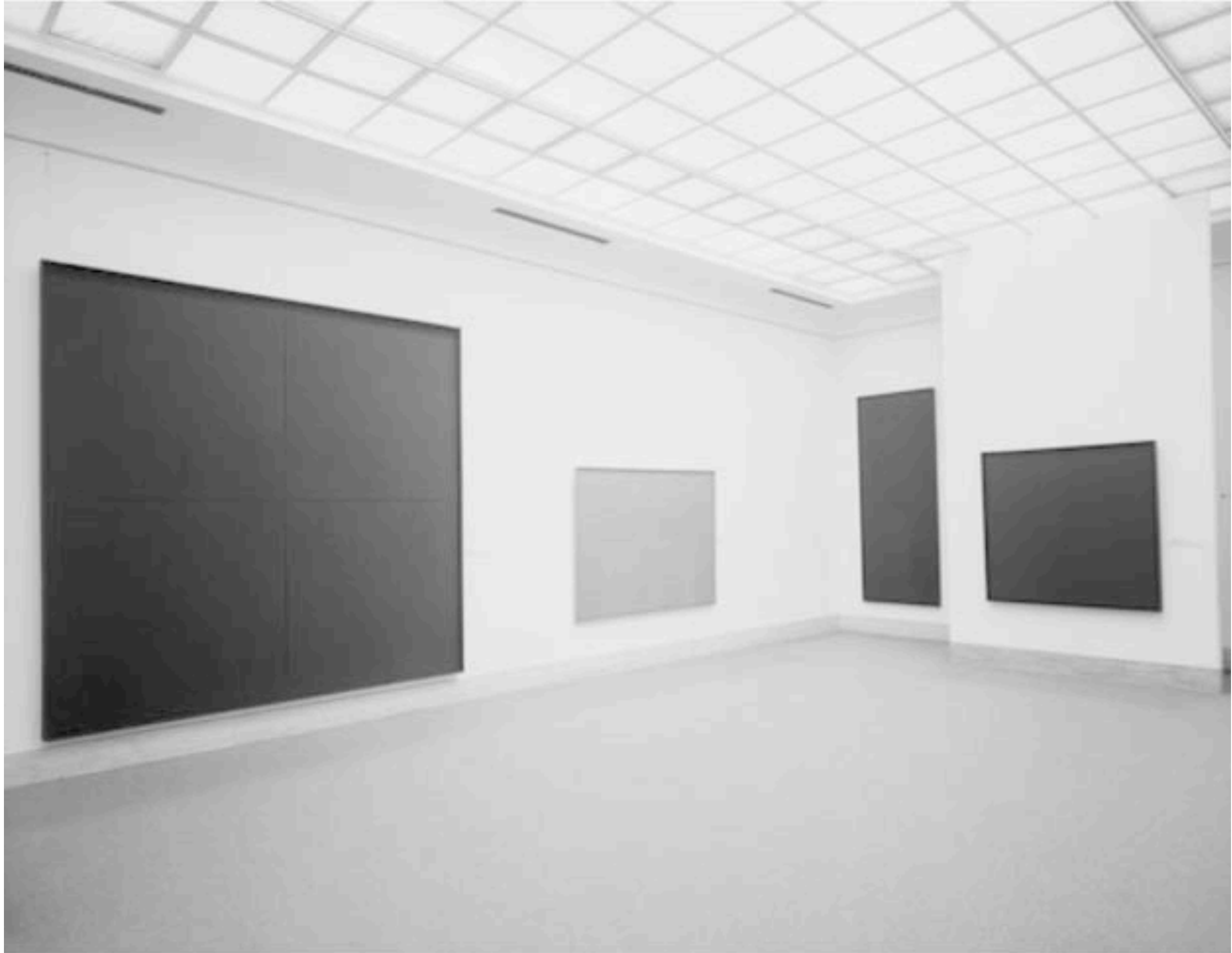


Figure 3.14. Ad Reinhardt gallery installation, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.15a–b. Morris Louis gallery installation, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.16a–b. Philip Guston and Willem de Kooning gallery installation, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.17a–b. Franz Kline and Clyfford Still gallery installation, *NYPS*.

