PSEUDOLOGY

PSEUDOLOGY: LYING IN ART AND CULTURE

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (2017)   McMaster University

(English and Cultural Studies)   Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Pseudology: Lying in Art and Culture

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NUMBER OF PAGES: vii, 247

Abstract

This dissertation draws upon Western literature in critical theory, aesthetics, art theory, and art history to explore how lying can foster aesthetic experience and the sociopolitical effects of this experience. It nominates the idea of *pseudology*—lying as an art—and outlines its distinguishing features from the dawn of postmodernism to contemporary practices. This study demonstrates an analysis of lying premised on an understanding of aesthetics as caught up in the wider issues of public pedagogy and everyday politics. Taking as case studies specific works of Marcel Duchamp, Robert Rauschenberg, VALIE EXPORT, and Carol Duncan, this dissertation argues for the narrative framing of artwork as paramount for its reception. As well, by examining the *artistic mystifications* of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Coco Fusco, Joshua Schwebel, and Iris Häussler, this dissertation analyzes the use of pseudology in institutional critique. The study finds that perfidious practices can point to the importance of the relational boundary between what is real/unreal, highlight the social construction of this boundary's aesthetic aspects, and reveal the ways in which each of us are active in the construction of a shared reality. Ultimately, our active framing of everyday life and the affective nature of our construction of a shared reality has been problematized by a contemporary prevalence of lying in the realms of public culture and politics. Pseudology reveals the power of narrative framing. The pseudological artworks discussed here expose, as models for the political aesthetic of lying, the need to debate the very tenets of reality constantly and continually—an essential civic action in the ethical, communal relationships of a democracy.

Acknowledgements

This project was completed with the honest critique, warm enthusiasm, and stalwart friendship of colleagues and compatriots too numerous to name in entirety. I shall endeavour to bestow my thanks, below, with the proviso of woeful insufficiency.

First, to my supervisor Mary O'Connor, the utmost praise for reading through numerous drafts and false starts of what finally morphed into the study before you. Her unerring wisdom and perpetual support helped me through the highs and (fantastic) lows of bending to the quirky genre of academic writing we call the dissertation.

Second, my steadfast supervisory committee of Susan Fast and Liss Platt shepherded this project in countless ways—thank you for leading me to water (and making me drink).

Third, to the friends and family who selflessly read versions of this project in its many stages, I am forever in your debt. Specifically, to the Lansdowne family (Helen, Emma, and Tristram) and Alana Traficante: simply call and I will be there, critical eye in tow.

Fourth, this project was stimulatingly shaped by the enthusiastic interlocutors supportive (or innocent) enough to ask the question, "So, how's your research coming?" To you brave and abundant souls, I pledge my heart. Specifically, in the Department of English & Cultural Studies at McMaster, Peter Walmsley, Susie O'Brien, Janice Hladki, Simon Orpana, Sarah D'Adamo, and Nick Holm, as well as, Peter Maidstone and Jeff George.

Fifth, I would like to thank this project's funding sources for making this research possible, especially McMaster University for a Teaching Fellowship, Ontario Graduate Scholarship, and conference funding, as well as the Social Science and Humanities Research Council for providing a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Doctoral Scholarship.

Sixth, a special thank you to the Hamilton arts community for including me in the city's goings-on, especially the Hamilton Artists Inc. and our programming director Caitlin Sutherland. Also, a special thank you to Jesse Travis, for your warmth, keen eye, and confident voice.

Seventh, my immediate family all deserve medals for (wryly) supporting me in a prolonged effort to test the malleability of academic institutions and their patience. I love you Roman Prus, Joy Fodden, and Gabe Prus. My deepest love and admiration flow to my partner, Emma Lansdowne, for seeing in me what I could not. I will love you always.

And to Iris Häussler, for the inspiration to explore the undefined space between reality and realism, herzlich danke.

   —Benjamin Prus, June 2017

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Tell a Lie, Perpetuate a Hoax.

—Stephen Kaltenbach

Introduction – Lying in Western Art and Aesthetic Theory

A Humbling Beginning

In the fall of 2006, I stood in the recently vacated Toronto home of Joseph Wagenbach: German immigrant, WWII survivor, recluse, and outsider artist. A handful of strangers, our group was lead through the cramped downtown-Toronto bungalow, weaving amongst preternatural plaster columns sprouting from the floorboards into the unfinished attic while avoiding piles of dolls, plastic figurines, and molds of skinned rabbits. Enveloped by piles of paper and half-eaten plates of food, the kitchen stove was overtaken by Wagenbach's massive, messy wax and tar station which he used to adorn his plaster sculptures with an eerie and uncanny grey skin. The odorous wax infused even his bedroom's depressed mattress with the weighty aroma of beeswax intermingled with the stifling density of years of dust. Under the auspices of an "Open Legacy Assessment" conducted by the Toronto Municipal Archives Department, Wagenbach's house was publicly opened to citizens to share in the process of assessing, cataloging, and archiving its extensive trove of brut artworks. Led by Senior Archivist Iris Häussler, over one thousand people took part in this semi-formal communal assessment of Wagenbach's personal history and effects. Visitors to the house were treated to intimate access into the hidden life of a fellow citizen. The curtain was pulled back on this unassuming home to reveal a warped, fecund, and consuming interior life rife with artistic expression. It was a rare case of municipal bureaucracy stepping aside to encourage a genuinely empathetic episode for a community and its members. It was an uncommon real-life encounter with

something truly spectacular: a trove of artworks within the deluge of everyday life. It was a singular, unforgettable experience.

As months passed and word spread of the unique home of Mr. Wagenbach, some new information was thrust forward into public light. In reality, Iris Häussler is, and had always been, a practicing conceptual artist—the archival exploration of this breathtaking house was an experience she had crafted for unassuming visitors, and, much to the chagrin of many of the public, Joseph Wagenbach's life and work were, and remain to be, constructed fakes. It was all *a lie*.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to interrogate the ways in which this framing mechanism of lying operates in postmodern and contemporary artistic practice. Iris Häussler's installation and performance work mentioned here, *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach* (2006), is part of her larger body of similar "haptic conceptual" works that she calls "fictitious memory sites."[1] These works point to a broader movement in contemporary art that actively plays with the performative altering of reality through the implementation of lying by various means: what I term *pseudological art*. Still, close scholastic attention to the aesthetic function of these fabricative artistic practices in the plastic arts remains a rarity.[2] What are the effects of furtively manifesting "art" in the

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[1] The term "haptic conceptual art" was nominated by Mark Kingwell in his assessment of Häussler's *Joseph*, as an "art of ideas that functions by way of immersion, even ravishment" ("Legacy"). One of the corollaries of my subsequent argument in this dissertation is precisely the articulation of the oft opposed realms of conceptual art and haptic installation by way of the primacy of narrative framing in each. For this reason, Chapter One discusses the frequently overlooked aspect of narrative framing in Conceptual art and my final chapter links Häussler's work to this legacy.

[2] Though lying and art have a long, tenuous relationship—which this introductory chapter will outline—lying qua lying remains undertheorized in scholarship on art. The related terms of *illusion*, *hyperrealism*, and *trompe l'oeil* are staples in art theory, yet the aesthetic significance of strategic trickery through deception is still something of an anomaly. Recent approaches to lying in art are discussed in the latter half of this introduction in relation to which I consequently situate this study.

"real world"? This study investigates the political valence of these hidden fictions, outright lies, and pedagogical hoaxes in postmodern and contemporary art.

Concordantly, this dissertation is concerned with the aesthetic experience of lying. What are the distinguishing features of this pseudology in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries? My aim is to suggest and to demonstrate a possible analysis of lying in aesthetic experience which can account for its complexity and contingency, premised on an understanding of aesthetics as caught up in the wider issues of public pedagogy and everyday life. It is commonly said of art that it *reveals* (subjective or objective) truths of the world. How, then, can we account for the inherent *deceit* in lying as an artistic strategy? If art invigorates our lives with the verve to find meaning, and it does this through a sense of unity, how do we theorize dissimulation in art since it relies precisely on the disunity between what is stated or perceived and what is actually going on? This study constitutes a starting place from which to understand the aesthetic experience of lying. In many ways, this doctoral project is a direct result of my continued grappling with the experience of Häussler's pseudological legacy.

Nietzsche's Backbone

> *Art works through deception—yet one which does not deceive us?*
> — Nietzsche, "On Truth" 96

In the above epigraph, Friedrich Nietzsche is concerned with the honest lie, open deception, or obvious illusion of art. The bent question mark that punctuates Nietzsche's productive uncertainty is testament to the dogged disorder that has plagued scholarship on the salacious association between artistic practice and lying. How might art reveal the truths of human existence while at the same time erroneously represent the world at hand?

Representational strategies of every sort threaten the tenuous distinction between the real

world and human fabrications. The "real world," or, following sociologist Irving

Goffman, the "ongoing world"—that is, the phenomenological flow of everyday

experience—is a fragile thing. For art to work on us as viewers and in us as participants,

it (usually) does so by acknowledging its duplicity. For Nietzsche, when this

acknowledgement is withheld, as in any claim to objective truth, a double lie is

perpetuated.[3] This distinction, between representation and the "real," forms the bowed

backbone of scholarship on lying. Within the history of Western critical theory this

backbone is doubly a sinuous border bolstered and defended at all costs. Deception,

illusion and mendacity are threats to the sanctity of the distinction between the true and

the false, the real and the fictional. There is an apparent categorical schism between the

deception of lying and the enlightenment of truth. What they have in common is an

anxiety about understanding and interpreting the world at hand. Where proponents of

absolute, objective truth hold the immutable nature of the ongoing world, it is from

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[3] Nietzsche's backbone pays heed to his not-so-humble observation that the certainty of our knowledge is hubris. The posture Nietzsche adopts is that of the question mark, deferentially delicate while also intensively investigatory. The curved, continuous nature of the question mark is not the abrupt conflictual crossroads of Capital-T truth. The uncurving combat between two unwavering antagonists abuts in the T's intersection. Like an uneven reticule taking aim at reality, the T unequally combines the possibilities of both the real and the imaginary, the true and the false. The creative forces of the imaginary shoot skyward to be kept in check by the glass ceiling of reality, the baseline arbiter of truth. However, in this rectilinear rebus lies the lie Nietzsche finds foundational for the fiction of voracious veracity: the double lie, that is the truth, that "The 'thing-in-itself' (which would be pure, disinterested truth) is also absolutely incomprehensible to the creator of language" ("On Truth" 248). The baseline of reality is only propped on high by the fictive scaffolding of the imaginary. Without the elevated status given to "reality" by our imaginative interpretation of the world, the arbiter of truth falls to designate only a lack, a truly base status, the absence of meaning denoted by the lowly underscore. In an embodied motion that reaches to such depths while also sprouting to the sky, the question mark's coil serves as a reminder that scholarship on the lie does not culminate in the crossroads of certainty lest it too fall victim to the double lie of truth's certainty. Rather, it leads one downward where meanings get muddied, toward the point many see as a full stop to knowledge but where others, still, find a seed.

scholarship grappling with the human capacity to lie that we find the subtlest

epistemological suppositions.

In what follows in this introduction, I lay a theoretical framework for analyzing

the use of lying in art. If Häussler's *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach* is an example of

artistic lying—a moment of being taken in, duped, deceived—what might be some

aesthetic functions of this fabrication? To understand how both *lying* and *truth* function in

Western art, and to first define both these sticky terms, I look to critical work in the Euro-

American philosophical tradition—the same aesthetical, ethical, and political theory that

has informed the art under consideration in this dissertation. I parse a tripartite structure

of the lie from this scholarship and delineate three tiers of analysis for lying: individual

utterance, contextual fabrication, and pervasive ideology. In this tripartite structure, I

offer accounts of lying that demystify deontological arguments that seek to bar further

investigation of lying based on moralistic condemnation. Ultimately, the Western

philosophical literature on lying that grounds my study reveals mendacity to be an

inherently political practice and an effective instance of human creation. As we discover,

truth is not opposed to lying (rather, truthfulness is). Nevertheless, *truth* in this

dissertation maintains a performative definition: truth is a differential force between

competing world views that vie for normalization within a sociocultural field in flux.

I then turn to art discourse on lying to address the question of art's ability to lie.

Following Nietzsche, I ask "How is it that art is only possible as a lie?" ("On Truth" 96).

And conversely, what has art to tell us about truth, especially art that employs explicit

lying? Ultimately, I find that art's lie and lying in art can reveal the constructed reality of

the world at hand. I then outline previous theoretical approaches to artistic practices like those I address in this dissertation to build on this critical work. In the chapters that follow this introduction, I link the pseudological practices of postmodern and contemporary artists to broader historical projects that self-reflexively employ the creative, critical, and political potential of lying.

Lying can create what we subsequently feel is an adulterated view of the world. Our view of the world is an interpretive framework, a specific way of evaluating what is and is not going on in the world at hand. As the act of lying remains hidden, the alternate interpretive framework becomes one's ongoing primary framework over time in a process of normalization. If the lying is discovered, then a state of ambivalence is created in the space between the two world views. When one of the world views is enveloped by the other interpretive framework it continues to exist as a clearly delineated entity: a "fiction," "hoax," "lie," or "forgery," for example. *Fiction* and *hoax* are designations of approval that allow other world views to exist non-combatively within a single ongoing primary framework. In following proper decorum, they exist as other worlds not claiming to be "true" and not in competition with the "real." *Lie* and *forgery* are designations of admonishment that discredit other world views while also containing them within a single ongoing primary framework. In transgressing proper decorum, they threaten to performatively remake what is "true" and "real."

Some methods of creating world views are designated transgressive because they threaten the stability of a single ongoing primary framework. Simultaneously, these same methods are employed to maintain the stability of a single reality. Certain world views

benefit certain people at the expense of others. For instance, a child may enjoy leaving her coat on the floor instead of hanging it up. This might help her get to the kitchen faster for an after-school snack, say, or more easily escape into the fictional worlds of television broadcast programming. To help facilitate the benefits of not hanging the coat, when the child is asked whether she has hung up her coat she may choose to lie. This lie creates a world view in which the child's coat is currently hung up. Hanging up a coat might be an important part of a parent's world view—it keeps the floor free of tripping hazards, it keeps the home tidy, it teaches proper decorum, etc. The parent wishes the child to subscribe to a set of practices that go along with a certain world view they wish to share. When the parent discovers that the child's lie has created an alter-world, a world where the coat is hung up, their own world view makes an adjustment to align with the scene that is now at hand. The child may be admonished for the lie or receive some form of punishment, etc. But, for a time, the lie could create a shared space in which two combative world views were able to exist.

The discovery of the lie creates a brief moment of amazement—how is it that the coat is on the ground while it was expected to be hung up? The parent, in all probability, may nearly instantly attribute this discrepancy in world view to their child's deception. But there still exists a moment, however brief, when the world view created by the lie, the alter-world, comes into conflict with the scene at hand, with the ongoing world, and this moment is characterized by an arbitration of reality. During this arbitration, a person feels the uneasiness of holding two competitive world views simultaneously. This uneasiness is coupled with zealousness and determination for "the truth" (whichever world view will

envelope the other). This redistribution of the sensible in which a person might feel this uneasy zeal, what Irving Goffman refers to as an "anomical flutter" or a sense of normlessness (*Frame Analysis* 379), is what I refer to in this dissertation as the aesthetic of the lie.

Artists who use this revelation of lying in their practice create moments for the self-aware arbitration of reality. While an earnest painting may give life to an alternative world view, one even combative to the dominant sociopolitical order, its existence or ontological designation as art is not at stake. It may be bad art, or anti-art, or so easily discredited that it is non-art, but the way it came into being (as a painting painted by a painter) is not in question. Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* is not a factual account of the storming of the Bastille in Paris that sparked a democratic revolution in France at the end of the eighteenth century. It is a dramatized, stylized rendering of the powerful importance of a major change in the sociopolitical fabric of the epoch. The social history of art commonly calls upon works to bear witness to the explicit historical events and implicit affective zeitgeists of the historical conjunctures in which they are produced. However, past and present viewers of this canonical work are not forced to ask themselves if the French Revolution took place or whether the revolution was led by a scantily sashed odalisque. An aesthetic experience of Delacroix's work may come from voyeuristically envisioning the fervent pique of impassioned revolt which may or may not be simultaneously expressed in the brushwork or colouring or composition of the painting, but it certainly does not come from a self-aware grappling with the ontological status of the painting as real or fabricated, or with a reflexive mediating of the

truthfulness or fictionality of the historical event itself. A viewing of this painting does not engender, under normal circumstances, a need to assess the sense of reality of the very situation in which the viewer is embedded. But, when an artist can produce a situation in which it becomes necessary for a viewer-participant to alter the very interpretive framework being applied to the ongoing world, to reassess what may be real or in fact a hoax, the aesthetic of the lie is invoked.

Though fleeting, this aesthetic experience has powerful sociopolitical effects. It seems we humans have a healthy aversion to holding two competing primary frameworks simultaneously. It is beneficial to adequately interpret the ongoing world, as to apply an incorrect primary framework to a situation may result in harm. For instance, anyone unlucky enough to mistake a glass window for an open door has run up against the very blunt material consequences of poorly framing the ongoing world. Adverse sensory stimuli work effectively in most cases to teach an individual the contexts in which to apply certain framings of reality. Being uncertain about the ongoing world may leave us scarred, and lies threaten us with this uncertainty. An art that employs the aesthetics of lying taps into this feeling of uncertainty, but does so self-reflexively (frequently by retroactively applying the designation *art* to an object or scene). As an interpretive framework, *art* has participants attend to this uneasiness critically—through the skillful judgment as to the truth or merit of implied interpretive frames, and the decisive importance with respect to the outcomes or consequences of these frames. Art does this through a distancing effect—what Brecht called *Verfremdungseffekt*: a moment of critical distance between the viewer and art that encourages questions and critiques of the

obviousness of sociopolitical conditions and exposes their historical nature ("On Chinese

Acting" 22). The aesthetic space of the lie is a powerful technique employed by artists

seeking to reinvigorate artistic creation with a productive uncertainty. Ultimately, this

project is about pseudological practices in the high art of the Western tradition and their

power to disturb the cultures in which they are performed by destabilizing commonly

held truths while interrogating the cultural values that presuppose those certainties. Given

our particular historical moment, we might also ask how the pseudology analyzed in this

dissertation acts as a model for navigating the "post-truth" twenty-first century.

Definition of Terms

To begin, we need a clear definition of *lying* and its sometime-opposite *truth*.

Though, as we will see, lying is not opposed to truth, but rather to truthfulness, truth

remains as the common corrective, expressing what is actually going on (even if "what is

actually going on" remains socioculturally defined). The knotty history of truth and lying

has occasioned scores of scholastic discourses, and before exploring if and how lying

functions in art, we must sculpt clear images of each vexing term.

Lying

Umberto Eco showed that the possibility for lying is an inherent part of sematic

communication, and, semantically, lies are as meaningful and effective as statements of

truth. Eco even went as far as to suggest, in his now canonical *A Theory of Semiotics*

(1976), that all semiotic study could be structured around a "theory of the lie" (7). As he

states,

> Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be *taken* as a sign. A
> sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for

> something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist
> or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands in for
> it. Thus, *semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything
> which can be used in order to lie*. If something cannot be used to tell a
> lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth: it cannot be used 'to
> tell' at all. I think that the definition of a 'theory of the lie' should be
> taken as a pretty comprehensive program for a general semiotics (7).

All semantic communication is grounded by a non-essential existence clause. Therefore, any definition of lying must remain faithful to this essential deception within all language, and any analysis of lying in or as artistic practice must be cognizant of (dis)simulation as a condition of possibility for all meaning making. We might say that the possibility of aesthetic experience derived from the revelation of this non-existence, that is, aesthetic experience derived from the disclosure of a lie, is fundamentally about the pleasures of linguistic creation. The tool of language gives birth to the privilege of lying. As historian Perez Zagorin maintains, "the faculty of lying is coterminous with language itself," and though lying remains "universally possible" it is also a "historically and socially determined phenomenon" (v). Yet, after over two thousand years of comments and evaluations by Western scholars there remains no agreement about lying (Barnes 166). If the lie is a foundational attribute of language, even a condition of possibility for all semantic communication, then it is still routinely treated as an aberrant and abhorrent use of language. This paradoxical duality, the lie's ubiquity and its perpetual admonishment, makes any study of lying a tricky endeavour. How might we define something so pervasive in everyday life yet so detested, something so universally human yet regarded so routinely as inhumane?

Forming a tripartite approach, what follows is the structure of the lie productively divided into three tiers of analysis: individual utterance, contextual fabrication, and pervasive ideology. This survey of the Western traditions of high art and philosophy is a parsing of the broad and disparate literature on the lie into these three tiers in an effort to gain some analytical clarity on a polemical subject that has both captivated scholars while being overlooked, and addled scholarship while being summarily dismissed.

First Words: A Socio-Semiotic Approach to Lying

The most common way of defining lying is as a statement intended to *deceive*. For philosopher of the lie Sissela Bok, the lie is any intentionally deceptive message which is stated through any semiotic code (13). Bok limits the scope of deceit and error to human agents that act with the "*intention to mislead*" (8). For Bok, a lie only occurs when it is explicitly stated, so does not include thoughts like self-deception. Senses mislead people, individuals have biases, and persons are self-delusional; instead, Bok focuses on humans deceiving other humans through *statements* (8). For Bok, because we can be mistaken about the true state of the world, lying is not about how correct our statements are, but about our intentions to deceive. As sociologist of the lie John Barnes reiterates, following Bok's work, "lying is not simply the opposite of telling the truth" (12). In this Bok and Barnes follow Kant in distinguishing between truth/falsity and truthfulness/deception: truth and falsity are ontological states and matters of epistemology based on correspondence between the ongoing world and statements about it, while truthfulness and deception deal with intention and are thus moral concerns (Kant, "Supposed" 347). One can therefore use statements that are true or partially true to tell

untruths; falsehood is only one type of lie. Thus, for Bok, Barnes, and Kant before them, lying is defined by the intention to deceive through statements.