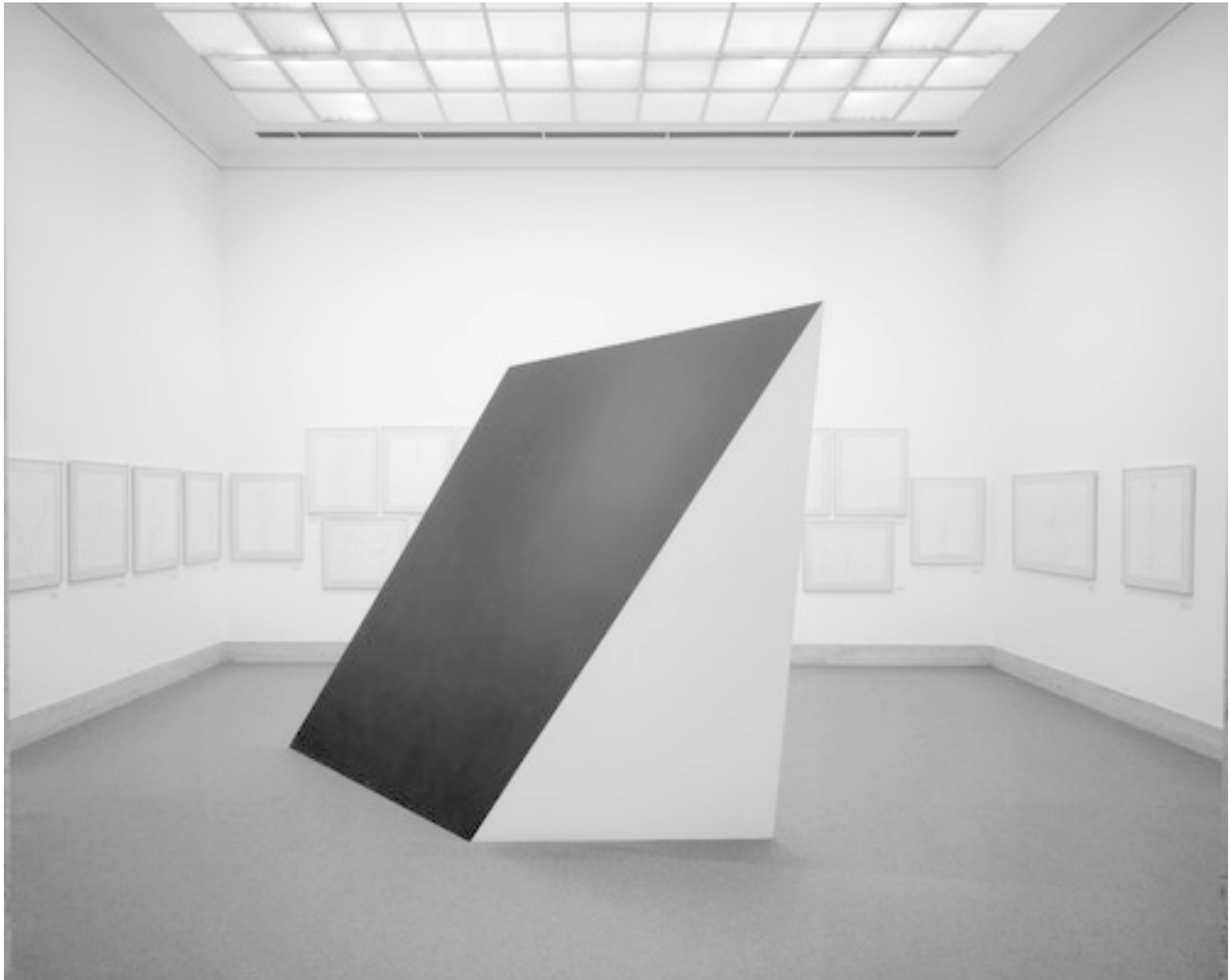


Figure 3.18. Ellsworth Kelly gallery installation no. 1, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.19. Ellsworth Kelly gallery installation no.2, *NYPS*.

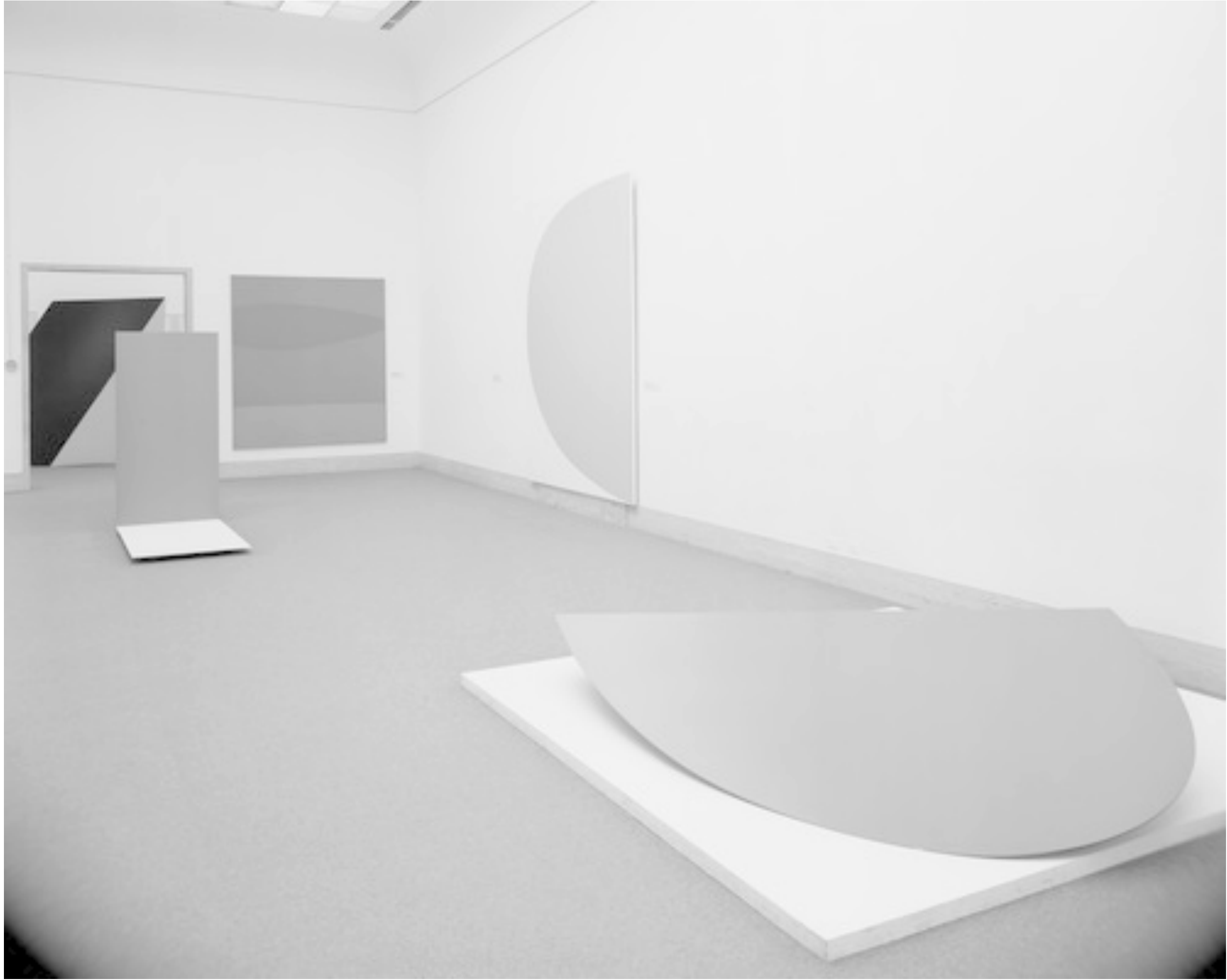
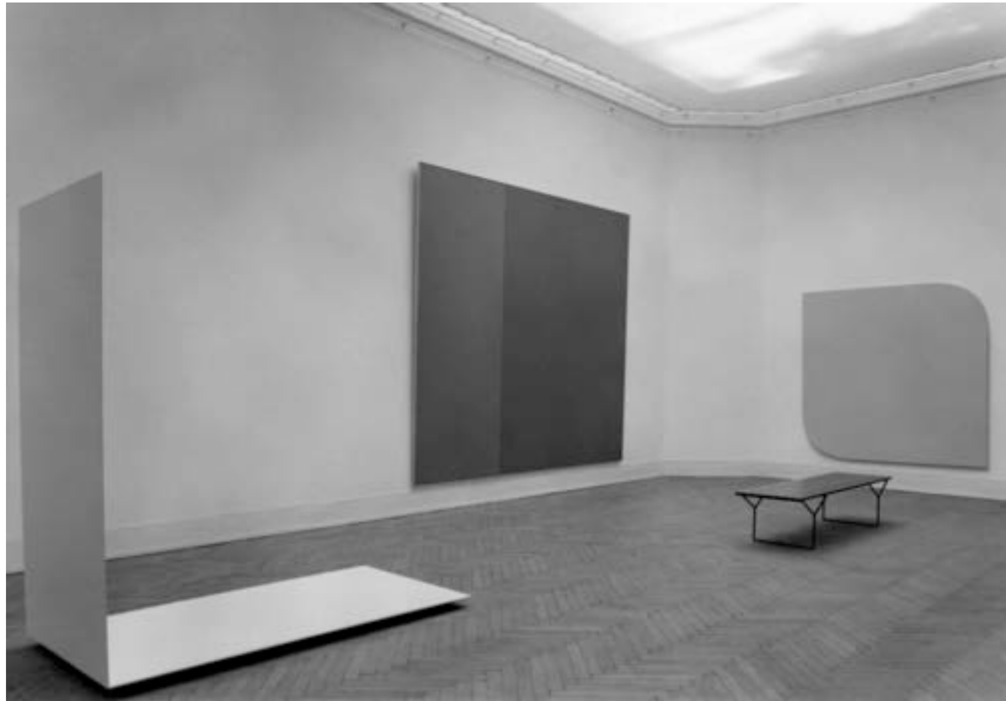


Figure 3.20. Ellsworth Kelly gallery installation no.2, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.21a–b. Galleries from *The Sculpture of Picasso*,
The Museum of Modern Art, October 11, 1967–January 1, 1968.

Figure 3.22a–b. Ellsworth Kelly gallery in *Sixteen Americans*,
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, December 16, 1959–February 17, 1960.

Figure 3.23a–b. Jasper Johns gallery in *Sixteen Americans*,
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, December 16, 1959–February 17, 1960.



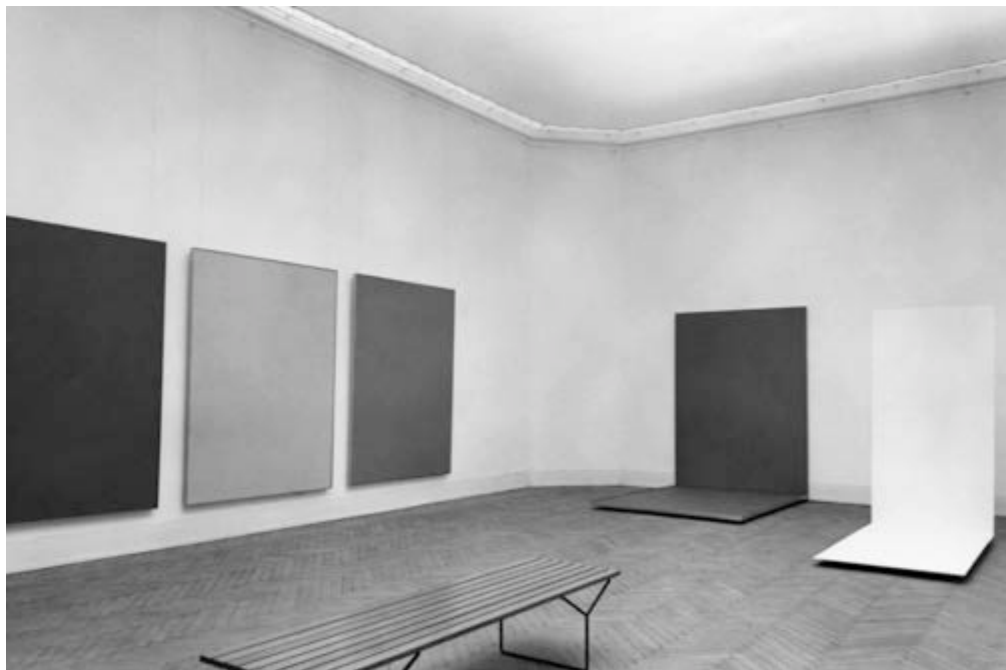


Figure 3.24a–b. Ellsworth Kelly gallery in American Pavilion,
Venice Biennale, 1966.