This equating of the lie with the intent to deceive forms the backbone of moral Western scholarship on the lie from Augustine to the present day. Augustine believed that his treatise on lying, *De mendacio* (395), would be "a work of such tremendous import for the regulation of daily living" (54; ch. 1), and, in the centuries that followed, his thoughts have indeed proven foundational for isolating lying as a moral subject. The most common way of determining when someone is lying remains Augustine's initial assertion that, "a person is to be judged as lying or not lying according to the intention of his own mind, not according to the truth or falsity of the matter itself" (55; ch. 3). False statements told in belief are not lies because they rely on faith (ibid).[4] The longevity of this form of the lie, which Bok, Barnes and Kant take up, could be attributed to the dire consequences Augustine associated with lying: "eternal life is lost by lying, a lie may never be told for the preservation of the temporal life of another" (67; ch. 6). To lie kills one's everlasting soul; so, to lie to save another person's corporeal life is not justifiable by way of magnitude.[5]

However, even though lies deceive, deception need not be their primary purpose. Even though "the good never lie" (71; ch. 8), Augustine excludes from his moral

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[4] Indeed, this argument has resurfaced since Donald J. Trump has taken office as the President of the United States: because statements made by President Trump are marred frequently by error or misinformation, it has become the norm for his administration to defend his apparent lying by reframing it as what the President believes to be true at his time of speaking (Cederström, "They're not lies"; Benen, "Conway: Look at Trump's heart"; Fandos, "Trump Won't Back Down"). I address this important correlation between belief, truth, and falsity in my conclusion, in which I employ the many lessons this dissertation procures from pseudology to analyze what some have called our current "post-truth" political climate.
[5] For Augustine, Christ did not lie and instead died for the Christians: so, no one should ever lie.

admonishment lies told as obvious jokes: "jocose lies" are not "real Lies" (54; ch. 2).

Writing almost a millennium later, Thomas Aquinas maintains this separation of the lie

by further delineating different intentions to deceive. For Aquinas, the jocose lie makes

fun, while the officious lie has a useful purpose. Only the mischievous lie has the intent to

injure, and as such it is the only lie considered to be a mortal sin.[6] Though all lies deceive,

each act of lying has a purpose that may outshine the deception. Even still, Bok reasserts

that, because "trust is a social good" that must be protected at all costs, any form of lying

regardless of its purpose is inherently detrimental to social wellbeing (24, 26). Such is the

usual study of lying: a moralistic minefield of ought-and-ought-nots constructed to

persuade the reader of the inherent virtue in rigid truthfulness (coupled with the easy

accessibility of Truth) and the inherent vice in lying.

If we leave the (Christian) moralizing world of deontology for the pragmatic

approach of sociology, the deception of lying loses its sinister aspect. If lying is intending

to cause a false understanding of the world in speech, thoughts, and writing (Barnes 11),

this false understanding need not be detrimental to either the liar or the dupe. As Barnes

makes clear in *Towards a Sociology of Lying* (1994), certain lies are considered beneficial

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[6] Though, in this context, Sigmund Freud's theory about jokes as a form of sometimes-unconscious aggression complicates the issue of intent. Freud wrote that when a joke is not told only for humour, it can be of only two other purposes: hostility (aggressiveness, satire, or defence) or obscenity (exposure) (97). Regarding the possible underlying aggression of jokes, Freud wrote: "A joke will allow us to exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in the way, bring forward openly or consciously; once again, then, the joke will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasure that have become inaccessible. It will further bribe the hearer with its yield of pleasure into taking sides with us without any very close investigation, just as on other occasions we ourselves have often been bribed by an innocent joke into over estimating the substance of a statement expressed jokingly" (103). Though a lie may be told as a joke, it clearly need not be only for playful humour.

by psychiatrists, like the first lie told by a child as a point of individuality and autonomy

(8). Barnes writes,

> Learning to lie properly is an important feature of the process of human socialization, for we have innumerable good accounts of adults, in a wide variety of social and cultural contexts, exercising their social skills in telling the right lies at the right time, and to the right people. By 'right' I mean successful in achieving deception (8).

So though lies deceive, this might be in the service of personal or social good. Lying, in

sociological accounts, is an elemental building block of social life, allowing humans with

competing world views to create and live within the shared space of social reality.

The foundational status that lying holds in human socialization and

communication stems from its close affinity to other terms like illusion, imagination, and

creation. For instance, as we have seen, Umberto Eco holds that a lie is a false statement

to which there is no real correspondent state of things in the world (an ontological

definition using the correspondence theory of truth), and this presenting of something that

does not exist is a condition of possibility for *all* communication (Eco, "Theory" 7). In

the same vein, Jacques Derrida reframes this condition of possibility as the radical

absence of the referent and the signified in the functioning of language over time and

space. For Derrida, this *différance* is the essential crisis of meaning in communication:

the referent may or may not exist and remarkably language continues to signify

("Signature" 319). Derrida's and Eco's underwriting of any individual statement with the

possibility of deception is at the same time the very possibility for building through the

imaginative and creative use of language. This building is part of the social force of

language, its pragmatic ability to produce behaviour, and therefore for Eco, "*Semiotics is*

mainly concerned with signs as social forces" (65). So, though Eco defines a lie as a false

statement, any analysis of the lie must be bound up with the lie's resultant productive

effects—what it stimulates us to see, inspires us to imagine, or causes us to create.

The productivity of a lie's deception leads us to the realm of the performative. J

Hillis Miller makes this performative dimension of lying explicit. For Miller, lies are

performative speech acts that bring about the condition they name but as yet does not

exist (Miller, "Lying" 20). In as far as language is used to exert force (illocution) the

existence of referents is usually not important—it is assumed they (usually) exist, because

they often do, but just as often they do not. Hence, a common way of defining the lie is as

a species of statement linked with the illocutionary force of intentional deception that

brings into existence that to which it refers. The focus on the truth or falsity of a statement

in the ontological definition of a lie is widened with the idea of the performativity of

utterances. Further, Derrida reminds us that the "lie is not a fact or a state, it is an

intentional act, a lying" meant "to produce an effect of belief" ("History" 34, 37). Instead

of looking at ontological definitions of the lie, Derrida maintains the importance of

focusing on the act of lying and asking of the lie "What does it do? What does it want?"

("History" 34). For Derrida, any lying is performative because it is first and foremost a

promising that appeals to the supposed constative "values of reality, truth, and falsity"

("History" 37). Though appearing to draw authority from these constative values, lying

otherwise performatively "*makes the truth*" and this performativity simultaneously

reveals *both* lying and the truth as historically contingent entities ("History" 51). Both

truth and falsity are produced and vied for by the historically contingent sociopolitics of

language use. By way of a final note, even in the pragmatism of performativity[7] we return to the moral import of lies. As an "effect of truth," a lie produces states that are products of its performativity, and this entails a responsibility for acts done in the name of the lie (Derrida, "History" 37).

Therefore, in this first, socio-semiotic tier of analysis, we are never far from the deontological significance of specific instances of lying. But, lying is not essentially immoral. The moral and sociological approaches to lying both define the lie as the *intention* to deceive, though in the first approach the lie is a sin and social detriment while in the second approach the lie is partially (and pragmatically) redeemed as a social building block. The semiotic approach to lying defines the lie as the stating of *falsehoods*, that is, the stating of things that does not accurately correspond with the ongoing world. This ontological definition finds the ability to craft deception, that is, to lie, as a condition of possibility for all communication. Both are combined and accounted for in the *pragmatic performative* definition of the lie as an intentional deception (deontology) that brings into being that which it names (ontology) and ultimately affects/effects the truth (pragmatic performativity). The effect of lying—the truth effect it produces as both an elementary capacity and a specific use of language—is of great interest to any attempt to understand the aesthetic significance of lying.

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[7] Pragmatism, as an approach concerned with the validity of our beliefs or theories of the world and the ways in which we find the world meaningful, is interested in the success or failure of these world views in our practical application of them. Pragmatism and performativity overlap as approaches concerned with the felicity or infelicity of our meaning-making systems. The performativity of Judith Butler, for instance, is concerned with the productive effects of reiterative discourse and the practical consequences for people's lives from the success or failure of this discursive reiteration.

Contextual Fabrication

  As discussed above, my first definition of lying is an attempt to deceive through some semantic code. In this initial tier of analysis, there is a hidden discrepancy between belief and utterance. As political theorist Alexandre Koyré reminds us, "A lie is not uttered in the void. One lies—as one tells or does not tell the truth—to someone" (292). A person adopts a false belief of the world because this false belief has been explicitly communicated by some agentic force—a speaker, an advertisement, etc. But, if we acknowledge the performative aspects of lying, then we must also acknowledge the large role context has in the creation of the deception. If a lie is an intentional act producing a false understanding of the world with real effects, then we must account for the ways that this (retroactively determined) false understanding is *produced by a dupe* in a specific context.[8] Indeed, we need to understand the ways in which *context*, as that infinitely indeterminable but substantially determinant third element of meaning, can be manipulated to cause one to produce this false belief. If the traditional take on the lie is an intentionally hidden contradiction between a speaker's belief and their utterance, how might we account for an intentionally hidden contradiction between one's utterance and its interpretive context?

  Can we move beyond deontology and the inner realm of an acting speaker's belief/intent and into the context in which meaning is defined within a speech situation for all interlocutors involved? Erving Goffman's sociological approach helps us do this

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[8] This omits, for now, the class of speech acts philosopher Harry Frankfurt terms "bullshit," that is, lies instantly recognizable as such when uttered.

with his idea of *fabrication*. Fabrication is the intentional effort to induce false belief through falsification of some part of the world (Goffman 83). Fabrications are ways to manage activity—when one is "framed" one is the victim of a fabrication. Along with falsifying some part of the world, fabricators also end up fabricating interpretive frameworks that then lead a person to hold false beliefs about real events (Goffman 197). In both instances, fabricators must actively work outside the "frame" to conceal the frame and entrench participants, but those deceived are markedly not passive in this deception. Fabrication deceives, but in Goffman's terminology it truly reorganizes our understanding of "what it is that is going on" in an active process. In this way, fabrication alters reality for those contained within the frame as these dupes actively contribute to their own deception through applying the incorrect interpretive framework to the situation they find themselves within. Goffman's focus on the interpretive frame of a situation in which someone is deceived shifts our analysis from the liar as progenitor of meaning to the context in which meaning is derived from some part of the world (including speech, of course).

 Goffman's focus on the frame of a situation is echoed by Barnes' study of lying: lying "gives strong support to Austin's basic contention that the force of an utterance is determined at least in part by the context in which it is made and heard" (Barnes 166). Austin's "claim applies as much to lies as to sincere statements" as the same utterance can be perceived as a lie or a truth differently in different contexts, or neither as is the case of statements in fiction (which diegetically do not attempt to deceive the reader) (ibid). Barnes has the great example of how new methods for communication require new

disclaimers for truth-telling, as in the phrase "this is a recorded message" that would precede the recorded telephone message of early users of answering machine technology, before it was ubiquitous. It was a new context so disclaiming statements were needed because the likelihood of a caller being deceived was higher.

For this dissertation, then, I take the idea that unfamiliar contexts increase the likelihood of deception. This means that new contexts are, to borrow from Goffman, "strips" of the ongoing world in which participants have yet to develop an adequately robust interpretative framework. Once answering machines were commonplace, the automatic interpretive framework engendered by a participant making a phone call included the possibility of connecting with a recording of her intended interlocutor, thereby appending to every phone call the implicit question "Is this a real person that has answered the phone?"[9] What the art explored in this dissertation does—art that lies about its being an authentically unmanaged piece of the ongoing world—is play with the contexts of everyday life and the staid interpretive frameworks therein by disrupting them with statements, objects, personae, etc., that effectively create new contexts and engender the need for fresh interpretive frameworks.

Ideology: The Ubiquitous Lie

If the second tier of analysis looks at the discrepancy between an utterance and its contextual framework, the third tier of analysis looks at the dissemination of this hidden discrepancy of contextual framing over time and space. In this third tier of analysis, lies

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[9] Playing on our interpretive prowess in this context has become something of a ubiquitous aesthetic experience: all of us familiar with this technology have at one time intentionally crafted or been caught in the disorienting frame break of realizing you are talking to a machine.

function on the level of the ideo-material matrix. This helps us to account for the way lies

persist beyond individual conscious actors producing them and beyond bracketed contexts

containing them. In what way do lies distort our estimation of our situation and affect our

choices in an extended, pervasive way?

In 1922, Walter Benjamin sketched a brief outline for an ultimately unrealized

project on lies. In it he summarizes a phenomenon he calls *objective mendacity*. For

Benjamin, "Objective Mendacity means: not to recognize the situation of a decision"

(Benjamin 203). Objective mendacity is a perpetuated lie that "is not subjective, a lie

whose responsibility is clearly that of an individual. Rather it is 'bona fide'" (ibid). One

can imagine the key to Benjamin's unrealized project stands in his use of "bona fide": an

objective lie is constructed without the intent to deceive, yet it is pervasive in its

genuineness or sincerity. Always the Marxist, Benjamin's objective lie sounds a lot like

ideology.

The connection between lying and ideology is an important one to make. For J.

Hillis Miller, all of society functions on lies that must forget the inevitability of death to

work ("Lying" 20, 29). For Miller, "the social system is sustained by a complex set of

constantly renewed speech acts that declare that such and such a person, rank, or thing

has such and such a value" (20) and "All speech acts are in a sense lies, since they bring

about the condition they name, a condition that, as it is being named, does not yet exist …

[and] it only works if everyone believes in it" (21). That society is a lie or is built on lies

is a persistent yet powerful idea. Plato's ideal republic is built on a sustained lie that

benefits the state: the so-called "noble lie." Marxist critiques of society aim to ferret out

these foundational lies, especially those which impinge on the everyday agency of citizens. For twentieth-century Marxist theorists Adorno and Horkheimer, mass art and culture are in the business of promoting the ideology of the ruling class, and as such are involved in deceiving the populace into undesirable working conditions. The widespread deception of the populace by mass culture represses resistance through the illusion of choice (40). This form of deception is commonly referred to as social hegemony, most notably theorized by Antonio Gramsci, as a form of deception without coercion, where citizens consent to the "common sense" of a pervasive dominant ideology, working toward the reproduction of the ruling order through internalizing and nourishing its manufactured needs (Gramsci 12). Similarly, for Guy Debord, mass media representations mask material reality, where "the true is a moment of the false" (par. 9). Barthes refers to this surreptitious ideological inflexion as "myth," the emptying out of historical contingency to present a specific concept as obvious, universal, and unmotivated ("Myth" 142-3). In the postmodern epoch, this hidden truth of ideology exposed by Marxist readings morphs into a nihilistic confrontation of the ubiquitous lie of the market and a postmodern concern with simulation, equivalence or surface (Rancière, "Art of the Possible" 267). The duplicitous experiences of reality manufactured by ideology are linked to the socio-economic structures of their historical conjunctures. Throughout Marxist critique, images deceive in the service of class domination. When this lying is disseminated over space and time it forms the system of norms and beliefs we call ideology.

In this way, the third tier of analysis must account for the ways lies can pervade everyday life through ideology. A sociocultural analysis of lying in art must account for the ways in which artworks reflect, expose, or reiterate the experience of living within specific ideological frameworks.

Summary: Structure of the Lie
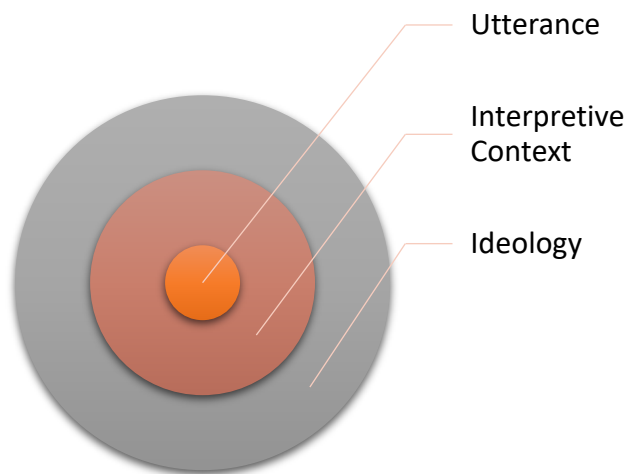
From these three tiers of the analysis of lying we can briefly outline a structure of the lie. A lie is some specific act of deception that exists within an interpretive context and an ideological framework. Lying is the hiding of an incongruence between an utterance and belief, between an utterance and interpretive context, or between the norms that produce an interpretive framework and one's best interests (however they are defined).[10]

Utterance

Interpretive Context

Ideology

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[10] A note on the temporality of the lie: how we perceive a lie depends on its relation to our expectations in time. Derrida reminds us that truth-telling is oriented toward the past or present, toward the world of events and facts, while lying is oriented toward the future as the possibility of that to come: "Between lying and acting, acting in politics, manifesting one's own freedom through action, transforming facts, anticipating the future, there is something like an essential affinity. … The lie is the future, one might venture to say … To tell the truth is, on the contrary, to say what is or what will have been and it would instead prefer the past" ("History" 66). When we know we are being lied to we can delight in the illusion of the world the lie creates, as in fiction, or dismiss the utterance, as in bullshit. When we learn we have been lied to, we may delight in the ingenuity of the trick, as in hoaxes, or we may be angry at the unethical breach of trust, as in mischievous lies. Hence, lying can be defined by three temporal modes, three ways we experience the lie in time. The first is as precedent, as a guide for/from similar situations that precede in time and importance. For example, the way fiction is experienced as bracketed from the ongoing world because we can identify it as such. There is an understanding of what is and is not real, a separation of fiction from the ongoing world.

A Note on the Politics of Lying

Because this dissertation is concerned with the political import of lying as an artistic practice, how might we define the politics of lying? For Kant, though lying is found in the political arena, lying is "opposed to all lawfulness" ("Supposed" 348). This strict opposition between lying and truth is Kant's categorical imperative of universal truthfulness. The law is composed of immutable reason while politics is composed of changeable applications of the law which remain susceptible to corruption through lying. For this reason, Kant holds that "law must never be accommodated to politics" (ibid). But if we move from the onerous sphere of deontology, we find that the lie is an inherently political form of speech that draws effectiveness from the freedom of human creation.

The freedom of lying is the ability to deny what is present, dis-embed oneself from the situation in which one finds oneself in order to see an alternate reality, an alternate existence. For Hannah Arendt, the individual is sensorially and mentally well equipped to live in the physical world but is also at a remove from it. This ability to dis-embed leaves one free to exercise one's will to accept or reject the very reality before one, not just logical statements of fact that could be deemed true or dubious, but an acceptance or rejection of the very sensory information they accrue (Arendt, "Lying" 5). Arendt explains this essential political function of lying, as "Without the mental freedom to deny or affirm existence, to say 'yes' or 'no' … no action would be possible; and

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The second is as present, as a revelation in the moment. For instance, the easy dismissal of bullshitting—it has no bearing on past or future but is recognized as superfluous loquaciousness. Lies here are encountered as lies, though their effectivity is sterilized. The third, is as future perfect, as a mode of future orientation that acts on a plausible future through fabricated constructions of the past (something covered in the first chapter of this dissertation).

action is of course the very stuff politics are made of" (ibid). Thus, for Arendt, lies are

linked to imagination and the capacity to act in and on the world (Arendt, "Lying" 5).[11]

Martin Jay follows Hannah Arendt's work on lying and agrees that lies are a form

of imaginative creation. Knowledge is created to diverge from as much as converge on

the ongoing world. For Jay, politics is propositional because it deals with the intended

future referenced in statements ("Ambivalent" 119). As Jay writes, the "ability to imagine

a different future is ensured by at least the possibility of counterfactual mendacity"

("Pseudology" 243). For Jay, lies are signs of freedom that ensure politics remains an

agonistic discourse ("Pseudology" 251). Jay's recent study of lying in politics finds that

politics is the struggle between narrative half-truths, and these half-truths are tied to the

freedom to envision a different future ("Ambivalent" 120). Accordingly, for Jay, politics

is comprised of "conceptual fabrication" where the narratives and concepts used in

political discourse (like a cohesive "nation-state," "national interest" or "the people")

cannot be epistemologically pinpointed; they are not necessarily lying, and may be used

with earnestness, but to the extent that they rely on amorphous and unsubstantiated

entities they expose the way political discourse is steeped in the creative imagination of

myth making narratives ("Ambivalent" 119). In this way, the creative use of language—

which inherently includes the use of lies—provides us with a set of capacities to bring

things into being or invoke the power of conceptual entities. This provides language with

the social force Eco identifies, as discussed previously. We do not have to have

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[11] Arendt writes, "the deliberate denial of factual truth—the ability to lie—and the capacity to change facts—the ability to act—are interconnected; they owe their existence to the same source: imagination" (Arendt, "Lying" 5).

experienced something for it to become a "cultural unit," that is, a logical entity, in our culture (Eco, *Theory* 66). Eco writes, "We only know a cultural unit communicated to us by means of words, drawings, or other means. For the defence or destruction of this cultural unit, as for others such as /freedom/, /transmutation/ or /free world/, men are even ready to go to their death" (ibid). In this way, "A lie … is a form of action" and both lying and truth telling change the world (Arendt, "Truth" 563-4). Lying is of great political import because it effects pragmatic responses and changes behaviour—it changes the world and the ways we live in it through the imaginative creation of cultural units.