Figure 3.25. Milton Avery, Edward Hopper, Stuart Davis gallery installation, *NYPS*.

Figure 3.26. Pop art gallery installation, *NYPS*, including works by Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg.

FIGURE 3.27. Pop art gallery installation, *NYPS*, including works by James Rosenquist.

Figure 3.28. Minimal art gallery installation, *NYPS*, including works by Donald Judd and Robert Morris.

"This room-sized environment by George Segal evokes the nostalgia of American Social Realism, a dominant style in the 1930s. Segal is greatly concerned with formal problems, as can be seen in this careful composition. The man to the left is a direct reference in carriage and movement to Rodin's 'L'Homme Qui Marche' ('The Walking Man'). As always, Segal includes common objects along with his figures, which are cast directly from life."

"Much of American art of the past 30 years has consisted in artists ringing changes on personally arrived-at formal images. Gottlieb's 'Burst' series, often densely and complexly brushed on the canvas, can also be muted to the cool laconicism of a painting such as 'Una.'"

"This picture, not typical of Tomlin's work, stands as a good indication of the cubist derivation of much abstract expressionist painting. Elements of Gorky and de Kooning are fused by Tomlin into his own peculiar disjunction of drawing and color."

Geldzahler on His Show...

"Burgoyne Diller acknowledged Mondrian's influence as long ago as the 1930s. In a series of delicately balanced recurring 'Themes' he enlarged Mondrian's elements, separated them, often allowing them to float near the surface of the picture. With Ad Reinhardt and Tony Smith he helped forge the climate that made minimal sculpture possible."

"Noguchi squeezes the marble as tenderly as if it were rubber. Happily, it retains his shape. Only 28 and a half inches in diameter, the piece is clearly monumental."

"The majesty and delicacy of Pollock's work is now available to us as it was to very few when he was working. The density and directness of his pictures remain the highest moment of the New York School. What seemed arbitrary 20 years ago looks exactly right today."

"The sheer self-contained sensuous beauty of this Rothko is typical of his best work. Rothko's horizontal bands of color, cloudlike at times, more austere at others, are capable of transmitting a full range of feeling, from the most joyous to the most somber."

"The simple serial progression of upright cool white fluorescent light is typical of much minimal sculpture. Flavin's religious and philosophical concern shines through to make of such an apparently simple configuration an object of mystery. They are the most successful light sculptures I've seen."

"I love this one. I was unfamiliar with it until I started going through catalogues planning the show. When I first saw it in photograph, it gave me a pleasurable shock, which has been sustained. In mood it relates closely to both George Segal's 'Gas Station' and Jim Rosenquist's American [illegible]. Although Hopper, of course, is best seen in terms of himself, he can also be seen as a bridge in sensibility to Pop Art."

Figure 3.29. Pages from "Geldzahler on his Show…" in *New York Magazine*, October 13, 1969.

Figure 3.30. Geldzahler standing in galleries of *NYPS*, 1969.