Though lying is inherently political and born of the imaginative capacity of human communication, the politics of the lie need not be "creative" in the contemporary positive sense of the term. The scale to which lying changes the world is of great political importance, and the political use of the "big lie" in totalitarianism reminds us that lying's inherent political status is not necessarily of a specific politics. For Arendt, big lies are more appealing than reality because they are crafted specifically for users and, therefore, do not contain any surprises—the organized lies of government are accordingly the most violent ("Lying" 7). Alexandre Koyré looks at this modern form of the lie in totalitarian regimes. Koyré holds that in everyday life lies remain a state of exception, and he is interested in what happens when the state of exception becomes the norm. Lies can be used to strengthen social bonds to the extent that, as in totalitarian regimes, there grows a definite rupture between "us" and "them" (293). In this way, totalitarianism uses biology and racism to make the schism between people seem most definite, and when this enmity becomes absolute one population is forced to dissimulate itself; for both "us" and "them,"

the lie "will become a condition of sheer existence, a primary and fundamental rule of

behavior" (294). In totalitarianism, where there is the "primacy of the lie" you can even

tell the truth to deceive your enemies—which is a second-degree lie (Koyré 291). The

social force and creative potential of the lie is harnessed under totalitarianism, and Koyré

rightly warns that to lie is "to assert what is not, distort the truth and obscure reality"

(292). Totalitarianism remains a lesson in the degree of lying's effective productivity.

    The big lie of totalitarianism is not unique to nation-states easily identifiable as

totalitarian, however. The coercive production of consensus is used within democracy, as

well. Jacques Rancière outlines the ways in which the Us/Them distinction created by the

big lie of totalitarianism is also manifested in the "ethical community" of democracy. The

ethical community is duplicitous because it fosters social cohesion at the cost of hiding a

radical other that, through its exclusion from the community, defines the community's

boundaries (*Dissensus* 187). Similarly, Jay holds that the totalitarian big lie is equivalent

to the imperative for absolute truthfulness in the North American political arena—both

stifle dissenting opinions and the agonistic process of politics ("Ambivalent" 120). If

consensus is the making of common sense, this general agreement is commonly achieved

through the purposeful hiding of the incongruence of dissenting opinions, that is, the

hiding of the divergence between the outward sign of unanimity and the actual

discordance of the ongoing world to achieve some sociopolitical end.

    Though the pervasiveness of lies can cohere social relations to the creation and

detriment of a radical other, or while lies can break down social relations as stated in the

moral argument against lying, these social forces need not only be negative. Lies can be

used reciprocally to combat the oppressive consensus created through hegemonic power structures—the breakdown of social relations need not always be a disagreeable outcome (Eco, *Faith in Fakes* 175, 179). Lying is a way to create personal space away from the transparency of public action (Barnes 163). Art can counteract the big lie of society through creating dissensus and constructing novel relationships between things and meanings (Rancière, *Dissensus* 141). This is Rancière's definition of *fiction*, the "re-framing of the 'real'" to produce new connections between human meanings and external things (ibid). Lying is a way to combat the stifling consensus of stagnant or repressive societal norms. With an eye to the criticality needed in democratic debate, lying itself will not foster the skepticism needed for political critique, debate, and change, but rather its crafting of a plurality of sources can facilitate such critical capacities in citizens. As Barnes remarks, "Diversity undermines the power of lies" (Barnes 167). Ultimately, the "real world ability to detect and expose [lies] … is closely related to the distribution of power" (Barnes 162). Both lying and the exposition of lies are political acts contributing to the pervasive understanding of a common reality. These reciprocal creative acts are parts of the political process of forming a shared conception of the ongoing world, even while this shared framework apportions agency unequally within the sociopolitical landscape.

Truth

> *the value of thought lies not so much in its inevitable convergences with*
> *truth as in the immeasurable divergences which separate it from truth*
>   —Baudrillard, "The Perfect Crime" 266

Writers on lying usually treat "truth" as unproblematic (Barnes 13). In the Christian tradition of moralizing lying, lying is opposed to truth and therefore every lie is a sin (though not necessarily mortal). For instance, Michel de Montaigne held that "Lying is an accursed vice … we should pursue it with fire and sword, and more justly than other crimes" ("Of Liars"). While there are limitless ways "to tell a thing which we know in our conscience to be untrue," truth, on the other hand, has "but one face only" (ibid). Bok suggests that, in the philosophical scholarship over the ages, "Paradoxically, the reluctance to come to grips with *deception* can stem from an exalted and all-absorbing preoccupation with *truth*" (5). In a study that examines artistic uses of lying, then, it is important to arrive at a working definition of *truth* if only to dispel it as the monolithic entity which has previously occluded deeper examinations of deception.

Though truth is not the opposite of lying, what might the "truth" in truthfulness mean? A "fact" is some evidentiary piece of the world as observed through a certain frame that is mobilized to support that frame and its ideological corollaries. Facts are mobilized by competing world views to achieve greater levels of facticity. As competing world views shore up facticity, ensuring the disparity between them appears all the greater, they cohere a set of facts into an identifiable ideology ("Liberal," "Conservative," etc.). Facts are tools in this clashing of world views. In "Lying in Politics" (1969),

Hannah Arendt reflects on the "inherent contingency" of facts (12).[12] Arendt initially

distinguishes between factual and rational truth in the Western philosophical tradition,

where factual truth is dependent on the intersubjective agreement of constituents and,

therefore, closer to the political crafting of opinions than to rational truth; whereas,

rational truth is independent of opinion and based on immutable logic ("Truth" 553). But,

insofar as, in the Western philosophical tradition, all types of truth assert validity, which

is different from opinion, the use of truth is a moment of performative coercion. Arendt,

in "Truth in Politics" (1967), writes that "Truth carries with it an element of coercion. …

Seen from the viewpoint of politics, truth has a despotic character. … Factual truth, like

all other truth, peremptorily claims to be acknowledged and precludes debate, and debate

constitutes the very essence of political life" (556). Arendt's conception of truth aligns

with contemporary notions of performativity, especially Butler's, where any moment of

stating something as "just fact" is also a moment of coercion—that is, it is within a

reiterative process of constructing the world ("Truth" 556).[13] Arendt's politics are

performative where truth and falsity, as far as they are used in politics, must then be

performative as well—able to act on and change the world in their constitution of that to

which they refer.

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[12] Arendt writes of "factual statements" that are separate from things like mathematical truths. Arendt posits that those she calls professional problem-solvers (from think tanks and universities) deal in rationality and theory and attempt to discover "laws" to explain in pseudo-mathematical fashion historical facts and predict political futures ("Lying" 11). For Arendt, our reality is composed of a fragile "whole texture of facts" that is always at risk of being attacked, denied or distorted by the lies of individuals or organizations ("Lying" 6). In this way, "Facts need testimony to be remembered and trustworthy witnesses to be established in order to find a secure dwelling place in the domain of human affairs" (ibid).

[13] For instance, Butler's *Bodies That Matter* reveals that even the constative utterance, i.e., just stating a fact that can be judged true or false, utilizes the reiterative citationality of language which performatively materializes that to which it refers (xix). More recently, Butler's *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015) draws on Arendt's theories of action, bodies, and politics.

Later reflecting on Arendt's essay in 2009, Martin Jay remarks "Strictly speaking, 'truth' doesn't assert anything; only speakers can do that. Arendt was clearly less sensitive than Derrida to the linguistic dimensions of speech act theory" ("Pseudology" 254n53). However, I would like to insist that, since Arendt remarks earlier in her essay that factual truth has a performative existence and dies when it ceases to be told ("Truth" 553), she is asserting a phenomenological performative dimension of truth.[14] Truth, to the extent that it stands for the empirical state of the world at any one time, truth as an objective reality or some such omniscient image of the world, *does* assert itself upon a participant of the world: as the final check and balance of the correctness of any instance of the application of an interpretive framework. This is the correspondence theory of truth: is this statement true, does it accurately correspond to the external world that it describes, etc.? Arendt seems to ask, would something not have to be labelled as a "truth" (supported by facts) and the author of this labelling then always be doing the asserting? If Arendt's definition of factual truth follows a performative constitution, then would her idea of "truth" not also imply a performative dimension, i.e., a truth is always already something that has been declared as such? I believe so, and this is from where I draw the operational definition of "truth" for this dissertation.

Truth is the differential force normalized—made to appear self-evident—by a frame. Truth is what we believe to exist independent of us. Truth is an aesthetic

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[14] I am reminded that the empiricist's objective reality always seems to be "more real" than a historical, qualitative perception because it omits *how* we come to know it: through *experience* (Merleau-Ponty 26-7). As Merleau-Ponty says, empiricist constructions hide the lived world of human culture, and he gives the former the appellation of "mental blindness" (27, 29); the empiricist is "not concerned with what we see, but with what we ought to see" (36).

qualification of experience: "this is true," or "that is untrue" are judgements made during experience or reflection on experience. Truth is under constant debate—our understandings of the world are part of a continual aesthetic pedagogy in which we parse things as "true" or "untrue."[15]

Truth and Art

Artists have been described as truth-tellers since antiquity. Aristotle viewed art, especially poetry, as conveying a deeper, more universal truth than other disciplines like history, which only attends to specific instances of the past (*Poetics* 1451b5-7). In Aristotle's view, art offers us a greater understanding of the reality of human existence by allowing us to study the universal truths enclosed within artistic constructions (ibid). The inherent humanism in the belief that art discloses universal truth is a hard sell today, and not one into which I aim to breathe life; but today, art and artists continue to function substantially in our political production of truth.

It might be hard to reconcile the contingency of interpretation of the world with our volition to change it. How can we act with any certainty or authority? Why attempt to reinterpret, to critique, to find the limits of the frame? The question often becomes one for moral and political philosophy: how *ought* we to live in the face of equivocality; what *universal rights* must we maintain in a clear and present relativism? Pragmatist aesthetics brings us back from these universalisations. Pragmatist Richard Shusterman writes that,

> If truth and artistic status depend on a socio-cultural power structure, this
> structure is not permanently fixed but is rather a changing field of struggle.

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[15] For instance, the resurgence of creationism and "flat earthers" in the US demonstrates that no truth remains self-evident without reiteration in public discourse. Self-evidence—the very defining feature of "truth"—is a product of continued citation.

> And one way a population's beliefs and tastes can be transformed is by the expressive power of the discourse or art presented to them" (229).

Art, as Shusterman relates, uses "perceptual persuasion" (230). Artworks, and art qua art, are arguments within discursive fields that structure our frameworks. Subsequently, "art" in this dissertation is an argument with discursive influence within a mutable field. Instead of (or, along with) fostering an apathy, the contingency of interpretive frameworks laid bare by lying in aesthetic experience highlights the necessity of engagement. As Deleuze makes clear, working from Nietzsche, the certainties of "Being, truth and reality are themselves only valid as evaluations, that is to say as lies …. To live is to evaluate … all is evaluation" (174). Capital 'T' Truth will not "naturally" win out over creative contextual framings of the world. Truth cannot be reached through a war of attrition. As long as human experience is fueled by the myriad desires and necessities that drive our organic existence, a battle of interests manages our lived day-to-day and consequently what we hold to be true.

A Note on a Few Sticky Terms

This dissertation investigates what makes certain experiences of art seem "real," "true," or "authentic." Here, authenticity is an aesthetic quality produce within a moment of interpretation. It is relative; it is context-dependent. However, authenticity continues to function as an important cultural value judgement. This sticky term is closely related to truth, and like truth, is continually under debate. The authenticity metrics we use vet evidence through the norms that make up our interpretive frameworks and consequent modality judgements (framing things as real or fictional, true or false—and, importantly,

authentic or inauthentic).[16] Within the agora of human interest, the norms that support

interpretive frames that in turn reiterate certain ideologies that in turn are mobilized by

myth, all affect our evaluations of the world at hand, and consequently, how we live. In

this way, the designation of "authentic" is both a political act and differentially defined

within different politics. My use in this dissertation of this contested term of contestation

acknowledges its complex contingency and differing metrics while also recognizing that

as a component of everyday aesthetic judgement it remains widely employed. Even

though what makes up authenticity continues to change, it remains an important

colloquial cultural category.

I want to also flag here the tricky imbrication of three terms: Modernism,

Postmodernism, and Neoliberalism. Throughout this dissertation, I engage these terms

when contextualizing the artworks I analyze. As terms with complex histories, each of

which has independently engendered scores of scholarship, I will qualify them as I

proceed through my analysis. In the conclusion, I give an extended discussion of

neoliberalism in particular, especially in our "post-truth" cultural milieu. These categories

are helpful for my analysis of lying in the works I have chosen, and my analysis of

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[16] The artistic lying of forgery qua forgery is a modern problem that takes firm root in the eighteenth century. Forgery began as a regular practice during the Renaissance, especially one that demonstrated an artist's genius. However, the new ideological contexts of *authenticity* and *originality* came into play in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to make forgery a problem. Thus, the concept of "fraudulence" or inauthenticity in literature grows in the romantic period because originality and authenticity gain conceptual authority (Carpenter 172). There was, therefore, a concomitant reassessment of what fraudulence in literature meant in nineteenth-century Euro-America. Thus, over the centuries the particular qualities that designated authenticity shifted, and by the nineteenth century authenticity became more important than genius (Keats 3).

postmodern pseudology helps us further understand the art of that era and our current

post-postmodern moment.

How Does Art Lie?

Given the contemporary pervasive perception that art does not lie, it behooves us

to look to the history of art theory to ask: *Can* art lie? Oscar Wilde held that lying itself

was an artistic practice. In "Decay of Lying" (1889), Wilde advocated for freedom from

moral constraint, the ability for art to transgress social limitations, and for the artist's life

as the greatest work of art ("Decay"). Mark Twain called lying the "finest of the fine

arts." In a sentiment commonly held by authors of fiction, Twain declared "lying is

universal—we *all* do it," but, also, it is a "sweet and loving art" that can foster charitable

and unselfish protection from "brutal" and "injurious truth" ("On the Decay"). Both truth

and lies can be used injuriously or benevolently. Nietzsche's use of a question mark in

this introduction's epigraph signals the disruptive ambiguity the concept of lying has

caused in art. If art works through deception to please us in revealing its illusion,

Nietzsche remained ambivalent as to the nature of this experience ("On Truth" 96).

Following Nietzsche, this section asks, "How is it that art is only possible as a lie?"

(ibid).[17]

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[17] In theoretical and historical discourses on art, truth and beauty are inextricably linked. Lying in art remains understudied because it is regarded as, on the one hand, an untrue aberration of language or an ugly social practice not worthy of scholastic exploration (outside of the continued bolstering of moral imperatives against it); and, on the other hand, lying is treated as an ultimately elemental condition of all communication, or, even, the true nature of our experience of reality, and therefore ignored because of its ubiquity. But, art discourse on lying does abound, if only tangentially through a consideration of truth.

The Lying Arts of Poetry and Governance

The common place to start a discussion on the ways that art lies is with Plato's banishment of the poets from his ideal Republic on the grounds that their art could only lie. Plato felt imitation was not the way to truth. Truth for Plato was "essential," "universal" or "ideal" (*Republic* 476a-b). But, more pragmatically for Plato, the lies of art were too disruptive to the smooth running of the nation-state (*Republic* 377e-380b). Lying itself is neither good nor bad, as Socrates argues in Plato's *Hippias Minor*. In fact, Socrates argues that the voluntary liar is better than the involuntary liar, because the voluntary liar possesses wisdom, truth, power, knowledge and prudence, while the involuntary liar possesses simply ignorance (*Hippias Minor* 375e-376a).[18] More power or wisdom allows one to do more good or evil with all of one's actions, including lying along with truth-telling. Hence, Plato's "noble lie," that coheres a nation and ensures its smooth social functioning, is a good lie, while the artistic lie of the poets, that enlivens the hearts and minds of the populace in ways unknown (and possibly detrimental) to the guardians of the nation, is a bad lie. In this, the most well-cited case of art's absolute duplicity, art's effective lying is paramount.

The anxiety that art can indeed lie, and lie all too well, is widely held. Though deception is a condition of possibility for all signification, various cultures are peppered

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[18] In a dialogue between Eudicus, Socrates and Hippias, Socrates questions Hippias as to who is the better person, Odysseus or Achilles. Hippias says that Odysseus is false and Achilles true, but over the course of the dialogue Socrates shows that a person who voluntarily does wrong is a good person, whereas someone who involuntarily does wrong is a bad person. For example, if justice is a type of power or knowledge, and if a person with the greater power or knowledge is more just than someone more ignorant, then Socrates concludes that a good person will voluntarily do wrong while a bad person does so involuntarily. Socrates makes the jump in logic at the end to assume that "he who voluntarily does wrong and disgraceful things, if there be such a man, will be the good man" (*Hippias Minor* 376b).

with tenets of aniconism like Plato's. For instance, both the histories of Christian and

Islamic representational strategies grapple with the threat of misplaced idolatry presented

by anthropomorphic images of Gods and people. Specific instances of enforcing

aniconism are litmus tests for a culture and its values. In a broad sense, the regulating of

image production and consumption is also what this dissertation addresses: when the

realism a contemporary artist employs leads to the deception of viewers, steps are taken

to theorize or moralize their overstepping of the artistic frame (representational boundary

delimiting the realm of art from reality). However, literature on aniconism, though of

great interest to theology, is primarily concerned with the deontological significance of

representation. Fear that people will use images improperly assumes a proper use, and

leaves little agency to artist or viewer-participant. Literature on aniconism is therefore of

little help in investigating the specific uses and effects of lying in contemporary Western

art.

Deception is "outside the pale of art"

   During the modern epoch, Kant's notion of purposeful purposelessness altered our

understanding of the ultimate ontological condition of art. Henceforth, art qua art was

taken to be autotelic and thus left the pragmatic worlds of religion, history, or craft to

enter the rarified space of aesthetic experience. As art became defined by aesthetics as a

realm separate from ongoing everyday life it ceased to be allowed to effectively lie.

Moving forward in history, this idea of art for art's sake became the calling card of

European Romanticism in the early nineteenth century. For instance, when English

Romantic painter John Constable visited Louis Daguerre's proto-cinematic diorama in

London in 1823 he wrote, "it is very pleasing and has great illusion. [But,] it is outside the pale of art because its object is deception. … art pleases by reminding not deceiving" (Leslie 106). Much of modernist art historical and theoretical scholarship echoes Constable's sentiment: true deception is not within the realm of art.[19] Thus, lying is traditionally precluded from artistic techniques because it hides art's understood ontological status—as an openly honest artistic expression.

Seminal art historian Ernst Gombrich holds that, because there is a "compact between the artist and the beholder," art must remain bound by the specificity of its medium: "Fidelity to nature has to be achieved within the limits of the medium" (xxiv). If this compact is broken, as with lying, then what is experienced ceases to be art (ibid). Gombrich maintains that images cannot lie, only statements can. As he explains, "it is the caption which determines the truth of the picture" (68). Gombrich asserts that such factual details may be interesting for historians (as documentation) but not for aesthetics (69). But, Rina Arya rejoins that though pictures may not lie themselves, because they are not propositions, they provide us with propositional knowledge; even though pictures are not arguments they can generate arguments (176). Similarly, while Plato held that pictures were a priori false because they could not lay claim to truth through ideal forms, Vitezslav Horák finds the truthfulness of pictures to be discourse-dependent (Horák 359). Pictures cannot lie, but they can be used to lie—just like statements cannot lie inherently but can be used to lie; art, like an utterance, is true or false through its use in discourse

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[19] Constable's statement reveals the slippery valley of verisimilitude between art qua art and art dissimulating its status as art in an effort to pass as something other—in effect, simply another unsettling aspect of the uncanny valley, the space of disturbing similarity that frightfully collapses our categorical designation of the world at hand leaving us bereft of certainty.

(Horák 360).[20] Though Gombrich and his qualifiers maintain art cannot lie, they illustrate

well the nature of pictures' truthfulness as discourse-dependent.

Morality presents a hurdle to our consideration of lying as an artistic technique of

value.[21] In the philosophical tradition of aesthetics one is hard pressed to find a rigorous

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[20] Though certain interpretive contexts, like state archives, strongly suggest discourses of truth and thus can "lie" by simply altering pictures—thereby changing historical record. For instance, in Stalin's Russia "photographs lied" because disappeared political delegates and pundits were visually, materially erased from photographic record (King 7).

[21] The idea that art cannot lie is linked to the moralizing of universal truth. The Christian asceticism that scorns base and worldly desires also scorns the base pragmatism of lying. Augustine exhorts that "as the mind must be preferred to the body, so truth must be preferred by the mind, so that not only does the mind seek truth more than it seeks the body, but even more than it seeks itself" (70). Truth is unchangeable and pure, for Augustine, and it is the natural desire of the mind, while the mutability of lies is naturally of the quagmire of human animality. Thomas Aquinas extended lying from just words to any sign intended to mean. For Aquinas, lying is categorically opposed to truth, and every lie is a sin (even though lying for fun or utility is not a mortal sin, but lying to injure is) (Aquinas 2). Even today, after the restructuring of "truth" by poststructuralism or by simple assertions that any whole Truth is unknowable, lying remains morally wrong. This might account for the dearth of discourses on deception in philosophy, and philosophy's reluctance to allow art to lie. While philosophy has been concerned with the distinction between true/false, it has neglected the truthful/deceptive binary because it has routinely dismissed lying as morally wrong (Bok 21).

The lie is routinely examined under moral philosophy, but this work marks lying as good or bad, right or wrong, and stops short of evaluating the artistic pragmatics of lying. For instance, while Kant wrote a foundational text for aesthetics as it was just a burgeoning field of study in the German Enlightenment, he was also categorically opposed to lying in any form. Kant's insights into the moral viciousness of lying are framed by earlier thinkers on the subject in the Christian tradition, like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. In his "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives" (1797), Kant addresses Augustine's scenario of the benevolent lie where one is forced to lie to protect the safety of another (Kant is responding to an article entitled "On Political Reactions" by the French philosopher Benjamin Constant [*France* VI:1, 1797]). He suggests that if a person did lie to protect another, then the liar is responsible for the consequences of what may come to pass. So, for instance, if the benevolent lie accidently puts a murderer in the path of the person the liar was attempting to protect, the liar is now responsible for the person's death. "Therefore, whoever tells a lie, however well-intentioned he might be, must answer for the consequences, however unforeseeable they were, and pay the penalty for them in a civil tribunal," he declares (348). For Kant, truthfulness is a universal principle, one that is the very foundation of legal and political society. Even to utter a lie in which no one person is directly harmed, for Kant, is an utmost grievous offence because it shakes the bedrock of the categorical imperative of truthfulness. Kant, in his writings on lying, is the paradigmatic absolutist. He does not make cases for moments when lying might be beneficial or even allowable. At no time should a person, in Kant's ethics, make "an intentional untruthful declaration to another person" ("Supposed" 347). Kant continues, and "To be truthful (honest) in all declarations, therefore, is a sacred and absolutely commanding decree of reason, limited by no expediency" ("Supposed" 347). But we have seen historically where such absolute honesty breaks down, as in, when the forces of totalitarian control openly extinguish the lives of millions of people. To be truthful in such a climate may mean sending innocents to their deaths. With the bedrock of our very social, moral and judicial fabric at risk, it is no wonder Kant did not include the lie as one of the beautiful things fit for aesthetic appreciation.

encounter with lying as a practice or the lie as an ontological or epistemological entity. Traditionally, art must reveal itself as an honest illusion else it risks falling into the moral quagmire of deception. In *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Kant states that a trick can deceive people into taking immediate (intellectual) interest in something—where we take pleasure in that something simply existing above and beyond our disinterested taste (our aesthetical judgement of it) (128 §42). But, Kant maintains that all interest and enjoyment, and all aesthetic value, is lost once the deception is revealed (129 §42). In our everyday lives, we take interest in nature because it gives access to the beautiful forms of the world, but our interest "vanishes completely as soon as we are conscious of having been deceived, and that it is only a work of art—so completely that even taste can then no longer find in anything beautiful nor sight anything attractive" (131 §42). For Kant, art can only tell the truth through obvious illusion or please through perfect deception—once a person learns of their being deceived it disallows aesthetic appreciation. We find this disregard for lying in the way Kant theorizes poetry, as well. For Kant, poetry is the highest of fine arts because it allows the mind free play to regard "supersensible" phenomena: it represents the world and creates beautiful compositions. Imperatively, it does not deceive: "In poetry everything is straight and above board" (156 §53). Rhetoric, on the other hand, practices deception by persuading people to leave the freedom of their own minds. Kant holds that any persuasion of this sort, though it could be put to good use for "intrinsically legitimate and praiseworthy" ends, does greater "subjective injury" to public trust more generally (155-6 §53). For Kant, art deceives as in illusion, but if this deception is hidden it becomes lying and is outside the pale of art.

Tricks that Teach: The Truth of/through Lies

> *lie like the truth*
> —Defoe

> *art is the lie that makes us realize truth*
> —Picasso

> *Lying, the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of art*
> —Wilde

There is a third option to consider in the potential of art to lie. On the one hand, this option asks us to leave the ontological world of truth and falsity for the pragmatic world of truthfulness and deception, and, on the other hand, it asks us to redefine our very epistemological limits. In this third way, art exposes the lies of what is considered true; and, moreover, art interrogates our certainty in the reliability of knowledge and suggests that the feeling of *knowing the truth* is the ultimate self-deception.

Nietzsche held that the creative and wilful affirmation of meaning in life was achievable through art. Nietzsche acknowledges that humans must create meaning in life and this meaning is never obvious, predetermined or "true" but always constructed with purpose ("On Truth" 93). The idea that truth is simple is, for Nietzsche, a lie: "Every truth is simple—Is that not doubly a lie?" ("History" 124). For Nietzsche, "art is *worth more than truth"* because "*We have need of lies …* in order to *live*" and therefore a person "must be above all an *artist*" (*Will* 453, 451). For Nietzsche, the supreme value in life is the will to truth, which is tantamount to the will to deception, and the will to illusion. Art demystifies its own deceptions to change the world—what Nietzsche calls a "truthful illusion"; "Everything which is good and beautiful depends upon illusion: truth kills—it even kills itself (insofar as it realizes that error is its foundation)" ("On Truth" 92, 97).

Art can construct the truth of life openly because it foregrounds the act of lying itself, and lying (the creative, metaphoric representation of the world in human concepts) is the very bedrock upon which knowledge is formed.

Traditionally, art creates truth through "lying" in an open way. In this vein, even Augustine felt art must be false to be true; Dante called poetry the "beautiful lie"; the middle ages regarded visual art as untrue, but after 1700 the definition of aesthetic truth changes so Roger de Piles can say that lying in art produces truth, or Giambattista Vico can say that the poets' falsehoods are "more true," and Denis Diderot could reiterate Aristotle's proclamation that poetry is made of lies (Tatarkiewicz 305). This conception of art's ability to lie is an open form of lying: illusion. Illusion is the pleasurable lie—per Constable's assessment, above, one takes pleasure in being reminded of the artifice of art. Artistic illusion is a deception where "the deceived is wiser than the undeceived" (Gorgias in Pape 7). Though the illusionism of art has a long history of being referred to in scholarship as a type of lie, *illusionism is not deceptive*. Illusion turns into deception only when the context in which art is exhibited sets up an expectation reinforced by the artist's work so as to trick a viewer into drawing false conclusions. As Gombrich says, tromp l'oeil "relies on the mutual reinforcement of illusion and expectation":

> illusion could turn into deception only when the context of action sets up an expectation which reinforced the artist's handiwork. The most famous story of illusion in classical antiquity illustrates the point to perfection; it is the anecdote from Pliny, how Parrhasios trumped Zeuxis, who had painted grapes so deceptively that birds came to peck at them. He invited his rival to his studio to show him his own work, and when Zeuxis eagerly tried to lift the curtain from the panel, he found it was not real but painted, after which he had to concede the palm to Parrhasios who had deceived not only irrational birds but an artist. In the cool light of reason, Parrhasios' feat is somewhat less admirable. Within the experience of poor Zeuxis, the

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> probability of a curtain's being painted was surely nil. A few strokes of
> light and shade may therefore have been sufficient to make him "see" the
> curtain he expected, all the more so as he was keyed up for the next phase,
> the picture he wanted to reveal. The trompe l'oeil of painters have ever
> since relied on the mutual reinforcement of illusion and expectation …
> Where these expectations cannot be controlled they have to be created. We
> read of one such attempt in classical antiquity to transcend the dream-
> reality of painting. The painter Theon revealed his painting of a soldier to
> the accompaniment of a blast of trumpets, and we are assured that the
> illusion was greatly increased. Those of us who still remember the first
> talking films can imagine something of the effect (206-7).

This shift of illusion into deception through a managing of both the "context of act" and the viewer's expectations is, pace Gombrich, precisely art that lies—the use of lying as an artistic technique. Within our second tier of evaluation of the contextual fabrication of lying, the scenarios that Gombrich describes here are clearly forms of lying in art. The instances of lying have been used to achieve some aesthetic effect in their viewer/participants. As we have seen with Barnes, new methods for communication require new disclaimers for truth-telling and art is no different. New modes of representation require interpretive frameworks to see art as art and not some strip of the ongoing world (like Parrhasios' painted curtain). By mimicking reality, art can dissimulate its status as art through the hyperrealism of trompe l'oeil supported by the managing of the interpretive context and associated frameworks.

In this way more generally, truth is "contextually framed" and multivalent—it is linked to what appears "real" (Roskill and Carrier 3, 13). For Roskill and Carrier, art can lie visually; art can fabricate worlds through fakery where the viewer is confronted with the claims of credibility made by the object (80). Art can also dissemble, disguise and create cues for the viewer to draw false conclusions (83). Truthful fabrications, though

artificial and staged, can produce "an effect of truth that stays with us or even grows stronger" (xi). In this way, Baudrillard sees art as not creating a "true version of the world," but rather as a form of, what he calls, "trompe life" ("Aesthetic Illusion" 128).[22] Illusion has creative, imaginative, and magical power. A trick like trompe l'oeil "restores dreams" ("Aesthetic Illusion" 113). While the formal realm of art and aesthetics is an attempt to manage and neutralize "the wild effects of illusion" through convention, the world instead needs illusionists who reinvigorate art's "trompe" in order to "ensnare" reality to reveal its unreality ("Aesthetic Illusion" 128, 129). This is the form of lying as an artistic technique that this dissertation analyzes in Chapter Two and Three, art that is a form of trompe life, enlivening participants to the constructed authenticity of the world around them and to the veracity or inaccuracy of their own interpretive frameworks.

In a very real way, this consideration of artistic lying is at the heart of aesthetics as a mode of critical inquiry. However, paradigmatic Modern art theory like Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* (1970) maintains that art creates the "unreal" in relation to the reality it critiques; art remains separate from the real world, even if it is created from and by the real world (7-8). This pervasive modernist approach allows philosophers like H. Gene Blocker to assert that the truth or falsity of art lies outside aesthetic concerns (233). In art "a world is given independently of ontological questions or real existence," but once a lie

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[22] The modernist purity of art and aesthetic values has been destabilized by the ubiquity of fakes. For Baudrillard, this realization comes as a warning that images can no longer "fake illusions" to "transcend reality, transfigure it or dream it" because they now tend toward virtuality—the "perfect illusion … the perfection of reproduction" ("Aesthetic Illusion" 114). But, for all his fretting over the fakes of contemporary life, Baudrillard maintains that there is a genuinely generative need for illusion in our everyday. There is a power in illusion to restore dreams, to be "creative." Baudrillard is concerned with the destructive force of the totality of perfect illusion, whereby the technological efficiency of reproduction destroys illusion by reissuing the real.

is discovered it "shatters" one's understanding of this world (236). Yet, the very field of

aesthetics first formulated by eighteenth century German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb

Baumgarten (1714-1762) was aimed at accounting for the significance of the pleasures

one takes by being taken in. Baumgarten suggests aesthetic concerns are intrinsically

those that stimulate our deeper observation of the world and spur us to accumulate

multiple views of the world including what is simply possible (Mirbach 110). While

Kant's aesthetic project influenced Modernist art theory, embers of Baumgarten's

sentiments seem to have survived smoldering in the postmodern concern for the

ubiquitous lie of hidden illusion. Lying in art taps into Baumgarten's fuller definition of

realitas that includes the *merely possible* by stimulating simultaneous views of the world.

From the very start, aesthetics was to be about how humans make sense of and construct

the world, not simply about judgements of taste and disinterested appreciation of the

beautiful. Aesthetics, then, as Baumgarten conceived the field of analysis, was a way to

account in part for the interest people took in reading and discovering fakes and forgeries,

as a sociopolitical process of better understanding the ongoing world. In this way,

aesthetics began to account for the experiences of lying and being lied to in art—

uncovering truth through the possibility of deception.

Contemporary Approaches to Lying in Art

Though artworks like Häussler's that employ lying as an artistic technique are

widely popular, only recently have they begun to garner nascent critical interest from

scholars. For instance, cultural theorist Theo Reeves-Evison recently noted lying is

indeed a popular practice for contemporary artists (196). Despite the substantial

popularity and initial studies delineating artistic lying as a "new" art, notwithstanding the long history of these practices, surprisingly little has been published on the topic.[23] Because artists in different historical conjunctures have used lying for different purposes, this dissertation addresses this historical contingency while providing a broad overview of these practices. What follows, here, is a brief outline of the recent approaches to lying in art that have proved foundational to this dissertation.

Context Art

In the 1960s Western artworld there was a growing awareness of the context of art's production and display. German artist and curator Peter Weibel argues that the institutional critique of the '60s evolved into the critique of the social processes that create reality through an expanding of the frames of art's discourse (51). Weibel finds the impetus to investigate the contexts of art, "the social, technical, spatial and ideological systems of art's production," in Conceptual art and its sociological concern with framing (46). Weibel writes, "What is known today as 'context' or 'discourse' was earlier known as 'frame'" (48). For instance, Weibel sees Robert Smithson's work as "nudging art closer to reality" by exposing the interpretive frameworks of our everyday life (48).[24] Weibel identifies three generations of contextual artists: the Conceptual artists of the 1960s that focused on the context of art's production and dissemination, specifically the

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[23] Carrie Lambert-Beatty is at work on a book for University of Chicago Press that will expand on her 2009 essay "Make-Believe: Parafiction and Plausibility," exploring deception, confusion, and states of doubt in contemporary art and culture ("Carrie Lambert-Beatty"). Antoinette LaFarge has recently stopped work on her Fictive Art archive to work on a book on fictive art, tentatively entitled *Fictive Art: World-making, Narrative, and Play* (LaFarge, "About").

[24] Robert Smithson (1970-1): "We live in frameworks and are surrounded by frames of references" (Weibel 47).

site-specific work after minimalism;[25] postmodern displacement "from artwork to art

context (frame)" (50);[26] and, a third generation in the 1990s that moved art into other

discourses, like ecology, ethnography, architecture and politics, expanding the boundaries

of art's discourses and "exposing art's frameworks" (51). For Weibel, in the development

of context art,

> The critique of representation became the critique of power and culture,
> and above all of reality, as constructed by various discourses. Therefore,
> by unveiling the construction of art and reality (through various 'fictitious'
> discourses), reality, section by section, is recovered. It is no longer solely
> about the critique of art's systems but the critique of reality and the
> analysis and creation of social processes. During the 1990s, discourses
> usually considered extrinsic to art were increasingly incorporated into
> discussions about art. Artists are now becoming independent agents of
> social processes, partisans of the real. The interaction between artist and
> social situation, between art and extra-artistic context has led to a new
> form of art, where both come together: context art. The objective of the
> social structure of art is participation in the social structure of reality (51).

Context art's transgressing the fictionality/reality boundary, revealing the active

construction of both the field of art and reality, and its focus on the interpretive

frameworks of artistic and everyday experience clearly suggest that any artistic use of

lying subscribes to the project of context art that Weibel outlines here. Though Weibel

does not discuss deception in art, lying in art is clearly a type of context art.

Furtive Art

       More recently, Kathleen Ritter has theorized the expanding context of art in a

similar way to Weibel, but with a focus on deception. "Furtive art" is the surreptitious

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[25] These include, Hans Haacke, Robert Smithson, Robert Morris, Lawrence Weiner, Carl Andre, Douglas Huebler, Gordon Matta-Clark, Daniel Buren, Michael Asher

[26] These include Allan McCollum, Louise Lawler, Martha Rosler, Mary Kelly, Allan Sekula, Stephen Willats, Victor Burgin and Barbara Bloom

permeating of civic spaces with art (Ritter 190). It is art "performed in secret" and does

not announce its identity as art—rather, it disguises itself by mimicking social space or

practices (Ritter 192). Because of this dissimulation, furtive practices can go unnoticed

and their ubiquitous possibility makes all of everyday life a possible work of art. In this

way, furtive art stimulates the broadest context for art—everyday life—and we can easily

link these practices with the movement of art outside the museum that Weibel identifies.

Lying as a technique for art practice is clearly a furtive practice because of its

dissimulation and its potential ubiquity.

But, at the same time, my approach to lying in art differs ever so slightly from the

furtive approach Ritter outlines. A furtive practice is an everyday action done with the

intention of having it be art, that is, having it "become subject to interpretation within the

discourse of art" where there can be an uncanny moment of realization: "the moment we,

as viewers, discover the intentionality of the act is when we can question the act itself and

give it meaning" (196).[27] But for Ritter, this moment happens within the traditional art

contexts where the initial work as performance in the real world is communicated via

documentation and anecdote back to its artworld audience. This myth making after the

fact "is a condition of the work—we are not necessarily invited to see the work in situ,

during the event of the performance" (ibid). Ritter begins her article by musing on what

voice to use in writing about such artworks: the unknowing participant, willing visitor,

creator, curator, or "omniscient outsider" (190). In doing so, Ritter illustrates an essential

characteristic of the disclosure of furtive practice: its ability to allow various points of

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[27] What I discuss in Chapter One as the declarative aesthetic act of the artistic frame.

view to exist simultaneously in the mind of the participant, to allow plausible interpretive frames to vie for greater relevance, and for this usually unconscious or hidden process of interpretation to self-reflexively take centre stage in the work. But this can only happen when the participant is aware of the shift in frame, hence, pseudology's difference from furtive art. Because furtive art is hidden, takes place in the ongoing world, is communicated by anecdote, and is revealed to be art only after the fact, it bifurcates its audience into an "unsuspecting public" or initial performance and a separate expecting art public that muses on the reactions or non-reactions of the first group (Ritter 191). It uses "an art discourse as its foundation and primary arena from which to draw meaning" (ibid). This practice most closely follows the artworks discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation. But, rather than dividing its audience, the art employing lying examined in Chapters Two and Three creates space for the audience of the initial performance to experience the shift from an everyday/public context to an art-discursive context.[28] The art this dissertation ultimately focuses on creates this space for the revelation of its lie to be experienced aesthetically.

Ritter's text is part of a volume devoted to locating the new places of production and exhibition of contemporary art, outside of the traditional studio-gallery-museum axis. *Places and Non-Places of Contemporary Art* (2002), as editor of the anthology Sylvette Babin remarks, "highlights practices that both seek to unsettle the boundaries drawn between different fields of human activity and to rethink their very modes of operation"

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[28] Unlike most furtive art, the experience for the audience can be transformed because built into the work is a moment of disclosure. The frame shifts for these participants because they are told by the artist or some other agent that they have been duped.

within a "proliferating number of places of art" (16, 19). Where art is produced and

consumed remains to be of critical importance to how it inhabits and affects the

sociopolitical field. By focusing on lying in art I hope to reveal key aspects of certain

artistic practices that take part in the broadening of the context of art in an analogous way

to Weibel's and Ritter's approaches, with a focus on analyzing the aesthetic experiences

to be had in the making-strange of the physical or social contexts of art and everyday life.

Fictive Art

For art that plays with the fictionality/reality border, new media artist and writer

Antoinette LaFarge has created the term *fictive art*. LaFarge sees works that present real

events (that may be in fact staged or fabricated) as forcing us to consider whether these

works actually exist ("Eisbergfreistadt" 211). For LaFarge, a fictive artwork is "a project

that has at its center an at least temporarily plausible fiction supported by the creation of

real objects" (ibid). It is art that "straddles the boundaries of art, fiction, and history"

(Miranda 5). LaFarge coined the term "fictive realities" at a panel she co-chaired at the

College Art Association annual conference in 2001. Fictive reality, LaFarge writes, is

> a realm [that] encompasses not only various kinds of artworks that seem
> real but, in fact, are fictive, but also more traditionally seeming fictive
> things, like role playing and games, where people are actually doing real
> things in real time. I'm interested in the border between real and fictive,
> and what happens when the two are confused, intentionally or otherwise.
> Computer role-playing games are a perfect example: They're fictive
> environments in which the players live the story by way of their actions
> (LaFarge and Sides, "Blurring").

Fictive reality is created by art that seems real but is fictional, or fictive things that have

people doing real things (LaFarge and Sides, "Blurring").

"Fictive" here is borrowed from literary theorist Wolfgang Iser's use of the term. *Fictive* highlights the way fiction transgresses the real from the imaginary and is always an act. Iser's use of "real" and "imaginary" are not Lacanian but phenomenological, where "real" or "reality" is the given world, the world at hand, and "imaginary" is what can be conceived in human thought. Fiction, for Iser, is the bracketing of reality to impart significance on it by linking it with the imaginary—fiction is a "transitional object" that links real and imaginary through a "transformational process" (13, 20). When fictions give explanations or foundations for things—so their fictional nature is hidden—they give social fictions the appearance of reality and constitute the basis of reality. The fictive is not only literary, but is also in all of life. As Iser says,

> Fictions also play vital roles in the activities of cognition and behaviour, as in the foundation of institutions, societies, and world pictures. Unlike such nonliterary fictions, the literary text reveals its own fictionality. Because of this, its function must be radically different from that of related activities that mask their fictional nature. The masking, of course, need not occur with the intention to deceive; it occurs because the fiction is meant to provide an explanation, or even a foundation, and would not do so if its fictive nature were to be exposed. The concealment of fictionality endows an explanation with an *appearance* of reality, which is vital, because fiction—as explanation—functions as the constitutive basis of this reality (12).

The fictionalizing act is the crossing of the boundaries of the real and the imaginary to give form to the imaginary while it gives alternate significance to the ongoing world.

Lafarge focuses on expanding the frame of art, and does not make the distinction that lying is a key technique of expanding this frame. Instead, the ontological ambiguity of LaFarge's fictive art is built into the artwork in the form of earnest clues, where a plausible fiction is supported by real objects that must self-disclose as fiction

("Eisbergfreistadt" 212). It puts the viewer in a relationship of play with the work, where

signs in the work are performative (212-3). Specifically, LaFarge argues that this

"*actualizing* a fiction through objects and other entities removes that project from the

realm of pure fiction" (211). LaFarge focuses here on the medium of the artwork, but this

gambit strays from Iser's definition of fiction. For Iser, fiction suffuses life and is as

much in law as in literature; it is not bound by medium and is otherwise an

anthropological mode of making sense of the world. For Iser, it is only when one does not

recognize the contractual signs of fiction that one acts within their natural attitude, that is,

all human meaning is fictive, and occluding this label designates what we call reality,

even though reality remains as fictive and bound by the contracts of social convention.