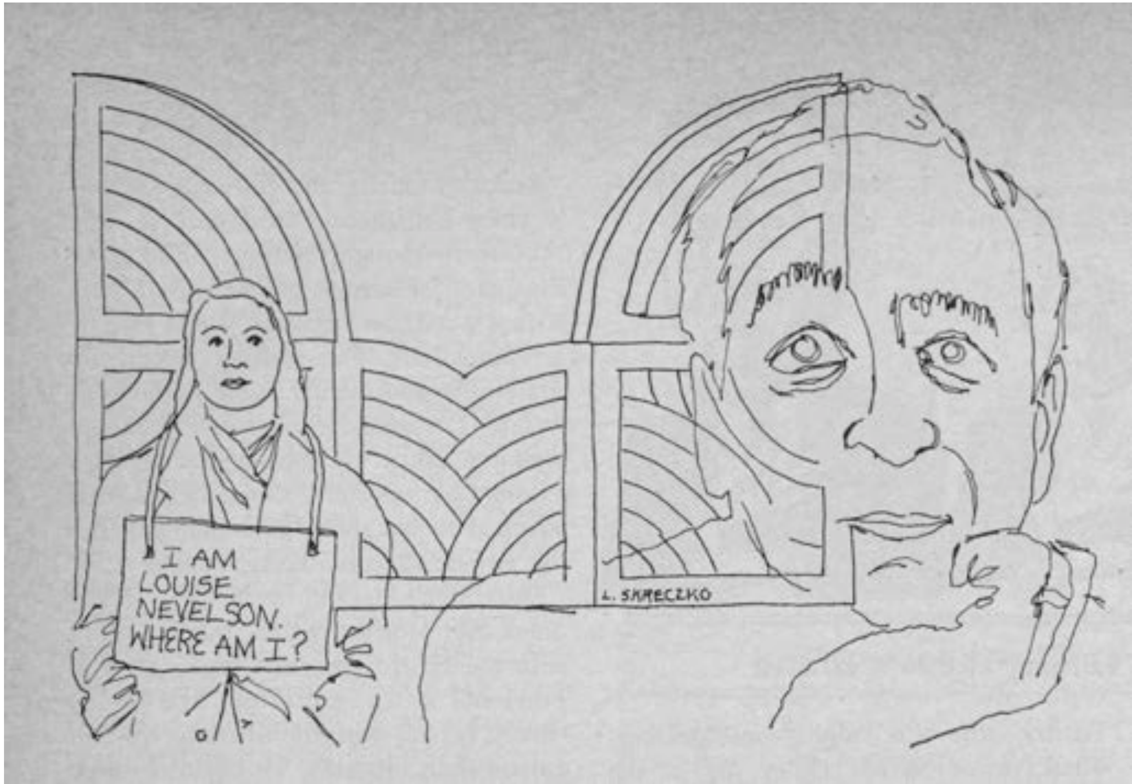
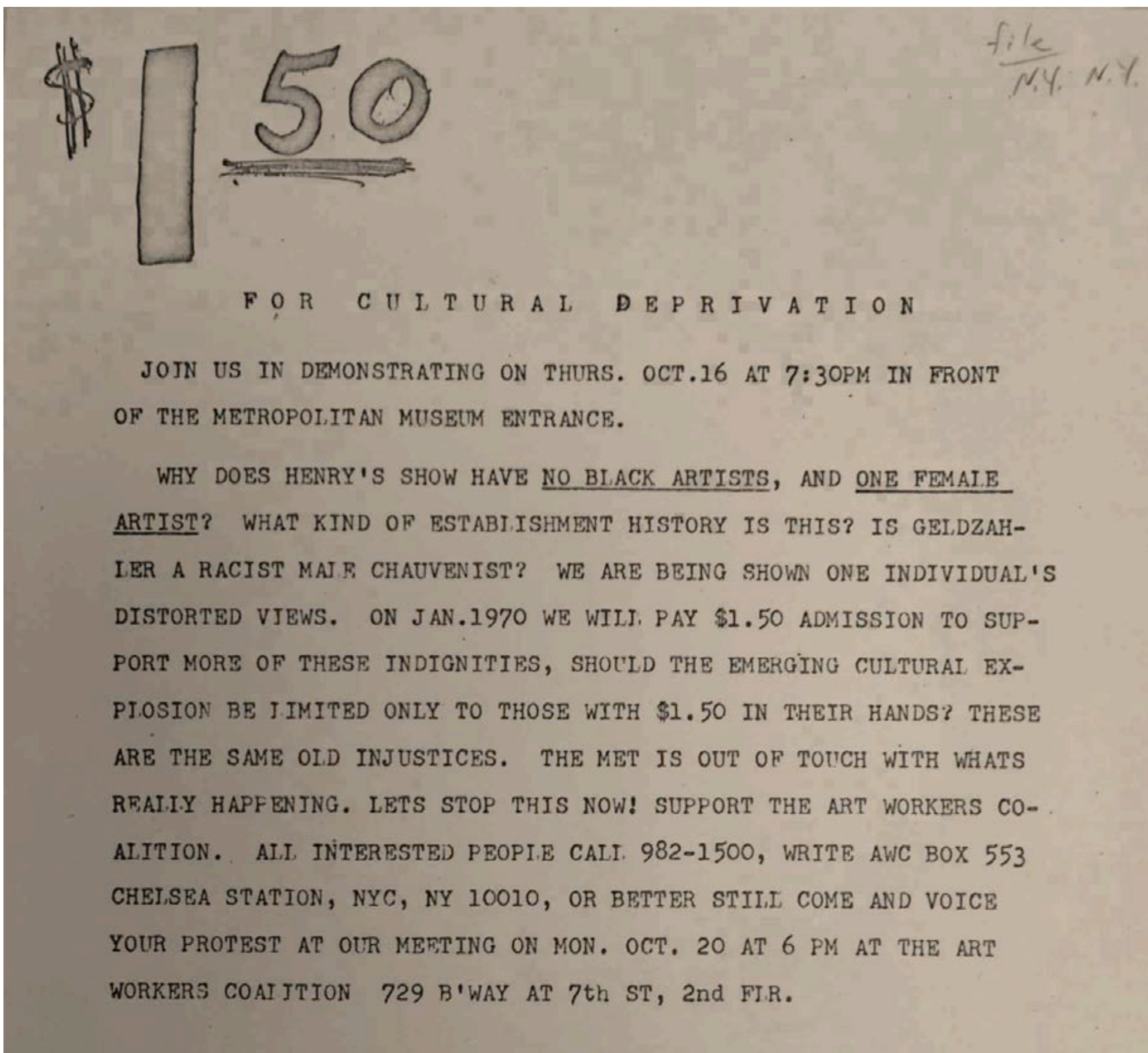


Figure 3.31. L. Skreczko, Untitled Illustration, *National Review*, December 16, 1969.



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$1.50

FOR CULTURAL DEPRIVATION

JOIN US IN DEMONSTRATING ON THURS. OCT.16 AT 7:30PM IN FRONT OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM ENTRANCE.