Following Iser and contra LaFarge, I examine the ways the explicit (duplicitous)

designation of narratives, objects, or performers as *real* causes an audience to address

them with a primary framework (the natural attitude, as a real strip of everyday life in the

ongoing world), and this can happen in any medium (equally as easily whether through

text on paper or on screen or by the agglomeration of real objects). So, the distinction that

LaFarge makes between fiction and fictive works misses the crux of the distinguishing

features of the pseudological artwork explored in this dissertation. We could say that

fictive artworks are a type of aesthetic lie because they mislead by their form. For fictive

art to be artfully different in kind from obvious art (fiction), it must deceive its audience,

and to deceive its audience, it must lie.

      Also, a divergence of this dissertation's project from LaFarge's fictive approach is

a concern for the aesthetic importance of these works that play with the fictionality/reality

boundary. LaFarge maintains that aesthetic encounters are not the purpose of these

works—they are more about creating a continuous unease. LaFarge curiously dismisses

the aesthetics of furtive art by reasoning that because it engenders a "suspended anxiety"

in the viewer as to the generic identity of the work (is it fiction, is it documentary, is it a

hoax?), and because there is never a clear resolution to this identity, that "What it offers is

less an aesthetic encounter than a game of hypotheticals" (214). But, as this dissertation

discusses, it is precisely this game of hypotheticals that is aesthetically significant. I argue

that there is an aesthetics of this questioning of existence, and this is what pseudological

artworks deal in.

Parafiction

   This and the remaining two approaches most closely resemble my own. Art

historian Carrie Lambert-Beatty has labelled the use of deceptive fictiveness in art as

parafiction. For Lambert-Beatty,

> Fiction or fictiveness has emerged as an important category in recent art
> … [But] Unlike historical fiction's fact-based but imagined worlds, in
> parafiction real and/or imaginary personages and stories intersect with the
> world as it is being lived. … Simply put, with various degrees of success,
> for various durations, and for various purposes, these fictions are
> experienced as fact. They achieve truth status—for some people some of
> the time" (118).

For Lambert-Beatty, "parafiction is a deception" that can be used for progressive

purposes and with the open possibility of viewers finding it out; it allows viewers to

experience a "gotcha moment" or to experience an "educated ignorance" and it alters

their worldviews "perhaps in truthful ways—by untruths" (ibid). Lambert-Beatty's article

is an extremely helpful summary delineating some key features of lying as an artistic

technique. Parafiction coopts the authority of existing parties to intervene in the real world (126); parafiction can denaturalize the authority it mimics and at the same time can show the possibility of a changed world through the audience's belief in its plausibility: as Lambert-Beatty writes, "the viewer's credence (and secondary audience's witnessing of that credence) becomes a synapse between the imagined and the actual" (127). In this way, parafiction works "within the horizon of plausibility" where parafiction "calls into being" a consensus it subsequently interrogates (123). Lambert-Beatty employs Rancière's idea of the distribution of the sensible to state, "The art of the plausible discloses consensus about the way things are, but it also can make a new reality sensible: accessible both to feeling and to reason" (127). So, parafiction is about the adequacy of statements of truth to convince viewers rather than an assertion of the complete relativity or inaccessibility of truth as in postmodernity (138).

In the addendum to her article, Lambert-Beatty writes that though she originally thought parafiction was a thing of the late 1990s, she has since found forerunning practices that are "generative for a parafictional turn in art, activism, and beyond, and indispensable for understanding its history" (143).[29] Lambert-Beatty asserts the possible importance of the "long legacies of hoax, prank, blague, trickster myth, and parody" to parafiction, though these links are not explicated as Lambert-Beatty calls for further work to be done to answer questions about the precedents of this type of work (120). She suggests "A complete typology of the parafictional and its tools would tell us much"

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[29] Lambert-Beatty focuses on works between 1998 and 2008, works that intervene in the real world and "act disruptively outside the artistic context" (118). Lambert-Beatty's forthcoming research focuses on colonialism and the artworks of Coco Fusco, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Fred Wilson, and James Luna. I discuss Fusco and Gómez-Peña's *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West* (1992-4) in Chapter Two.

(132). I approach this call to further scholarship from both a historical and a structural viewpoint: I outline a history of uses of lying in art, but I also focus in on the quality of the experience of lying more generally. I link pseudological work of the latter-half of the twentieth century and today to its historical precedents in literary mystification, forgery, and hoaxing, and ultimately to a shared aesthetic maneuver that I call the aesthetics of the lie. Rather than define a new field, Lambert-Beatty has entered a conversation that has deep historical roots in the relationship between lying, fiction and the ongoing world. The most recent use of fictiveness in the real world as an artistic technique has its precedents in this ongoing conversation. I extend this ongoing conversation by addressing the political significance of an aesthetics of the lie found in postmodern and contemporary Western artworks.

Moving forward, I outline a politics of parafiction. Lambert-Beatty is interested in connecting parafictional artworks to "broad historical shifts of the recent past" (120). She states: parafictions "are so powerfully and uniquely appropriate to our historical moment—which is to say, powerfully and uniquely troubling" (ibid). I, too, am interested in investigating specific instances of dissimulation in art and their relation to their historical conjunctures. But because I see the use of lying as an artistic practice as existing in conjunction with the fictionality/reality divide, I ultimately question whether parafiction is indeed *uniquely* "appropriate to our historical moment." Lambert-Beatty holds that parafiction relates "to media culture at large and particularly to the epistemological shock that the rapid mainstreaming of the Internet has caused, especially in the last ten years" (137). But, such practices are not unique to the digital age. By

addressing *what* these practices are *used for* by artists, I reciprocally suggest *why* they are

employed at specific locations in specific historical conjunctures. While there is no single

politics to the aesthetic of the lie, I hope to show the ways in which certain artistic

practices seek to intervene in the sociopolitical fabric of our everyday lives. That is to

say, the aesthetic of the lie is *political* without being overdetermined as to what politics

this move might take. Specifically, I focus on the ways in which lying as an artistic

strategy can be used as a pedagogical method, as in the forgery and literary mystification

Julia Abramson describes as "a trick that teaches, an illusion that reveals, and an artifice

that manifests its own contrivance" (26), and as a survival technique, as in the esoterica

Perez Zagorin describes as "averting repression" (vi).

 Like Lambert-Beatty, I am interested in the moment that the deception is

revealed. Parafiction gives people a "concrete experience" of what is being presented

(126), and reveals this experience of reality as performative (123). All the work that goes

into creating a parafiction, to materialize it within the world, gives it "surplus truth-value

produced by that labor—a kind of performative residue"; works get a "special charge"

from appearing momentarily real (125n27). I am interested in how to describe this

"special charge." In the remainder of the essay, Lambert-Beatty does not return to this

special charge specifically, but it could refer to the authority parafictions performatively

generate, or the destabilizing humility that being tricked produces. I want to know the

experiential quality of this shift in and out of the plausible. How do artists work to make

us aware of this experience? How might we describe this experience? For instance,

Lambert-Beatty identifies the possibility of different "credal states" of viewers,

"spectatorial modes such as disbelief, belief, suspicion, certainty, and doubt" (137). To follow up, I ask: What is the quality of experience of *shifting through* credal states? Once we have a fuller theory of this experience, I believe we can more accurately state how lying in art intervenes in the distribution of the sensible. I suggest that pseudological artwork intervenes by showing the world as a malleable network of meaning. The aesthetic of the lie is a space of contradiction, a space in which the discursive and material contradictions of the world are rendered palpable, discernable, open to savouring, digesting and decomposition. I explore some works and themes in historical and contemporary art practices that I see as partaking of the same aesthetic maneuver as pseudological parafiction: a desire to create the aesthetically critical and contradictory space of the lie.

Lies

Scholarship that explicitly examines the use of lying in art is sparse, but it does exist. In 2004, British philosopher Peter Goldie wrote, "It's a little observed fact that some works of conceptual art also involve deception," where deception is intentional and necessary for the success of the artwork (33). Goldie compares respective responses to deception within the fields of art and psychology. He notes some projects in both fields require for their appreciation deception of their participants. But while psychologists worry about the ethics of their deceptions, artists and art theorists seem to neglect this aspect of the practice. Goldie does not lay an argument for it, but he states that "an act of deception should be permissible where it causes no harm, particularly to the person deceived, and it may even be the right thing to do where it promotes the good of the

person deceived (as a 'white lie' might) or where it does good more widely" (35-6). But,

for Goldie, when harm is caused by artworks, through eliciting real negative emotions

from participants, as may happen in psychological experiments, there is not an easy

reason why art or psychology should treat the ethics of deception differently.

Goldie concludes that the difference between the two fields lies in the motivations

behind each use of deception: in psychology deception treats participants as means to a

greater end, while in art deception is crafted for the experience of the participant and the

participant can be delighted, in hindsight, at the ingenuity involved in their being taken in

(40). However, because Goldie bases the aesthetic appreciation of deceptive artworks in

an abstract viewer's second-hand appreciation of the potential experiences of previous

firsthand participants who are deceived, he fails to make a case for the apparent

difference between deceptive artworks and experiments: both the initial art audience and

experiment participants are used as simply a means to effect a result: the production of a

set of dupes to be observed. Goldie forgoes a truly aesthetic analysis of the deceptive

artworks he explores, conveniently linking "aesthetic merit" to an artwork's ability to

stimulate appreciation of its own deceptive techniques.[30] Yet, in the realm of psychology,

surely one can also marvel at and appreciate the deception involved in Stanley Milgram's

psychological experiments that caused participants to apply electric shock to people under

the direction of an authority figure and the aegis of "science" (and this ingenuity must be

one of the reasons Goldie himself elects to use Milgram's examples in his essay). But,

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[30] Goldie declares that deceptive artworks have ethical demerits but aesthetic merits, while psychological experiments have only ethical demerits.

ultimately, and significantly, Goldie states that because deception causes strong emotions, when people become aware of having been deceived, they have a moment of *self-learning*: about their assumptions, their gullibility, or their "pompous and self-righteous anger" (34). Goldie's focus on the intention of lying in art contains within it the necessary consideration of the effects of the lies produced in art—specifically the possibility of stimulating self-learning through revelation of deceit.

Writing a decade later, Theo Reeves-Evison solely focuses on the effects of lying rather than the intentions of artists to account for the social aspects of lying (199). For Reeves-Evison, "Effects … are signs of themselves, and cannot be falsified" (ibid). Unlike the duplicity of intentions that usually remain hidden, a focus on the effects of lying in art, even without a pragmatic redefinition of lying itself, would concentrate on "the aspects of the lie which become public, participatory, and dialogic" (ibid). To do so, Reeves-Evison uses Bakhtin's theory of language to formulate lying as a dialogic (inter-subjective) practice that occurs in concrete speech situations extended over time; Reeves-Evison therefore treats the lie as a "temporally extended discursive object" (197). His project of the ethical considerations of lying in art focuses on answering: "what remains of the artistic lie once the 'truth' has been restored?" (196). Reeves-Evison theorizes that this remnant of the lie can affect the production of subjectivity because, following Felix Guattari, art is "capable of augmenting reality and granting it a greater subjective consistency" (206). This dissertation follows Reeves-Evison in analyzing the sociopolitical effects of the use of lying in art for the lived reality of participants.

Reeves-Evison distinguishes the current interest in lying as a practice from previous trickery in its "focus on process, with an eye to managing not only the deception itself, but also the moment when it unravels" to allow artworks "to undermine language in its static, monological mode; to distort and disrupt established norms and conventions, and shrug off the obligation to manipulate language in the socially sanctioned manner" (196, 208). While I agree with Reeves-Evison, and Lambert-Beatty, that contemporary lying in artistic practice focuses on managing the revelation of the lie, I add that this feature is present in previous uses of lying in artistic practice and therefore is not particular to our present moment. Lying remains, as always, an artistic technique capable of achieving various purposes when the lie is revealed. From the classical Greek anecdote of Parrhasios tricking Zeuxis to demonstrate superior skill as a painter to Iris Häussler tricking the public to effect the political realization of our own defining of reality through framing, lying has historically achieved its artistic ends in art when revealed. That is not to say the artistic use of lying can only engender aesthetic experience through the revelation of its deception (as the case of EXPORT's *Genital Panic* demonstrates, which will be discussed in the next chapter), but there is an aesthetic experience to be had in the revelation of a lie and artists have been able to manage this moment through history to achieve various sociopolitical ends.

Frame Analysis

Lying presents methodological problems as successful lies leave no identifying markers. This quirky structural attribute is one reason for the perpetual Quixotic quest for reliable outward signs of lies. To build the theoretical framework necessary to attend the

unique characteristics of pseudology, we need a method to analyse the ways in which viewer-participants of this art come to understand "what is it that is really going on." How do we discuss art that uses lies if art has always had a complicated relationship to duplicity? What is the best way to begin to understand the effects dissimulation has on aesthetic experience? It seems to me we need an interpretive framework for the ways in which we undertake the political-aesthetic work of interpretation. This is precisely the job of frame analysis. To understand how the artists addressed in this dissertation frame the real world through the artistic use of lying, I look to the frame analysis work of Erving Goffman and Judith Butler. They provide a language and a theoretical framework that allows me to describe how lies affect the interpretive frames of both artists and multiple participants.

Frame analysis is most thoroughly articulated by Erving Goffman in his *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (1974). Goffman analyses experience through a typology of frames, keyings, and fabrications that organize the human interpretation of the natural world and its social interactions. In setting out to understand the structural conditions of human experience, Goffman seeks to understand what gives rise to an individual's sense of "realness" within experience: "Under what circumstances do we think things are real?" and how is this sense of realness continually reached under normal circumstances (2, 9)? Realness, for Goffman, is a qualitative designation of experience reflexively generated by an individual's collusion with the ongoing world within interpretive frameworks (85). There remains in Goffman's model a sense that a certain perception could either be "frame accurate" or "deceived, deluded, or

illusionary" (345). The "ongoing world" is Goffman's term for the "real world," out there, though he fittingly does not use the term "reality" as reality remains in his argument a quality and affective effect of a person's experience (247). What we experience as reality is a constructed quality derived from perceiving the particulars of a situation.

As a method of analysis, Goffman works from written narrative accounts of people's experiences, using news clips and anecdotes as archetypes of both experiences and the interpretive frames people employ: their conventional understandings and the beliefs they constitute. Goffman limits the scope of his analysis to the individual person, foregoing a larger societal perspective (13), though he does suggest the importance of developing "an image of a group's framework of frameworks—its belief system, its 'cosmology'" (27), even if this metaframe is not developed within his work.[31] The real world, for Goffman, is filled also with the frames of everyone's interpretations, and the consequent material organization that results from these frames (ibid), and in this way Goffman hints at the ideological or cultural contexts created by the imbrication of multiple frameworks. Though this ideological critique is only suggested by Goffman, it is developed in the work of Judith Butler; Butler takes up Goffman's frame as a political and aesthetic discursive device that not only frames reality (felicitously or infelicitously) but performatively constitutes the reality to which it refers.

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[31] Goffman's frame analyst seeks meta-designations of action and is not concerned with the minutia of the play-by-play, but applies a critical distance to an activity in an aim to move beyond "a common-sense version" of the interpretation of an event (46).

In *Frames of War* (2009), Butler develops framing as an act of delimiting public discourse that works narratively and performatively to necessarily exclude and de-legitimize other framings of reality (xiii). Butler takes seriously Goffman's assertion that to define something as real is also to make real its consequences (Goffman 1). For Butler, "The frame does not simply exhibit reality, but actively participates in a strategy of containment, selectively producing and enforcing what will count as reality" (xiii). Specifically, in Butler's argument, the frame is enunciated as a perpetual public recruiting strategy (xiv) that prepares the public for waging war (xv), attempts to stave off revolts from the population (xvi), and, by delimiting certain populations as ungrievable, is the first violent act of waging war through normalizing the unequal distribution of precarity and subsequent human suffering (xix). The discursive frames of war performatively construct the waging of war and are its first and continual acts of violence through the repeated iterations of the "differentiation between the living and the dead" (xix). Thus, all war justification attempts to be operative, instrumental and effectively normative by managing the constitution of citizens' interpretive frames (xv). Thus, Butler's work suggests that the aesthetic experience of the limiting of the sensible through framing is in fact integral to political action, cultural critique, and the discursive framing of everyday life.[32] Unlike modernist aesthetics based in Kant's apolitical take on art, Butler's politics

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[32] While it is a tangential aim of this dissertation to make clear the necessity of an aesthetic approach in any study of culture, it may help at the outset to say a few words about the importance of developing a broadened aesthetic framework. Because reality is a palimpsestuous experience, we need a way to account for both the globally political and the minutely personal within the same framework. Part of current scholastic work on aesthetics is showing that it is an approach that can exceed the individual—not simply about subjective judgements but the constitution of the political sphere (Bennett, "Practical" 3). Butler's extension of Goffman's account of an individual's frame of social experience into the biopolitical management of entire populations is one example of such a move.

are radically different from the status quo. Kant's foundational influence in aesthetic and

art theory is germane here; Butler is, of course, contra Kant, and my analysis follows

Butler, not Kant.

All strips of activity that are perceived in terms of primary frameworks, what

Goffman calls the "actual," are open to both keyings and fabrications, and additionally,

retransformations of these initial transformations (156). Each interpretive layer of

experience is called a lamination, where "the outer layer, the rim of the frame" establishes

"the status in reality of the activity" (ibid). As a common example of layering Goffman

employs throughout his work, we might take the activity of theatre acting: the outer most

layer of activity is the putting on of the play, which constitutes the actual reality of the

situation, where the actions performed in the play—the actors' movements and

dialogue—are keyed, meaning they are strips or pieces of the actual ongoing world that

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By viewing experience as always in the process of framing realness, what lays inside or outside this changing frame is tantamount to "what" and "how" something is depicted. It is a move toward conceiving all perception as performatively constructing the perceived, and acknowledges the ways in which objects continue to "act" for subjects (Derrida, "Signature" 316). Frame analysis takes seriously the inherent potentialities of all cultural objects to be of social and political significance and the radical contextuality of meaning (only ever within specific situations, specific historical conjunctures). Frame analysis negates the possibility of an art autonomous from society; it disallows the possibility of an apolitical art whose stock and trade is an innate but ineffable quality that is always pleasurable (Kant's "disinterestedness") and progressive (Arnold's "best and brightest"; Greenberg's "keep culture moving"). By focusing on context, the frame-analytical study of aesthetics transgresses the form-content duality to take art and its experience as always constituted within a *situation*, that is, the acting out of possibilities made available by a specific historical conjuncture and geo-social emplacement.

One strong reason to draw on Butler's frame analytical work here is because of the way aesthetics is foregrounded in her work on grievability. Butler shows us that aesthetics is not a rarified realm for only art but is the field in which we form our frameworks and from which we approach the world, make decisions about the world, and act on the world—and how the agency of differing populations to make these choices, and the availability of choices themselves, are aesthetically limited. That is, following Baumgarten, aesthetic experience is labelled such because in it we reorganize our field of fiction, or what we believe to be plausible in the ongoing world. Thus, the aesthetic experience of pseudological art is politically important as it not only deals with the real lives of citizens in an age of "post-truth" Trumpism, but because it exposes what populations hold as plausible as thus reveals the norms shaping our shared framings of the world.

achieve new meaning through being placed within the theatrical frame. The theatrical

frame has certain effects on the interpretations of the actions, and what actions can be

seen, the consequences of the actions observed, and the mode and degree of realism

needed to connote reality. For instance, when Ophelia dies in *Hamlet*, the actress playing

Ophelia need not die to fulfill the theatrical frame's acceptable level of realness. As well,

we need not see this act happen—the actress need not fall into a river (only to live

exegetically) for the audience to accept it having occurred within the theatrical frame (we

only hear about it from Gertrude).

I discuss Goffman's definition of fabrications, above, in the "Contextual

Fabrication" section of this introduction, but I would like to build on that initial definition

here. Fabrications in general manage activity "of the kind that could actually occur"

(Goffman 197). Goffman points out that one of the usual tenets of fabrications are the

very *normalness* they seem to create. Goffman points to another kind of fabrication, one

that goes about fabricating new interpretive frameworks. He says,

> There are claimed actions, however, such as the various forms of second
> sight, humanoid visitations from outer space, astrological influence, and
> the like, that might be impossible, and therefore what is being fabricated is
> not merely one occasion of the activity but also the *possibility* of that
> activity itself. And since these possibilities involve arcane powers, forces
> radically incompatible with our whole system of empirical knowledge
> about the workings of the physical world, one can say (as I would) that
> what is being fabricated are frameworks themselves (ibid).

This sort of performative construction is what Butler seizes on and expands into a

function of all interpretive frames, no matter how seemingly mundane (Butler, *Frames*

5).[33] For instance, we need not speak of "arcane powers" to find scenes at odds with our knowledge of the workings of our world. Understandings of social acceptability, cultural credibility, and our sense of the status quo are continually being reinscribed during the interpretation of public actions. Because this dissertation interrogates art that surreptitiously operates in the ongoing world, I require a way of describing the various "levels" or "laminations" of the experiences of participants. Therefore, I turn to Goffman and Butler, who articulate this facet of experience so clearly. What their idea of the frame allows us to do is to account for and take pleasure in the continual reframing of focus, that is, the differing interpretive frames one reciprocally applies to the world at hand. The reframing of focus is a necessary function of both artistic experience and the politics of everyday life.