WHY DOES HENRY'S SHOW HAVE NO BLACK ARTISTS, AND ONE FEMALE ARTIST? WHAT KIND OF ESTABLISHMENT HISTORY IS THIS? IS GELDZAHLER A RACIST MALE CHAUVENIST? WE ARE BEING SHOWN ONE INDIVIDUAL'S DISTORTED VIEWS. ON JAN.1970 WE WILL PAY $1.50 ADMISSION TO SUPPORT MORE OF THESE INDIGNITIES, SHOULD THE EMERGING CULTURAL EXPLOSION BE LIMITED ONLY TO THOSE WITH $1.50 IN THEIR HANDS? THESE ARE THE SAME OLD INJUSTICES. THE MET IS OUT OF TOUCH WITH WHATS REALLY HAPPENING. LETS STOP THIS NOW! SUPPORT THE ART WORKERS COALITION. ALL INTERESTED PEOPLE CALL 982-1500, WRITE AWC BOX 553 CHELSEA STATION, NYC, NY 10010, OR BETTER STILL COME AND VOICE YOUR PROTEST AT OUR MEETING ON MON. OCT. 20 AT 6 PM AT THE ART WORKERS COALITION 729 B'WAY AT 7th ST, 2nd FLR.

Figure 3.32. “1.50 FOR CULTURAL DEPRIVATION,”
Leaflet produced by Art Workers Coalition, 1969.

Figure 3.33. Xerox Advertisement for *NYPS* as published in *New York Magazine*, December 1, 1969.

Figure 3.34. Jean Toche demonstrating in GAAG protest outside *NYPS*, October 1969.

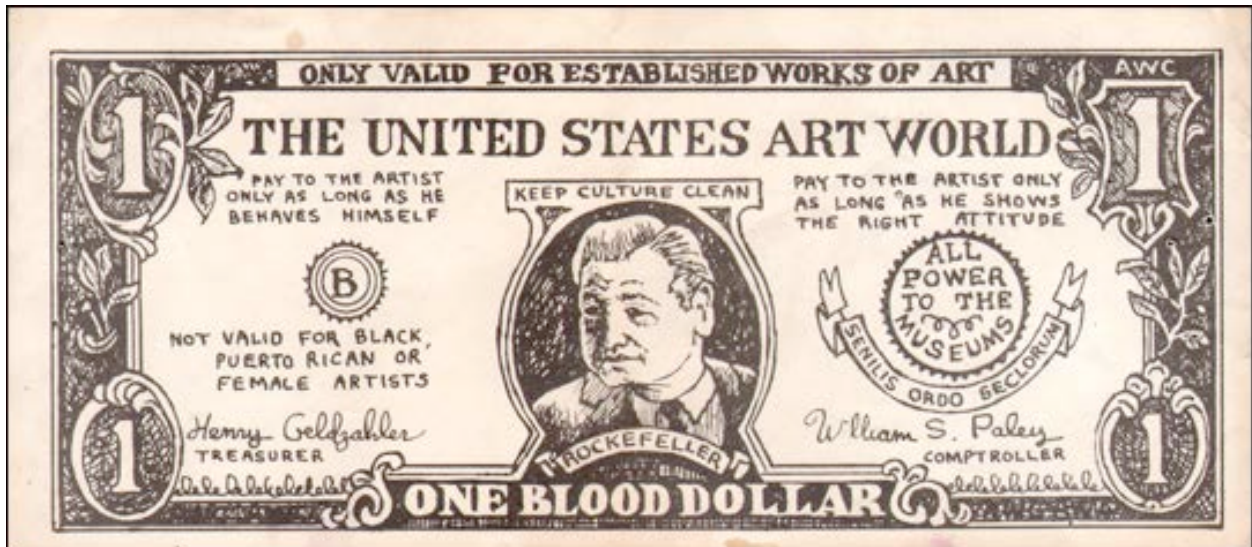


Figure 3.35. Art Workers' Coalition, *One Blood Dollar*, ca. 1970.

Figure 3.36. Press conference announcing Xerox sponsorship of *NYPS*,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 17, 1968.

Figure 3.37. C. Peter McColough, Roswell Gilpatric, and Thomas Hoving,
Press conference announcing Xerox sponsorship of *NYPS*,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, October 17, 1968.

Figure 3.38a–b. Centennial Medal, designed by Frank Stella, 1969.

Figure 3.39. Museum stationery with embossed version of Stella M design, ca. 1969.