Outline of Study

The aesthetic significance of lying remains largely unacknowledged and unstudied, even though many artists of the last 60 years have explored the aesthetic possibilities and political applications of lying in sculptures, performances and installations. This dissertation addresses this lack of attention by examining modern and contemporary artworks that engage with the practice of lying. Lying is usually understood in terms of moral correctness, and this study provides a pragmatic perspective that will expand our understanding of deception in art to include artistic, and even politically progressive, uses of lying. Lying does not fit into existing aesthetic theories, and this

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[33] Butler: "recognizability precedes recognition" as the "categories, conventions, and norms that prepare or establish a subject for recognition, that induce a subject of this kind, precede and make possible the act of recognition itself" (*Frames* 5).

study explores the nature of lying as it manifests in art to expand and revise our theoretical framework to account for it. In this way, this study aims to legitimize lying in artistic practice by articulating and theorizing it. While the subject of my research is artistic practice, my focus on framing contextualizes these mendacious artworks within the broader dynamics of the social construction of reality, the politics of everyday life, and the foundational status of lying in semantic experience. This dissertation, then, follows the duplicitous impulses in the art of the last sixty years to reveal some of the dynamics and characteristics of pseudological artworks. As a subject that bridges the heretofore disparate areas of aesthetic experience, narrative framing, pragmatism and everyday pedagogy, the unique critical capacity of this specialized field allows for novel understandings of the ways in which we interpret and value art and culture and the ways in which these value judgments inform the sociopolitical field.

What follows is an analysis of lying in artistic practice that considers the ways in which these practices intervene in the sociopolitical fabric of everyday life within the specific historical conjunctures in which they manifest. How do artists work to make us aware of the constructedness of reality? How can we describe the self-aware experience of reality's performative constitution? What is the experiential quality of modality judgments?[34] I address these questions to expand our understanding of how lying intervenes in the distribution of the sensible.

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[34] In semiotics, the modality of a sign or a text is the reality status it claims, its apparent transparency in relation to reality. Individuals continually assess the plausibility, reliability, credibility, truth, accuracy, or facticity of the representations of reality within a text.

It can be argued that the three central aesthetic operations of lying in art are to: a) bring *x* into existence; b) expose contextual framing, and; c) interrogate ideological assumptions. In Chapter One, I investigate the ability of pseudology to perform the aesthetic operation of bringing into existence. Specifically, I look at works by Marcel Duchamp, Robert Rauschenberg, VALIE EXPORT, and Cheryl Bernstein, to understand the technique of the lie as a performative speech act for artistic production. I argue that a narrative turn characterized the shift from Modernism to Postmodernism during the 1950s and '60s and foregrounded new pseudological possibilities for artmaking. That is, in the transition from Modernism to Postmodernism, artists sought to recoup the power of framing the reception and interpretation of their works—to attend to *how* works were to be perceived as well as *what* was being perceived. The pseudological works discussed in this chapter invent events to convey and/or critique the ideologies of their contexts, politicize truth through their epistemological rethinking of frames of the ongoing world, and highlight cultural bias, critique interpretive conventions, and interrogate enunciations of authority.

In Chapter Two, I analyze pseudological practices aimed at institutional critique. Focusing on works by Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco, and Joshua Schwebel that surreptitiously work from within arts institutions to expose ideological assumptions at work within sites of artistic production and display, I identify their common technique of *artistic mystification*—calculated deception and subsequent unmasking. This critical maneuver is both aesthetic and political in that it causes one to question the ordinary frames of perception one uses to interpret the world at hand, and

fosters critical evaluations of underlying assumptions governing art, artists, and museum spaces.[35] Each of these pseudological works questions a certain politics while offering another, critiquing the implicit common-sense conceptions managing the lives of artists, audiences, and the broader public.

In Chapter Three, I revisit the original inspiration for this project: Iris Häussler's *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach*. I interrogate the ways in which Häussler's pseudology operates within different interpretive frames and laminations. What I call Häussler's *hoax art* is work developed in the vein of three-dimensional novels—stories that are to be lived by participants—but equally as important, these stories are meant to be experienced as real. Reflecting on my own experience of Häussler's work, I theorize the political import of the necessary *frame-threading* that participants must undergo in Häussler's immersive pseudological installation. *Joseph* brings an invented history to life through the experiential framing mechanism of the archive and combines pedagogy and performance to craft unique experiences for participants. In Häussler's pseudology, art is suffused with everyday life in a manner that exposes the active framing of all experiences of reality. When this active framing is made visible through the revelation of Häussler's deception, participants undergo a negative experience (negative, not in the sense of detrimental, but

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[35] Until the end of the twentieth century, the terms *aesthetic* and *politic* were often pitted in opposition, the former used as an adjective denoting the field of art and connoting the absence of politics, while the latter dealt with the real world of human governance. Though in recent years each term has been reframed somewhat in regards of the other—that is, the sensory dimensions of governance and the agential consequences of sensory limiting (see, Butler *Frames of War*; Rancière *Politics of Aesthetics*; Highmore *Ordinary Lives*)—they remain two different, effective ways of categorizing, or framing, the world: focus on aesthetics (science of bodily knowledge and perception including the merely possible) or on politics (modes of governing oneself and others including the agency with which one may act). There relatedness is something of a new theoretical development, and one this dissertation continues to articulate.

in the sense of indeterminate, as opposed to a positive experience in which one's interpretive framework is straightforwardly applied) (Goffman 379). While the negative experience is wildly unframed and disorienting, its productive effects have potentially constructive results. In Häussler's hoax art, lying is an indirect tool of critique, allowing participants to aesthetically experience their active framing of the world and thereby concomitantly expose the continual framing of reality by other agents in the public and private spheres.

Finally, I conclude this study applying the unique insights provided by the pseudology under study here, its aesthetic-political functionalities, to the current "post-truth" moment. I read the lying of the Trump administration through the analytical lenses lent us by the pseudological art discussed in previous chapters. I also qualify what makes our contemporary "post" epoch feel so different from previous mendacious moments.

Chapter One – Pseudological Discourse and the Artistic Frame

> *art history has consistently decided upon the virtues of a work of art through considerations completely divorced from the rationalized explanations of the artist*
> —Duchamp, "The Creative Act" 139

> *It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that paintings are today apprehended with the ears.*
> —Rosenberg, "Art and Words" 153

> *To some extent, all conceptual art is narrative; it can be seen as shifting emphasis away from the art object and towards the series of operations made by the artist in presenting the piece, and the viewer in receiving it. For this reason, description of conceptual works often takes the form of an anecdote about what the artist did.*
> —Soutter, *The Visual Idea* 136

In this chapter I investigate the pseudological legacy of Marcel Duchamp in the work of Robert Rauschenberg, VALIE EXPORT, and Cheryl Bernstein, and I outline how the narrative turn that characterizes the shift from Modernism to Postmodernism during the 1950s and 60s foregrounded pseudological possibilities for artmaking. I am interested in the technique of the lie as a performative speech act for artistic production. In the transition from Modernism to Postmodernism, artistic practices sought to recoup the power of framing their reception and interpretation—to attend to *how* works were to be perceived as well as *what* was being perceived. The performative act of narrative framing, combining the constitutive nature of ekphrastic description and contextual anecdote, is made more explicit and folded into artistic production as artists took control

of the discourses around their works.[36] I wager it is this awareness of the textual

mediation of aesthetic experience that supports the flourishing of pseudological practices

during this time. The pseudological works discussed in this chapter invent events to

convey and critique the ideologies of their contexts. They politicize truth through their

epistemological rethinking of frames of the ongoing world. The artists, critics, and

historians discussed in this chapter highlight cultural bias, critique interpretive

conventions, and interrogate enunciations of authority.[37] This pseudology acknowledges

the sociocultural forces shaping the interpretive frames we use to make sense of art,

authority, and the everyday—though does not always acknowledges its duplicitous

methodology, as we will see.

Critic and philosopher Harold Rosenberg jests that without all the intellectual

hullabaloo, art would cease to exist. While artists and art movements of the modern

period called for the conjoining of art and life, he writes that "Such efforts are bound to

fail as long as the word *art* continues to refer to a special category of objects" (155).[38]

This qualitative schism Rosenberg describes between art and the ongoing world is what I

define in this chapter as the *artistic frame*: the interpretive framework that brackets

experience, demarcating what goes on inside as "art," and excluding what lies outside as

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[36] Traditionally, ekphrasis is the verbal representation of visual works of art. Following Murray Krieger's historical assessment of the term as language that "seeks to create itself as its own object" (27), my use here is akin to the performative utterance's creation of its referent.

[37] I consider artists, critics, and historians as triangulated components of a fulsome discursive art world. Consequently, I ground my discussion of pseudology in a real world that exists as a network of inter-connected parts: museums, galleries, artists, critics, media, theorists, and viewer-participants. In this real-world network, there is plenty of room for lies and untruthfulness.

[38] Rosenberg continues: the "verbal ingredient … removes them to a realm founded on the intellectual interrelation among works of art … [where] they continue to present the essential subject matter of art's own self-conscious history" (155).

the "real" world. The stimulus that causes an individual to apply the artistic frame is dependent on their specific personal history; therefore, the diverse histories of different individuals yield countless changes in how, when, and why the artistic frame is applied. Each application involves a reading of context. For instance, visitors to a museum change their comportment, criticality, etc., once having entered the exhibition space.[39] A change of surrounding environment accompanies an appropriate change in interpretive framework. Visitors will not act uniformly, but each will register a change in frame and respond to this change in their own way (and those who do not register a change in frame, like young children perhaps, are socialized to begin to register this frame shift).[40]

But a key, often overlooked, component of the artistic frame is language. Language segregates art from the everyday and creates and sustains art's "sacred or mythical status" (Rosenberg, "Art and Words" 154). Often through the written word alone, artists can create pseudological works by dissimulating the ontological status of what is described. Anecdotal narratives form the material substrate of this intangible artistic construction. These production narratives—stories about the creation of physical artworks—are themselves performatively creative works. They are the only way some art can be both created and experienced. When stimulus is intentionally hidden by an artist/agent that would otherwise cause one to apply the artistic or fictional frame, these anecdotal narratives become complicit moments of pseudology.

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[39] Pseudological artworks toy with the boundary of artistic context. This is discussed further in the following chapter.
[40] Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum* (1995) documents this civilizing project of exhibition spaces.

The exposing of the artistic frame and the resultant aesthetic possibilities of playing with this exposure were examined a half-century before Rosenberg theorized the mythological significance of language in art. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Marcel Duchamp interrogated the aegis of artistic inclusivity with the proposed display of his sculpture *Fountain* (1917)—the now famous gesture of suggesting exhibiting a prostrate urinal as a work of art. In effect, the headwater of Duchamp's *Fountain* is the source of the three streams of pseudology that I analyze in this and the following two chapters: the use of discursive narratives to construct works of art and their publication in print media; the use of artistic mystification to bring a visceral aesthetic dimension to institutional critique; and, the use of hoax art that nurtures the self-aware critical perception of our framing of reality. For the analysis that follows in this chapter, I investigate the importance of narratives of artistic production imbued with the power of the lie to conceal a discrepancy between what is stated and the extant world. This is a shift of artistic engagement to the framing discourses of art. If the field of art expands to include its discourse, then discursive engagement is acknowledged as an important practice for both artists and viewers. Lying can be used to bring art into existence, to shape the terms of debate, and reach more people. This section discusses the pseudological revisionism of the post-Duchamp era of the 1950s and '60s Western artworld that narratively created either artworks that were not actually produced extra-discursively or performances that did not actually take place in their purported time and place. Lying in the artistic practices discussed here explicitly or implicitly acknowledges

the everyday aesthetic importance of reproductive media in shaping our discursive field.

Lying used in these artworks performatively creates the object of debate.[41]

Framing the Framers: The Slow History of Duchamp's Pseudological Legacy

> *As for plumbing, that is absurd. The only works of art America has given*
> *are her plumbing and her bridges.*
>   — "The Richard Mutt Case" 5

In 2004, a panel of five hundred art experts preparing for the Turner Prize voted

Duchamp's *Fountain* "the most influential modern art work of all time" ("Duchamp's"

BBC). The common understanding is that since Duchamp's *Fountain*, anyone can use any

material they want to make art. While the idea that "anything goes" is now a meta-

condition of contemporary art where "Anything can be art, today" (De Duve, "Pardon My

French" 249), in 1917, when Duchamp proposed the urinal for display as art, it was not

institutionally accepted that one could make art from anything of any kind. Yet, art

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[41] I discuss *Fountain* in what follows, laying the groundwork for my analysis of pseudological art narratives in this chapter, and I revisit Duchamp's work at the outset of the following two chapters to hone in on the features that correspond to the chapter subjects. Though it is not new to connect Duchamp to Conceptual art, institutional critique, and everyday life as this and subsequent chapters will do, my aim is to highlight the *pseudological legacy* of Duchamp in these areas of artistic production.

In a special issue of the art theory journal *October* on the legacy and reception of Marcel Duchamp titled "The Duchamp Effect," Benjamin Buchloh leads a roundtable of preeminent art historians in which they debate Duchamp's conceptual connections (Buchloh et al). Duchamp is credited in various ways for influencing certain strands of Conceptual artists, promoting the dematerialization of the art object, and initiating a semiological shift in practice. The theorists seem to agree upon the notion that Conceptual art interrogates the framing of art, as such, but they remain divided as to whether this is a new contribution made by Conceptual artists or if it is even part of Duchamp's legacy (Buchloh et al 145). The often-contradictory discussion ends enigmatically, with Thierry de Duve flippantly questioning the semiotic ambiguity of the term "Duchamp" in general, as an individual artist, a working practice, or a set of contextual factors (Buchloh et al 146). Yet, amid the connections drawn by the roundtable, Rosalind Krauss penultimately poses a question left hanging like ripe fruit: "Would you say this notion of inside and outside and of making the work circle through both has a relation to Duchamp?" (ibid). Krauss refers to the inside and outside of art spaces. Though never stated here or elsewhere, it seems clear to me that in this conversational context Krauss would have offered Duchamp as the progenitor of this redefining of the frame of art and linking this frame with an oscillation between inside and outside the contexts for art.

In addressing Krauss' unanswered question, I am responding to Carrie Lambert-Beatty's call to investigate the ways in which pseudological works reimagine Duchamp's legacy (Lambert-Beatty 120).

historian Thierry de Duve argues that Duchamp was interested less in rebelling against the definition of what constituted artistic media than he was interested in specifically testing the resolve of the Society of Independent Artists in New York, of which he was a founding director and board member ("Don't Shoot" 270). The Society's now-famous, non-juried show at the Armory in 1917 was intended for all members of their ranks, and anyone paying the requisite entrance fee would be simultaneously admitted as a member and hence allowed to exhibit their work. Duchamp, who was also the chair of the hanging committee, pushed the full consequences of this inclusive call for artists to the limit by paying the entrance fee under an assumed name, Richard Mutt, and offering for display something he fully expected to rattle the Society's mores—even in an open, non-juried show.

If we expand the frame of analysis, from *Fountain* as an art object to the broader pseudological performance Duchamp undertook to present the urinal in an *art context* under an assumed name, we can begin to account for the performative facets of Duchamp's actions. I view Duchamp's readymade, the actual urinal, as a prop in a larger ruse. It is by the imposture of adopting the pseudonym R. Mutt, assuming the mantle of "artist," and inserting an everyday object into the field of artistic discourse that Duchamp could prepare the context for his rabble-rousing critique. He hoaxed the Society of Independent Artists, yet in abstaining from the revelation of this hoax for years, Duchamp's *Fountain* could not yet be appreciated in the way it is today. This sort of hoax is for an extemporal audience, after the fact. By moving the artfulness of the work from the illusions created by paint on canvas or sculpted matter to the illusion of propriety in

an art institution, Duchamp not only shed light on the discursive field that informed art

(per de Duve), and focused primarily on the *idea* of art rather than its material substrates

(as is the popular narrative for this work in the development of conceptual art espoused

by Benjamin Buchloh et al in *The Duchamp Effect*), but also highlighted the more

effective use of pseudology in the ongoing world (in this case, the somewhat elitist world

of arts administration and bureaucracy). Duchamp ensconced his motivations for

Fountain behind a "straight" performance that mimicked reality, thereby causing the

Society of Independent Artists to address his (R. Mutt's) exhibition application with their

primary frameworks (they did not know it was Duchamp submitting the urinal as a test).

Hence, the Society board also viewed the proposed art object of the urinal against their

artistic frameworks, which expectedly led to the rejection of the urinal as art.[42]

Duchamp's hidden performance is what Irving Goffman calls a corrective hoax.

These usually include the objectives of making a moral point as well as having fun, and

they are usually an argument about the gullibility of audiences and how "those who

manage the public interest have become frozen in their roles, cut off from functioning

properly" (Goffman 90). This type of fabrication, for Goffman, has a "distancing and

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[42] A corollary of Duchamp's loyalty test is what Thierry de Duve identifies as the "Duchamp effect": a broad but slow realization by the artworld that anything can be art. De Duve states, "I call this the 'Duchamp syllogism,' and I take it to be the logical driving force behind the so-called Duchamp effect: When a urinal is art, anything can be art; and when anything can be art, anybody can be an artist" ("Don't Shoot" 264). Though, rather than being about the "supremacy of the artist" to determine what is and is not art, *Fountain* and Duchamp's affiliated readymades were transgressions of normative art making that exposed their discursive framing; Duchamp never called his readymades "art" himself, but allowed them to accrue that name and in doing so evinced a "withdrawal from traditional artistic agency" (De Duve, "Don't Shoot" 266). Duchamp's legacy was not that an artist can control interpretations of artworks by calling anything art. Instead, he exposed the ways in which art is always already discursively framed (ibid). De Duve concludes that Duchamp's main contribution to artistic practice was to reveal that "art is not a medium" and artists have no monopoly over defining art (ibid). In this way, Duchamp shed light on the discursive field of art and its role in defining art and artistic practice.

irony which games allow" (103), fitting for Duchamp as an artist who is closely

associated to irony and games (Cook 266). Because Duchamp, as the conspirator of the

hoax, dissimulated the frame of his exhibition entry (which would show it as a joke), the

Board members became unwitting viewer-participants. Rather than being simply a form

of illusion, where one's sense perception works against an accurate reading of a scene,

Duchamp's artistic deception required the active hiding of the frame to promote the role

of viewers as participants and in doing so, apply the incorrect interpretive framework.

Whereas with an illusion the world usually provides corrective information to account for

the error in perception, with a deception the creator actively hides this corrective

information (Goffman 111-112). Though the effectiveness of Duchamp's hoax relies on

the revelation of the hidden frame, it is remarkable that this narrative of the broader work

took decades to bubble to the surface of the artworld's consciousness.

It was not until some decades later in the late 1950s that *Fountain* began to garner

critical acclaim, and it seems straightforward enough to suggest that this is precisely

because the *story* of this critical hoax began to circulate. De Duve finds that "no scandal

at all broke out during the exhibition," Duchamp resigned from the hanging committee,

and a few newspapers discretely mentioned a bathroom fixture as sculpture without

mentioning Duchamp (De Duve, "Don't Shoot" 264). In May 1917, Duchamp published

Alfred Stieglitz's photo of *Fountain* in the second issue of *The Blind Man*, a Dadaist

periodical that he published with Henri-Pierre Roché and Beatrice Wood, yet he did not

disclose his performance by revealing himself as fabricator. In any event, very few people

would have laid eyes on this issue, as the circulation was hand-distributed and totalled

about a few hundred copies. Under the section title "The Richard Mutt Case" the issue outlines the six-dollar entry fee asked by the Society for anyone to exhibit, the disappearance of Mr. Mutt's sculpture, and the two main objections the work faced: 1) it was immoral because of its lewd connotations; and, 2) it was plagiarism because it was designed and produced by a toilet manufacturer and not the artist (5). Accompanying the photograph and brief contextual description is an essay by artist Louise Norton, "Buddha of the Bathroom," in which Norton states that Mr. Mutt believed in the independence of artists, tried to stay true to the aims of the Society, and argues that if anyone can be an artist, then the Society should have accepted that anything can be art (6).[43]

It was not until Duchamp began to work on his *Boîte-en-valise* in 1935 that he associated his own name with *Fountain.* This anthology of almost all the art he had produced to date, completed in 1938 and released in 1941, contained sixty-nine minute reproductions. Amongst them was a miniature urinal with a label that read: "Fountain / by Richard MUTT / (Ready made; haut. 0m60) / New-York, 1917." This is the first connection of Duchamp to *Fountain* in print. Shortly after, in March 1945, Stieglitz's photo of Fountain was published in the avant-garde art and literature quarterly *View* in an issue devoted to Duchamp.[44] To this, New York gallerists Harriet and Sidney Janis contributed an article, "Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist," in which they link Duchamp to

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[43] The issue continues: "Now Mr. Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bath tub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' show windows." And "Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object" (5). Norton's reading of the work focuses on the primacy of the artist, and therefore casts doubt onto de Duve's rereading of the legacy of Duchamp. I follow de Duve's rereading as it has the bonus of hindsight.

[44] Duchamp designed the front and back covers.