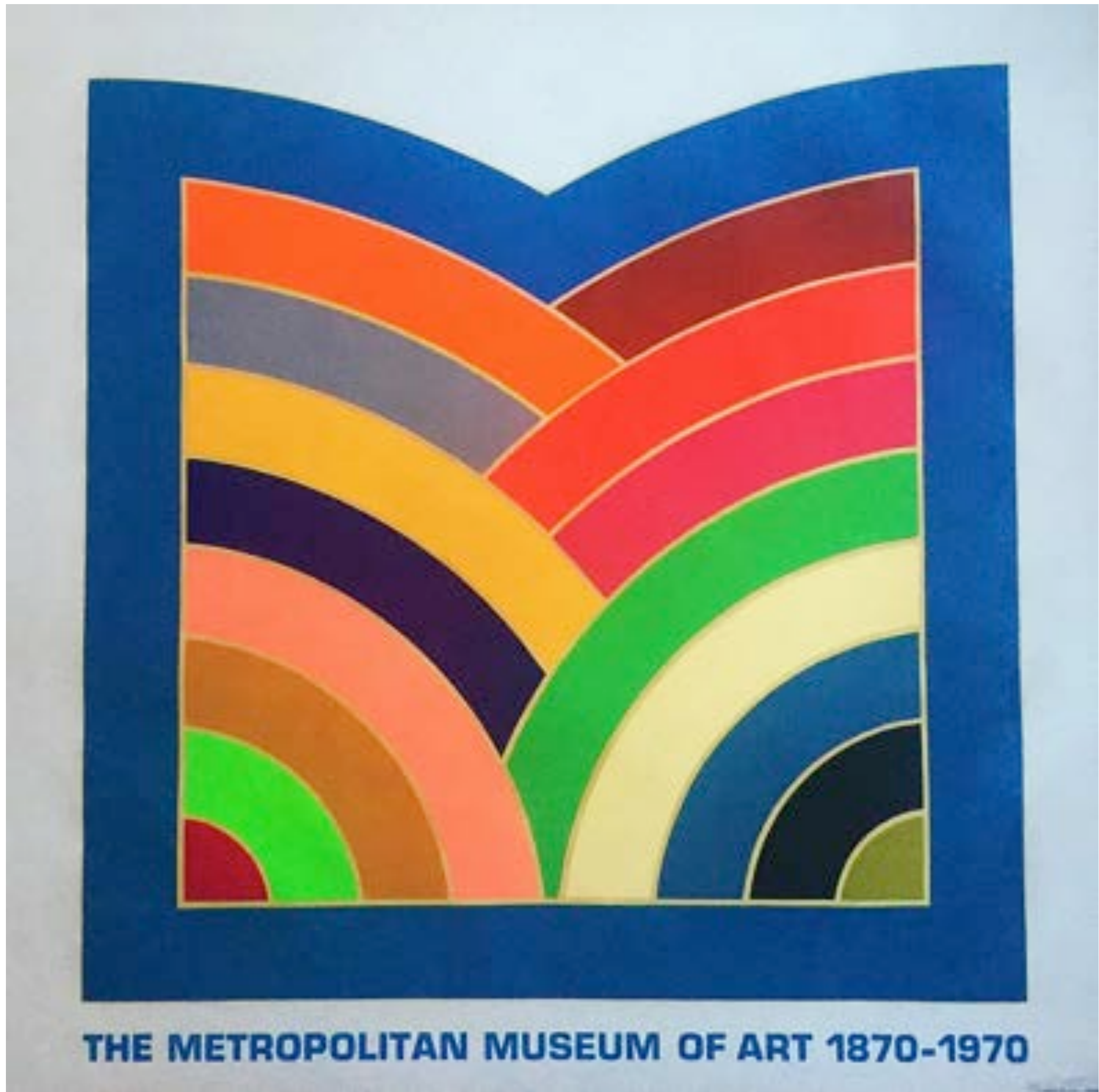


Figure 3.40. Poster produced for Centennial using Stella M design, ca. 1969.

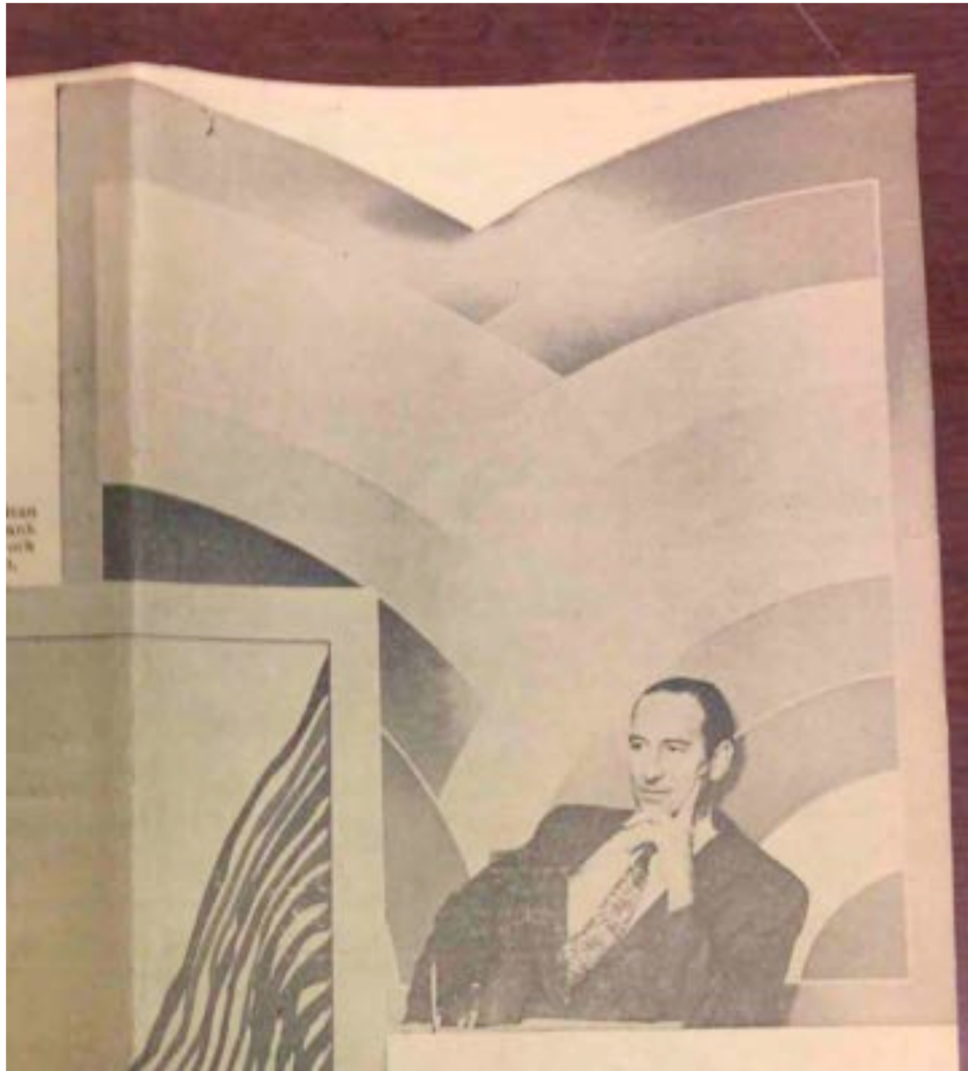


Figure 3.41. Photograph of Hoving seated in front of painted version of Stella M design.