"the famous *Fountain*, 1917, rejected from the Independent Show in New York" (reprinted in Motherwell 311).[45] After the publishing of Robert Motherwell's anthology, *The Dada Painters and Poets* (1951), and Winthrop Sargeant's *Life* article, "Dada's Daddy" (28 April 1952), Duchamp's work began to receive widespread, popular recognition. The latter publications both include the expanded narrative framing of *Fountain*.[46]

In the early 1950s, when these two publications bring Duchamp's work to a wider audience through a narrative frame, artists like Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns "rediscover" Duchamp's work and it is soon appreciated for its ingenuity by the avant-garde community in New York. With his work now sought after, Duchamp was called upon to exhibit the fabled readymades of yore. Yet, Duchamp did not keep the original *Fountain*. Previously, in 1950, at the request of Sidney Janis, Duchamp signed an old urinal Janis had bought at a Paris flea market. Duchamp hung this replica on the wall like a regular urinal for Janis' show "Challenge and Defy" (1950). A few years later he hung it upside-down over a doorway with mistletoe at the exhibition, "Dada, 1916–1923" (1953), that Duchamp organized with the Janises ("Overview" *Cabinet*).[47] Duchamp's

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[45] Duchamp coined the term *anti-art* around 1914, referring to Dada's mandate of dissembling the failing culture of the period. Anti-art has since commonly been applied to his readymades as objects that counter traditional notions of art practice and creativity. The Janises, per Norton, also find the readymades' revolutionary potential in "The assumption is that the object, conveying properties which coincide with the artist's angle of approach, is endowed as a work of art by virtue of the insight and authority of the artist's selection. Selection is here no longer just a step in a process. It becomes a completed technique" (310).

[46] From Sargeant's article: "In 1917, at the Exhibition of Independent Painters in New York, he submitted the most famous of all his readymades. It was a urinal, identical with those that adorn men's rooms throughout the civilized world. The exhibition's jury, in some embarrassment, placed it obscurely behind a partition" (108).

[47] The 1950 remake was not displayed like the original gesture; it was used to make another scatological statement by shifting the urinal's orientation yet again. It was not until 1963 that a replica visibly resembling the 1917 version was made, and this time not by Duchamp, at all. Swedish art critic and

revising and revamping of the history of his own artwork, changing its display and

repurposing its form for new contexts and audiences, was an inspiration to a generation of

artists struggling to produce work amid a discursive milieu dominated by the art critic

(Harrison, "Feeling" 132, 145). Concomitantly, the lack of "original" objects for

exhibition exposed the extent to which the discursive framing of the works was integral to

their makeup.

In the case of *Fountain*, what caught attention then, as it continues to do today, is

the discursively framed historical narrative of Duchamp's original performance. Its

narrativization in print media frames the performance, describes the context for its

reception, communicates its impetus, and outlines the conceal-reveal structure of

Duchamp's corrective hoaxing. The aesthetic significance of the work comes not only

from the controversy around the banal design of the urinal itself, but from the story in

which the urinal is a key prop. This story grew in significance as it took on the weight of

history. It became a beacon of proto-postmodern art, challenging the supposed authority

of art institutions to determine what is and is not art, the myth and supposed prerequisite

of virtuosic originality, and art's ability to reference an external, "real" world and thereby

act as the stimulus for "authentic" experience.

Linda Hutcheon, in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), theorizes that postmodern

art openly acknowledges the interpretive contingency of and interrelationship between

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museum director Ulf Linde produced a *Fountain* with permission of Duchamp for an exhibition at Galerie
Burén, Stockholm. This replica was not signed by Duchamp at first — "R. Mutt" was signed using Electra
set style block letters—but Duchamp signed it with enamel paint in 1964 when it was exhibited at Galerie
Schwarz, Milan ("Overview" *Cabinet*). Eight reproductions were then made in 1964 in Milan, along with
two artists proofs and two reproductions outside of the edition of eight (ibid).

fiction and *history*, where in both, claims to authority, originality, and referentiality are problematized (110). In both, narrative order produces a sense of unity. For Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction contains an "intense self-consciousness" about narrating the past and "acknowledges the paradox of the *reality* of the past but its *textualized accessibility* to us today" (113-114). This is in keeping with the broader textual turn in art and scholarship during this time—epitomized in the artworld by the working strategies of conceptual art group Art & Language. I see textuality as defining the pseudological practices of the late '60s and early '70s, and wager it is this awareness of the textual mediation of aesthetic experience that supports the flourishing of pseudological practices. While Hutcheon focuses on historiographic metafiction that problematizes this unstable ontological schism between history and art, the artists in this chapter ensconce fictions in the weight of "history" to bring some artistic invention into being. Pseudological fabrications hide the commingling of fiction and history by an "ontological sleight of hand" (Hutcheon 115), that is, by concealing the discrepancy between the ontology of their anecdotes and the frame by which an audience interprets them. If, as Hutcheon discovers in postmodern historiographical metafiction, "Fiction and history are narratives distinguished by their frames," and, yet, "there is rarely falseness *per se*, just others' truths" (109), the pseudological practices of artist and writers in this chapter strategically *use falseness* to hide the distinction between the historic and artistic frames.

Making History: Postmodern Pseudological Production Narratives

> *The historical past is … at best a myth … and at worst a lie, a retroactive rationalization.*
> —White, "The Burden of History" 37

In 1953, when Duchamp's *Fountain* re-emerged and Duchamp was reenvisaging its display, Robert Rauschenberg began creating his own narratively revisionist artwork. *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), like Duchamp's *Fountain*, gains authority from its production narrative. As the story goes, Rauschenberg wanted to draw using only erasure, felt he needed to erase something that was already undoubtedly considered "art" to make it significant, so he took a bottle of liquor over to Willem de Kooning's studio and asked for a drawing to erase, and de Kooning, playing along, gave him one that would be very hard to obliterate. Rauschenberg spent weeks and numerous erasers expunging the drawing from the sheet. Once the paper was sufficiently cleared, and extremely worn, he labelled it and framed the assemblage under glass; the "traces of drawing media on paper with label and gilded frame" ("Robert" *SFMoMA.org*) stand together as the seminal work.

However, forensic art critic Greg Allen has recently discovered it was Jasper Johns who created the title and label for the work, and conceived of framing the assemblage. Johns drew the label for the erased sheet, and the piece was put in a store-bought frame that Rauschenberg picked up. Johns has said this change in the work, from a stand-alone erasure drawing to an assemblage titled *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, was

spurred on because of an upcoming show at the Poindexter Gallery in New York in

December 1958 (Allen 175).[48] Allen describes,

> For the crucial period of *Erased de Kooning Drawing*'s uptake into the art
> world's discourse, Rauschenberg had always claimed that he had written
> the inscription. That he'd 'signed' it. That's what he told [documentarian]
> Emile de Antonio [in the film *Painters Painting*, 1972] … That's the only
> way anyone talked about it. But it is not true (Allen 170).

Like Duchamp's *Fountain* gaining critical success after its production narrative had

circulated, Rauschenberg's erasure drawing only began to gain critical success once it had

been adequately framed—physically, but more importantly, narratively, with the addition

of the written script "Erased de Kooning Drawing" placed directly into the work. The act

of designation performed by this label transforms the palimpsestuous paper sheet into an

enigmatic artistic gesture. It performatively constructs the work, reframing the paper as a

provocative sign. Therefore, the label and frame are crucial to the success of the piece,

hence why the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art states,

> The simple, gilded frame and understated inscription are integral parts of
> the finished artwork, offering the sole indication of the psychologically
> loaded act central to its creation. Without the inscription, we would have
> no idea what is in the frame; the piece would be indecipherable ("Robert").

In this way, Rauschenberg's pseudology is meant to imbue his work with the Modernist

myths of originality and authority, retroactively reframing his erasure drawing in a highly

significant narrative frame—an historical fiction of sorts. Hutcheon defines Modernist

historical fictions as those that use real historical figures to "validate or authenticate the

fictional world" (114), and postmodern metafictions use this same "formal and

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[48] The drawing might have been titled and labelled by Johns in mid-1955, without a mat overlay and frame
(Allen 170-1).

ontological sleight of hand," but to self-reflexively problematize this subterfuge (114-115).[49] Following the epigraph from Hayden White, I see Rauschenberg's narrative framing of this work as a moment of pseudological mythologizing—a "retroactive rationalization," in Hayden White's phrasing. Rauschenberg's dissimulated recontextualizing and discursive framing of *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, rather than being self-reflexive, is employed to fit and reiterate the Modernist ideologies of originality and authenticity—even while the drawing interrogates these ideals in a postmodern fashion by appropriating and then erasing the art of an established, authoritative artist.

Though Rauschenberg's pseudology may be Modernist, his recognition of the need to reframe his already extant work falls under the legacy of Duchamp and was very much of the burgeoning postmodern, self-reflexive approach that began to take shape during the 1950s. Harold Rosenberg, in his essay, "The American Action Painters" (1952), proposed that the act of making a painting had become the subject matter of painting. He called this "action painting" process art. Literary critic Mary McCarthy countered Rosenberg by stating, "You cannot hang an event on a wall, only a picture" (McCarthy 30). And yet, something *had* changed in artistic practice in the early '50s—the artistic framework had changed, art was undergoing a reconceptualization—and both Rauschenberg and Rosenberg had sensed it.

It was not until 1969, in an article for *The New Yorker* titled "Art and Words," that Rosenberg describes vividly the essential role that narrative framing of artwork plays

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[49] Hutcheon asks, "how do we know the past? What do (what can) we know of it now?" (ibid).

in our understanding of what is going on. Rosenberg stresses the influence of linguistic

discourse on the experience of art, and redefines art as having a "materials-words

composition" (155). He depicts this connivance between art and words as the new,

adulterated regime of art production and perception:

> A contemporary painting or sculpture is a species of centaur—half art
> material, half words. The words are the vital, energetic element, capable,
> among other things, of transforming any materials (epoxy, light beams,
> string, rocks, earth) into art materials. It is its verbal substance that
> establishes the visual tradition in which a work is to be seen—that places a
> Newman in the perspective of Abstract Expressionism rather than of
> Bauhaus design or mathematical abstraction. Every modern work
> participates in the ideas out of which its style arose. The secretion of
> language in the work interposes a mist of interpretation between it and the
> eye; out of the quasi-mirage arises the prestige of the work, its power of
> survival, and its ability to extend its life through aesthetic descendants
> (152).

Rosenberg recognizes that today the eye cannot differentiate what is or is not art; rather,

it is an "intellectual system" that defines art, and art objects have "verbal reverberations"

(153). I find Rosenberg's descriptions of the importance of linguistic discourse in art

production and perception brilliantly phrased: there is always a linguistic-affective-

kinetic matrix while interacting with art—something modernist art theory attempted to

occlude (for instance, Fried's condemnation of minimalism's "theatricality"). Rosenberg

pinpoints the increased importance of narrative framing in art at a time when this framing

was made blatant in the anecdotal narratives of Minimalism, Earthworks and Conceptual

art.

A narrative turn in art practice became most pronounced in the late 1960s and

early '70s when the use of language *as an art medium* began to take shape. For instance,

with a heightened modernist self-reflexivity that would become paradigmatic of

postmodernism, Robert Morris' *Card File* (1962) lists the materials that went into its own

making on one of the cue cards included in the artwork itself. Marked "Material" (Fig. 1),

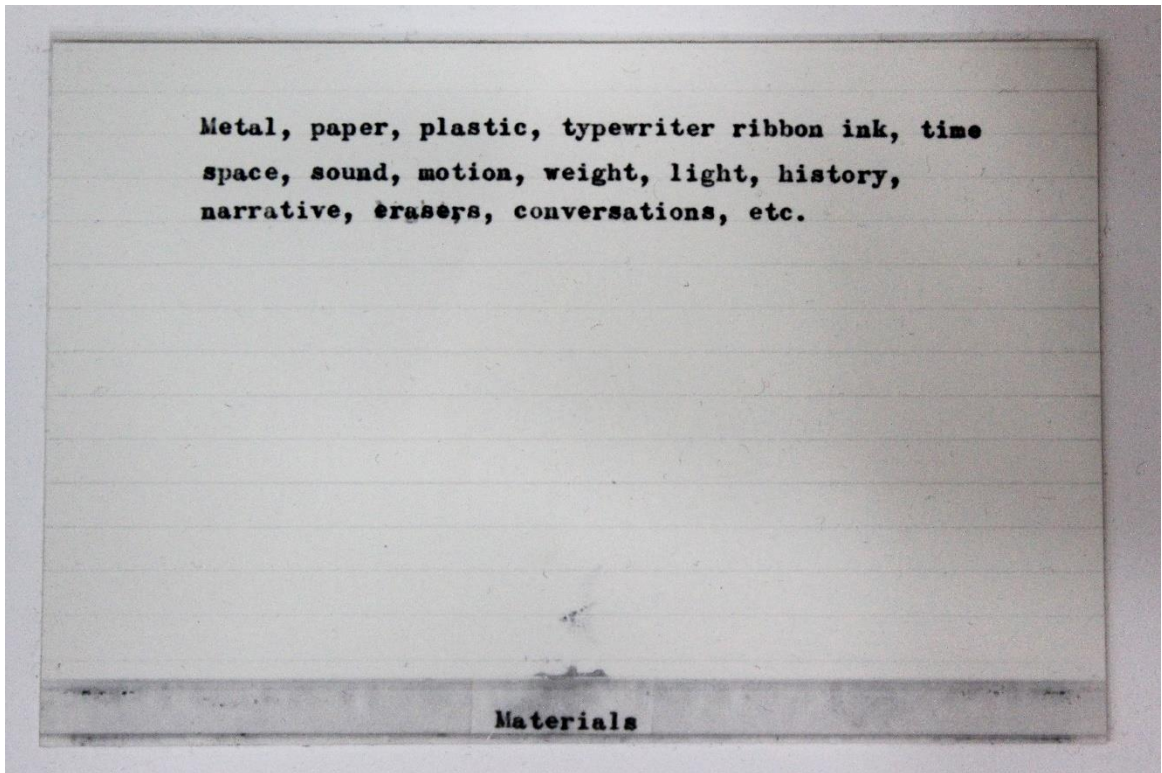"narrative" is listed along with other physical and non-physical materials.[50] *Card File* is

Figure 1: Robert Morris, *Card File* (1962), detail. Photograph: Benjamin Prus

regularly said to mark the beginning of Conceptual art, by highlighting its "concept" over

its material (Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy" 164; Buchloh et al 126; Cros "Card File").

Centre Pompidou curator Caroline Cros notes that, like Duchamp before him, Morris

exhibits an "indifference to aesthetic choices" (ibid). This weighting of idea over the form

of the object has been theorized as an anti-aesthetic approach to art making, most

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[50] The full list on the cue card reads: "Metal, paper, plastic, typewriter ribbon ink, time / space, sound, motion, weight, light, history, / narrative, erasers, conversations, etc." Also of note, Morris seems to have paratextually demonstrated "erasers" by effacing the printed word: either by typing over some older word in a palimpsestic gesture, or by smudging the typed word "erasers" with an actual eraser.

famously in Hal Foster's anthology *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays of Postmodern Culture* (1983). I would like to suggest that the "anti-aesthetic" mode of art making that takes hold in the 1960s is characterized by an increased use of narrative as an artistic medium.

Though a fixed aesthetic style may have been pushed to the wayside as art making took on new and "conceptual" forms, narrative remained an integral medium necessary for the creation of an artwork. This pairing down of the physical manifestation of the work is what Lucy Lippard and John Chandler famously described in 1967 as the "dematerialization of art" (31-2). As conceptual pioneer Douglas Huebler declares, "I don't care about specific appearance [,] I really don't care about precise or exhaustive documentation. The documents prove nothing. They make the piece exist and I am interested in having that existence occur in as simple a way as possible" (Rose 144). Yet, the declaration of narrative as artistic medium was not an altogether obvious development from the previous dominant art theory of the 1950s. Morris' inclusion of narrative as medium comes only two years after modernist art critic Clement Greenberg articulated his most trenchant anti-illusion, anti-narrative schema for modern art.[51] Greenberg's art

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[51] Greenberg gave his best articulations of Modernist criticism with "Modernist Painting" (1960) and *Art and Culture* (1961), both of which justify the impenetrability of abstract art, advocating for its un-language-like character and superiority to the process of verbal description easily applied to figurative arts. Greenberg's argument in "Modernist Painting" (1960) congeals the disparate art movements since the mid-nineteenth century under the unified aim of self-reflexivity. Because Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* used logic to critique logic, Greenberg dubs him the first Modernist and sees "The essence of Modernism … in the use of characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence" (85). For example, "flatness alone was unique and exclusive to pictorial art" (87) and "three-dimensionality is the province of sculpture" (88). Visual art was meant to be *visual* in ways befitting the material in which it was formed. Greenberg, in "The New Sculpture" (1948), states that "It follows that a modernist work of art must try, in principle, to avoid dependence upon any order of experience not given in the most essentially construed nature of its medium" (139).

        Throughout his career as an art critic and theorist, Greenberg kept a clear delineation between the autonomous field of art and the discursive field of theory. For instance, in "T.S. Eliot: A Book Review" (1950), he states that art is "a matter of self-evidence and feeling, and of the inferences of feeling, rather

theory takes as its guiding principle the belief that purity comes at the elimination of

semantic meaning to foreground the experience of art more directly.[52] Yet, clearly it was

still the job of the critic to frame modern art discursively, as Greenberg's prodigious

output of art criticism testifies, even if this criticism was supposed to remain

compartmentalized and not affect one's experience of art. Not only did Greenberg's

limiting of art's critical focus to its form ignore the sociopolitical conditions and other

circumstances of art's production, but it ultimately ceded discursive framing of art to

theorists and critics by proscribing linguistic communication from the purview of art.

Conceptual art interrogated this proscriptive contradiction. The formal strictures

Greenberg posits as art's raison d'être end up being the very ideas successive artists in the

'60s critique and dissolve. Greenberg's theory was a totalising definition of Modern art

that left no room for alterations (lest they be defined as aberrations). As Thierry de Duve

asserts regarding Conceptual art, "the self-reflexive move of modernism has come to the

point where art wants to be its own theory and sustain itself on that theory" (Buchloh et al

134). The stated negation of material substrates highlighted the role of the work's

narrative structuring and the role of the viewer's application of interpretive frameworks.[53]

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than intellection or information" (234). In the case of artistic writing itself, Greenberg said "Part of the triumph of modernist poetry is, indeed, to have demonstrated the great extent to which verse can do without explicit meaning and yet not sacrifice anything essential to its effect as art" (244). Greenberg held it was a fault of modern critics to interpret the meaning of what a writer has written, and that such interpretation was an assault on the autonomy of art.

[52] In "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939), he writes that it is an aesthetic detriment that "poetry must deal with words, and words must communicate," yet if it was easier to eschew this tendency modern poetry would inevitably be more "pure" and "abstract" (7).

[53] Even within the high modernist abstract expressionist works Greenberg championed there is a greater reliance on narrative framing, evinced by the increased power critics held in determining what the work was *about* (what it *did* or what the artist *had done*). This followed as there continued to be a marked decrease in figural or referential *content* (conventionally speaking) of the works—as figuration gave way to abstraction the discursive framing of criticism was highlighted. In his essay, "Sculpture's Recent Past," artist and art

Specifically, the work's anecdotal narrative became increasingly the only stimuli

the viewer had by which to formulate their own interpretive framework and, hence, come

to know "what it is that is really going on" in the work. For instance, in Robert Barry's

Inert Gas series (1969), Barry experimented with the concept of sculpture and released, at

Figure 2: Robert Barry, *Inert Gas Series* (1969), performance photograph, *Helium. Sometime during the Morning of March 5, 1969, 2 Cubic Feet of Helium Will Be Released into the Atmosphere.* Photo Credit: Robert Barry

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historian Charles Harrison plots the transition in sculpture, from 1958 to the late '60s, from an insulated practice of fixed physical forms within a controlled environment, to the creation of incontiguous forms that may or may not exist in physical space, i.e., the production of mental images of some relation where "imaginative reconstruction of the artist's procedures and activities was often inseparable from the perception" and identification of artworks as art (42-3). This coincided with the disestablishment of Modernism through the exhaustion of abstract art's potential for new developments (Harrison, "Feeling" 127). The dissolution of Modernism was characterized, per Harrison, by the loss of faith in two of its most crucial tenets: "that works of art can be the real occasions of transcendental emotions; and that spectators can be capable of disinterested responses" ("Feeling" 132).

various locations around Los Angeles, measured amounts of five noble gasses into the atmosphere to imperceptibly expand ad infinitum. The photographic records of his sculpture-turned-performance are intentionally bereft of diegetic clues—see, for example, his release of a canister of helium in the Mojave Desert (Fig. 2). The image shows a desolate landscape of desert brush, con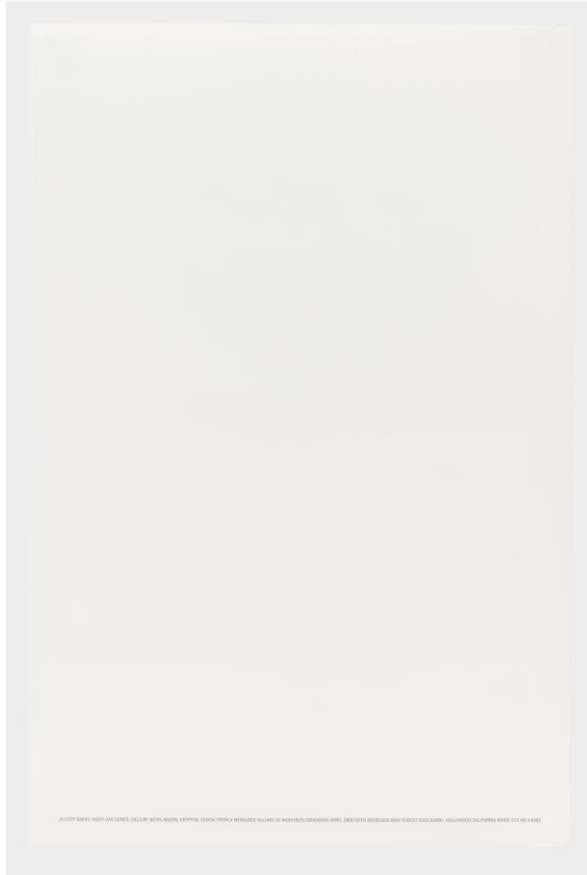noting utter absence. A gas canister is present in the foreground. No signs of movement or change are present. Any gas could have been in the canister, if any gas at all was indeed released. As with VALIE EXPORT's work (which I discuss, below), Barry's use of photography here as a quasi-legal record of existence is humorously vacant, not only of subject matter, but of the very ability of the photographic medium to function as indexical archive of some originary event.