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT...

FRANK STELLA, INTELLECTUAL PRECISIONIST

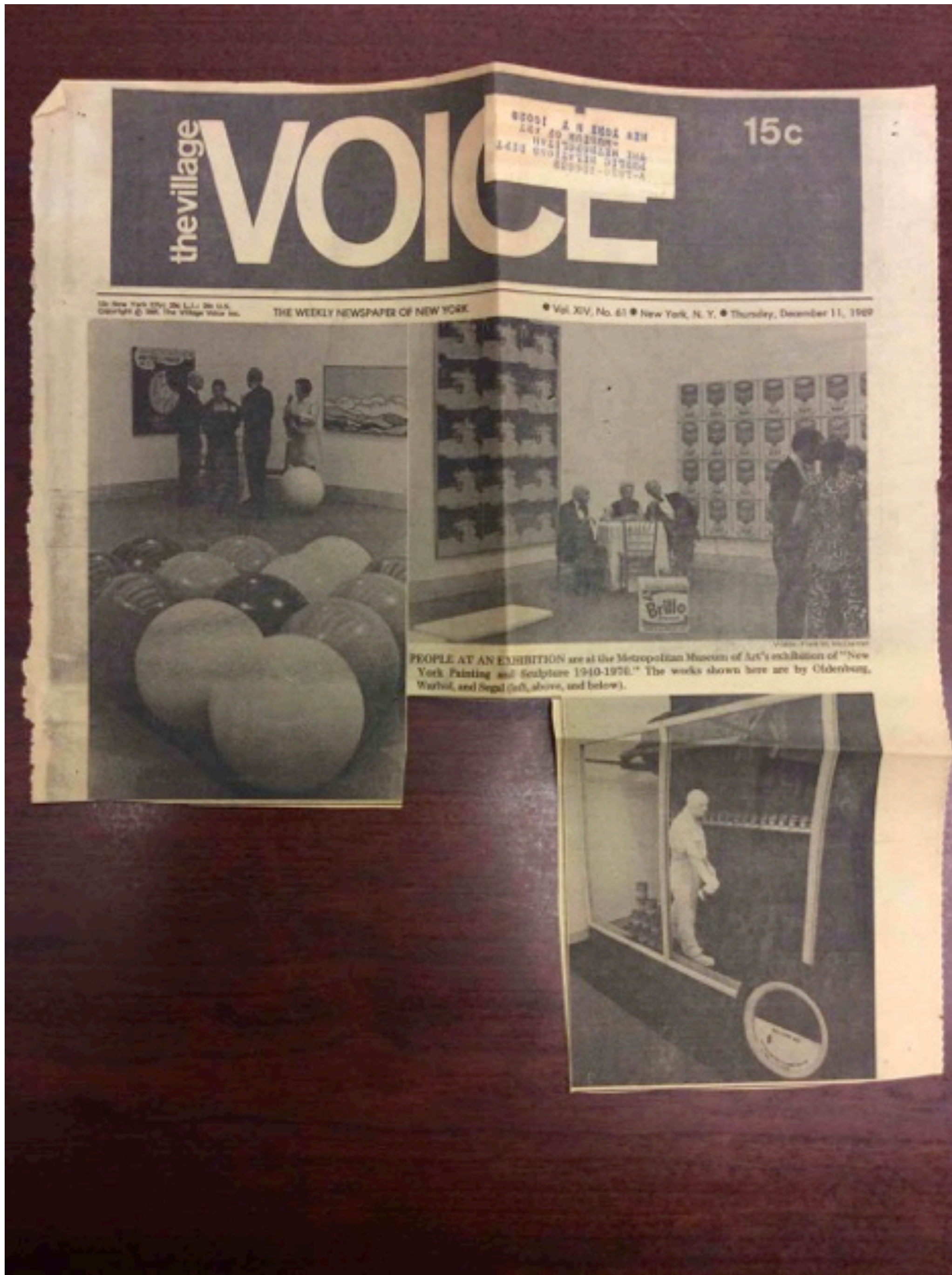
Figure 3.42. “People are Talking About…Frank Stella, Intellectual Precisionist,” *Vogue*, November 15, 1969.

Figure 3.43. Bruce Davidson, [Bartender at an Opening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art], 1969.

Figure 3.44. Bruce Davidson. [Two Bartenders at a Museum Opening], 1969.

Figure 3.45. Bruce Davidson, [Two People at an Opening at the Metroplitan Museum of Art], 1969.

Figure 3.46. Bruce Davidson. [Opening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art], 1969.



the village VOICE 15c

THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF NEW YORK • Vol. XIV, No. 61 • New York, N. Y. • Thursday, December 11, 1969

PEOPLE AT AN EXHIBITION are at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition of "New York Painting and Sculpture 1940-1970." The works shown here are by Oldenburg, Warhol, and Segal (left, above, and below).

Figure 3.47. "People at an Exhibition," Front page of *The Village Voice*, December 11, 1969.

Figure 3.48. Henry Geldzahler, Ellsworth Kelly, and James Wood
working in galleries of *NYPS*, 1969.

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Thomas Hoving records. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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