Figure 3: Robert Barry, *Inert Gas Series/Helium, Neon, Argon, Krypton, Xenon/From a Measured Volume to Indefinite Expansion* (1969). Photo Credit: Robert Barry

The poster for the performance, which functions officially as the work itself, does not even include the vacant photographs. It is a blank page, at the bottom of which is listed the title of the series, curator Seth Siegelaub's gallery PO box, and a

telephone number (Fig. 3).[54] Only by calling the phone number would an interested

person learn, from an automated answering machine, what indeed was "happening" in the

work. It was by the innovative curatorial efforts of Seth Siegelaub that these images were

also published alongside this informational phone number (Alberro, *Conceptual* 118).

The entire artwork, however, cannot be understood without these geographically and

temporally disparate pieces. The elements that make up the work can only be sutured

together in the binding causal manner of anecdotal narrative. Because of the specificity

needed to narratively frame these works, Conceptual artists like Barry chose to self-

articulate rather than rely on the discursive management of art critics and historians.

In this vein of self-articulation, Arthur R Rose's "Four Interviews," which first

appeared in *Arts Magazine* in 1969, was an attempt by Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler,

Lawrence Weiner and Joseph Kosuth to insert themselves into the art discourse of the day

while controlling how their Conceptual art was discursively framed. Kosuth penned

interviews with the others under the Duchamp-esque pseudonym Arthur R Rose. As part

of the first generation of artists who were also university graduates, Kosuth et al.

employed Rose as a tool to rebuff the claims critics had made regarding their work. This

is an outward move of artistic energies from the making of unique objects to the crafting

of the context in which art is experienced. Kosuth famously wrote in 1969, "all art (after

Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually" ("Art After

Philosophy" 18). An art of ideas, an art whose focus is the thought processes of making

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[54] The line of text that runs along the bottom of the 30x 45" poster reads: "ROBERT BARRY/INERT GAS SERIES/HELIUM, NEON, ARGON, KRYPTON, XENON/ FROM A MEASURED VOLUME TO INDEFINATE EXPANSION/ APRIL 1969/ SETH SIEGELAUB, 6000 SUNSET BOULEVARD, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA, 90028/213 HO 48383" (Alberro, *Conceptual* 118).

and experiencing art, expands the realm of art production and critical consumption into art's metastructures, and it thus cannot not exist without the framing narratives Kosuth and others found so important.

This heightened awareness of discursive framing caused a crisis in aesthetics: a growing cognizance that communications media dominated the sensorial field and had become a primary force of cultural production. As the Conceptual artists of the '60s received Duchamp's legacy and began to craft works that required more overtly intellectual engagement, thereby either explicitly or implicitly highlighting the interpretive framework of art, they did not altogether reject illusionism in favour of the stark banality of everyday objects, as the common conception of their work suggests (forwarded by Buchloh et al 140). As mass media began to disseminate information about artworks across time and space, artists harnessed the (pseudological) possibilities presented in this intertextual situation. If art necessitates narrativization, could art exist solely as narrative?

Pseudology became a method that allowed some artists to address these questions. For example, in July 1966, Eduardo Costa, Roberto Jacoby and Raúl Escari set out to create "A work that begins to exist exactly at the moment the audience becomes aware that it's already over" (Costa et al). Their manifesto "Un arte de los medios de comunicación (manifiesto)" ("Art of Mass Media") proposed to mimic the communal engagement style of the contemporaneously popular "happenings" or group performances, but, unlike the proximal, face-to-face nature of happenings, their new art would employ the capability of mass media to reach millions of people across time and

space. To wit, they proposed to disseminate press releases about invented events that

never actually occurred. Hence, their mass media art was an open acknowledgement that

news media structure our understanding of events and define the very terms of what

constitutes an "event" itself. As they write, "it is of no interest to information consumers

if an exhibition took place or not; all that matters is the image of the artistic event

constructed by the media" (ibid).[55] By harnessing this creative potential of mass media,

Costa, Jacoby and Escari sought to demonstrate the ways in which one can *invent* reality

through combining pseudology and publicity.[56] Yet, this power to invent draws its

authority from a presumed connection with a factual past or present. In this way, it is of

paramount import if an event is *framed* to have actually taken place, because information

consumers will then apply their primary frameworks, creating expectations and real

consequence. As with Duchamp, Mass Media Art moved the art of deception outward

from discrete objects to enfold the surrounding discourses of art. With Mass Media Art,

as with *Fountain* and *Erased de Kooning Drawing* before it, there is a powerful

recognition that narrative framing is integral to the *creation* of art, as well as its reception.

By combining the dissemination strategy of Mass Media Art with the surreptitious

narrative framing of Rauschenberg, VALIE EXPORT's[57] seminal performance piece

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[55] What we might now see as a Trumpian approach to fake media events: his advisor Kellyanne Conway inventing the "Bowling Green Massacre," for example (Schmidt and Bever "Kellyanne").

[56] "So this is a triple creation: writing a false report—transmission of this report through the media — reception on the part of the spectator who constructs—from data received and based on the meaning the data acquires for him—the dimensions of a nonexistent reality that he believes to be true" (ibid).

[57] The artist's birth name is Walltraud Höllinger. In 1967, she rejected the norm of patriarchal surname inheritance and instead chose the name VALIE EXPORT, which she appropriated from a brand of cigarettes. In keeping with the logo branding and feminist self-definition, VALIE EXPORT must always be capitalized.

Action Pants: Genital Panic (1969) proliferated through visual reproduction and artworld discourse at the same time it became real by withholding the truth of its never having been performed. Austrian performer, film maker, and installation artist VALIE EXPORT, together with writer and curator Peter Weibel, conceptualized "expanded cinema" in 1967. Combining film, performance, and installation techniques, expanded cinema sought to upset patriarchal domination and gender norms through direct engagement with audiences. For instance, one of EXPORT's most famous pieces remains *Tapp und Tastkino* (*Touch Cinema*, 1968), performed in ten European cities between '68 – '71, in which the artist covered her naked torso with a theatre-like, curtained proscenium and Peter Weibel invited passing men and women to touch her bare chest. Cultural theorist Roswitha Mueller explains that by inverting the norms of cinema viewing, EXPORT's expanded cinema allows the actor's body to stand in for filmic representation, breaks sexual taboos instead of shaping hegemonic sexual relations, remains irreproducible as opposed to mass reproduced film, and, importantly, the audience is revealed in daylight instead of hidden and anonymous in the black box of the theatre, while what is "shown" remains hidden instead of voyeuristically revealed as a forbidden desire, and the woman present is an active subject instead of passive object (15-18).

EXPORT's expanded cinema practices were part of her development of Feminist Actionism and utilized savvy media practices to combat patriarchal working conditions in society. As a response to Vienna Actionism, EXPORT's feminist practices sought to "transform the object of male natural history, the 'material woman,' into an independent actor and creator" (Export, "Aspects" 71). The countercultures and politically progressive

movements of the 1960s held that sexual liberation was an essential counterpart to

political freedom. EXPORT has said of the method of her political engagement,

> I was very influenced, not so much by Actionism itself, but by the whole
> movement in the city. […] The content of Viennese Actionism was not so
> important. I did my actions in another way, with video. The Actionism
> artists never worked with media. They made films, yes, but to document
> their work. (Export and Indiana, "Valie Export")

It is significant that EXPORT distinguishes her media practice from utilitarian

documentation. Though *Touch Cinema* was a scandalous performance that was written up

in popular press for months after its showing (Widrich 92), EXPORT's expanded media

practice continued to play with publicity through publicly posted screen prints. The artist

turned the documentary still of the performance, which was taken by Peter Hassmann a

year after the first performance in Vienna, into enlarged screen-printed posters that were

then pasted around the city. Mueller's insistence on EXPORT's resistance to mass

reproduction notwithstanding, this sensitivity to publicity allowed EXPORT's

transgressive filmic performance to continue to work on public consciousness. The screen

prints served as cues for the narrative retelling of the performance.

In another expanded cinema piece and the work on which my analysis will focus,

Aktionhose: Genitalpanik (*Action Pants: Genital Panic*, 1969), EXPORT employs the

same acute attention to publicity. For this work, the artist first walked through aisles of

seated spectators in a Munich cinema wearing very tight, crotch-less pants. Again,

replacing the filmic representation of a passive woman figure with a real agential woman

subject, EXPORT's transgressive movement through the theatre rows placed her genitalia

at eye level to the passive patrons. Subverting the association of female exposure with

vulnerability, EXPORT's control and strategic use of her own body flipped the gendered power relations of patriarchy; she confronted movie-goers with her exposed crotch to present in tangible form that for which the cinema allows voyeuristic viewing.

      The piece has since been exhibited as a series of screen prints reproduced from a photograph taken a year after the performance, again by Peter Hassmann, and accompanied by the narrative explanation of the event. The photograph (Fig. 4) depicts EXPORT on a bench, seemingly outdoors, wearing the crotch-less pants. The image is not a performance still as we have come to know them—it does not depict EXPORT in the act of confronting cinema goers within the theatre. The photograph looks more like a staged promotional image. The first time the image was published was in 1970, in

Figure 4: VALIE EXPORT, *Action pants: Genital Panic* (1969). Photo Credit: Patty Johnson

EXPORT and Weibel's *Bildkompendium Wiener Aktionismus und Film* (1970). The

caption for the piece read, "Instead of a screening I was supposed to push through the

rows of the audience with exposed crotch (cut out from the pants), ergo crotch and nose

on the same level; indirect sexual encounter with the audience. VALIE EXPORT" (290).

This conditional supposition has recently led art historian Mechtild Widrich to challenge

the authenticity of the performance as chronicled.

Widrich suggests that *Genital Panic* was likely not performed in the theatre as

described.[58] At the time the performance was said to have occurred, Widrich finds no

mention of its existence, unlike the *Touch Cinema*, which received months of media

coverage (92). Widrich suggests that, instead, the public circulation of the photographic

image served to bolster the veracity of the work's production narrative. She explains,

"photography must be seen as a privileged medium of performance, due to its dual

capacity of acting as quasi-legal document of the past (applicable even when the

photographs are staged) and at the same time as a persistent re-enactment" (96). This

quasi-legal authority with which photography operates comes from "the concept that the

live act provides unmediated access to performance through the artist's body" (90). A

narrative account or other performance documentation of an artwork "draws its authority

from but also itself *enacts* the belief in the bodily presence of the artist, which is

retrospectively projected back into the event" (94). Following Alan Sekula, we could add

that the evidentiary success of any photographic documentation of an artistic performance

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[58] The performance is called *Genital Panic*, the photo and subsequent silkscreens are called *Action Pants: Genital Panic*, here shortened to *Action Pants*.

lies in the organizing and structuring system in which it flows, that is, in this case, the artworld. The continued institutional framework in which *Action Pants* is situated has allowed its production narrative to procure and retain, unchallenged, an extant status. It is also, reciprocally, this institutional context, as medium, which allows for the narrative description of *Genital Panic* to exist *as art*. In this light, I characterize the artworld as a semantic machine that, when fed anecdotal narratives and other tenuous fictions, can mint the ontologically durable, fungible, and profound material we understand as "art". The reception history of *Genital Panic* suggests that one of the dissimulative tricks in artistic practice is a promise to connect the viewer with something "real," such as EXPORT's (supposed) bodily performance.

It is understandable why EXPORT would place such a large purchase on the corporeal reality of this political performance. In a relatively recent talk, "Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality" (2003), she placed her focus on the real world and a rejection of illusionism in the tradition of the Futurists and Constructivists to engage directly with everyday politics (EXPORT, "Expanded Cinema"). In this light, it is not so curious that EXPORT has continued to state that *Genital Panic* took place in the theatre, placing the performance squarely in the extant world. Yet, Widrich's convincing work suggesting EXPORT lied about actually performing the work highlights the paradoxical nature of this brand of pseudology—a use of illusion to deny illusionism, lying to make something real. While the piece may not have been performed in the theatre as described, it continues to function performatively through all its subsequent enunciations. After the staged images were created, both original photos have been sold as photo editions to

galleries and printed in publications. Though the photo may be staged, it still circulates in the artworld and each instantiation of it combined with its narrative explanation is a performative "re-instating" of the earlier performance; and to the extent that this earlier performance did not exist, it is a lie in the semantic sense Eco gives. Each retelling, though, is a new version of the performance. So, I am interested in the technique of the lie as a performative speech act for artistic production. The succeeding exhibitions of the "documentary" photograph and screen prints, publications in magazines and journals, and written criticism of the work, combine to create what we know of as *Action Pants: Genital Panic*—its ideo-material assemblage. From the moment of documentation and circulation, whether the performance is real, staged, or in other ways fabricated, there exist "palimpsests of discourse and image that continue inexorably" and constitute a "reception history" for the performance (Widrich 97). This history reciprocally becomes the context for later reproductions and re-enactments, critical and historical texts, and publications of any sort, where "context is not a supplement [to the original performance], but the medium within which performative action unfolds" (Widrich 98). With each enactment of *Genital Panic*, each new exhibition or publication, different meanings are produced by different audiences and imbricated within the sedimentary silt of the artwork's reception history and its ideo-material assemblage.

EXPORT's work highlights the degree to which discursive framing is paramount in the construction and dissemination of artworks, the inherent ambiguity and difficulty in connecting any utterance of a performance to an originary event; and, yet, it also highlights the importance this imaginary connection plays in joining documentary

utterances to the bodies of supposed real performers. EXPORT's *Genital Panic* fits

perfectly into the history of pseudology as its truth cannot be ascertained, and the truth or

falseness of subsequent utterances is overlooked by historians and curators alike. While

Mueller's seminal analysis of EXPORT's work is grounded in the substitution of the real

female body over the usual representational image as a subversion of the power of

patriarchal media, I see EXPORT's *Genital Panic* and its intervention into narrative and

imagistic representation as actually reinforcing the agency of the feminist postmodern

subject to intertextually self-define as she self-discloses. No documentation of the *Genital*

Panic theatre performance exists, no record of its having taken place was ever produced,

and yet its photo-verbal enunciations circulate within critical and theoretical discourse,

powerfully shaping debate by evincing clear feminist insurgence.

      Artist Kari Bauer printed silkscreen posters of Hassmann's staged photograph in

1969, and included VALIE EXPORT's logo on them. These were meant to be posted

around Munich, but EXPORT never got permission to put them up in the city and did not

have the means to put them up herself. These posters she ended up giving away to friends,

as EXPORT recounts in a 2007 interview with Widrich (96). However, in an interview

with MoMA curator Roxana Marcoci published on the MoMA website 2 June 2010,

Marcoci explains that "EXPORT had the image screen printed in a large edition and fly-

posted it in public squares and on the street." EXPORT did post reproductions of the

images in Berlin in 1994 for a show called *Gewalt/Geschäfte Violence/Business*) for the

Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (Widrich 96), yet there is no reference to this in the

MoMA narrative. Instead, the 1969 screen prints being discussed encompass an intended

postering, a real postering in 1994, and an imaginary originary performance—the sort of concise continuity only offered by the suturing structure of anecdote. In this way, the power of publication and dissemination is harnessed by VALIE EXPORT in the screen prints and accompanying anecdotes that distribute the work.

The screen print highlights the intertextual nature of postmodern subjectivity through the repetition of the "subject" in different media: the artist pictured in the image, the diegetic logo bearing the artist's name, and the didactic panel repeating the artist's name and working medium. Her adopted name is featured in the image itself, in the form of the brand logo.[59] It sits below the bench on which she is seated, between her legs, putting her in a further position of dominance. This tripartite distinction of modality calls to mind Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965), except Kosuth's explicit version of these different representative modes include an example of the actual object. While Kosuth's is a mass-produced chair, and thus also alludes to the intertextuality inherent in our language of things, EXPORT's use of a mechanically reproduced image, at twice remove from the subject through the translation of photography into screen printing, adds distance between the subject and the viewer. EXPORT's postmodern feminist subject exists already in an intertextual network of representation, and EXPORT's work actively seeks to question and change the gender bias inherent in the broader patriarchal system of representation. Through self-definition, what EXPORT termed Feminist Actionism, the

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[59] The insertion of one's own name into the content of the work is a method of publicity adopted by rap artists in the 1970s and continues in the genre of music today: a way of claiming voice and asserting subjecthood through that voice (Shusterman 212).

artist could assert her authorial agency, not only over the work she created but the representational subjectivity which she inhabited.

I suggest that it is precisely this ability to harness the narrative framing of her work, while also actively developing strategies of dissemination and publicity, that makes EXPORT's work fit so nicely into the history of pseudology. Her fictive creation functions as fictive art in Lambert-Beatty's or LaFarge's senses, but only once this metanarrative is disclosed. The power and prevalence of EXPORT's work continues to be a supposedly straightforward indexical relationship to an originary event. In this way, EXPORT's work utilizes the power of the lie to conceal an incongruence between what is stated and what has been. EXPORT's framing reveals the ways in which creative uses of dissimulation can steer public discourse and political debate in progressive vectors.

As a creative manoeuvre that builds a provocative performance that unfolds through its telling within history, EXPORT's *Genital Panic: Action Pants* outlines a pragmatic method of creation that performatively creates that to which it refers and that perhaps would otherwise be too dangerous or impractical to create. The work also exemplifies the ways in which the intertextual subject is both unbounded, diffuse, and wide ranging, while also continually open to revision, change, and recontextualization. This openness is also a productive vulnerability, one that is an essential feature of language itself. While lacking the apparent ease to which we can traditionally "point" to a physical, originary act or object, as a postmodern work EXPORT's unbounded assemblage is open to continual retellings and additions (with or without her holding the gun, for example). While its power at first reading seems to come from the substitution of

the real body in place of the representational, its greater power comes from its continual

referral to this real body while only ever existing as replication and re-enactment.

     In Gregory Battcock's now seminal anthology of art theory and criticism, *Idea Art*

(1973), in which Arthur R. Rose's interviews are republished, the New York art critic

Cheryl Bernstein published an article that celebrated the new work of then-burgeoning

artist Hank Herron. In "The Fake as More," Bernstein discusses the new abstract work of

Herron, who had copied ten years' worth of paintings by Frank Stella all in the span of

1971. Bernstein praises Herron's work as "Stellas *plus*, Stellas and *more*" because they

eschew the modernist trap of originality (42). Bernstein notes

> a radically new and philosophical element in the work of Mr. Herron that is
> precluded in the work of Mr. Stella, i.e., the denial of originality, both in its
> most blatant manifestation (the fake as such) and in its subtle, insouciant
> undertones of static objectivity (the telescoping of time). […] [Herron's work]
> is surface, narrow, and, most especially, tragic, for one is forcefully reminded
> at every line and turn that it represents the ontological predicament of our
> time, indeed of every living being: inauthentic experience. They are, in a
> word, fakes." (45)

Herron's fakes became popular with avant-garde artists in the 1970s because he denied

artistic originality while remaining original in his process, as outlined critically by

Bernstein. Herron has since been recognized as a harbinger and stimulus for the

progressive art practice of Appropriation Art and has appeared in the press as an example

of critically advanced art while Bernstein has been lauded as "an astute, theoretically

advanced critic and a leader in non-originality" (Duncan, *Aesthetics* 214). But Herron's

fakes are not the only fakes on hand in this text.

     Cheryl Bernstein serves as a paradigmatic figure of pseudological linguistic

fabrications. What her biography in the anthology fails to note is that Bernstein herself is

a fake.[60] In fact, Herron is a fake as well. Both are creations of art historian Carol

Duncan. Bernstein was created in the spring of 1970 by Duncan and her then husband

Andrew Duncan (Duncan, *Aesthetics* 211). They intended to use Bernstein as a parody to

critique the modernist insularity and "high-end" theoretical jargon of art history and

criticism typified by the then-dominant voice of *Artforum*.[61] Duncan thought the parody

would be obvious, as the text was riddled with jokes and the central premise of Hank

Herron's oeuvre was the seemingly blasphemous idea of simply copying the paintings of

Frank Stella and exhibiting them as his own (212). But, as Duncan reflects, "Bernstein

and Herron were easily assimilated to art world concerns of the day and (as I gradually

learned) in certain university art departments even became required reading for students"

(213). The invention of Hank Herron and Cheryl Bernstein was meant to parody the

artworld and its pseudo-intellectualism, but the characters and their products were

accepted as real.[62] Bernstein's text, far from being recognized as a parody, contributed

new theoretical concepts and jargon to the art critical lexicon of the 1970s and '80s.[63]

"Non-originality" was cited as a precognizant forerunner to the Appropriation Art or

Simulationism of the 1980s. Bernstein portends, "the implications to be extracted from

[Herron's work] will no doubt occupy a segment of the abstractionist artistic and critical

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[60] As the introduction to the text states, "Cheryl Bernstein was born in Roslyn, New York. She attended Hofstra University before taking her M.A. in art history at Hunter. One of New York's younger critics, she has recently completed the soon-to-be-published work, *Felicien Rops: The Tragedy of Misconception*" (41).
[61] Magazines such as *Art International*, *Artforum* and *Arts Magazine* catered to the rising tide of interest in contemporary art that began in the '60s.
[62] At least one critic rejected the verbose writing style: Barbara Reise, who worked for *Studio International* as a contributing editor from 1969 to 1973, wrote a review of *Idea Art* in 1973 in which she held Bernstein's text as the exemplar of the failures of the anthology.
[63] Until 1986, by Thomas Crow, who was told the time-forged secret by Duncan, by writing about it in his catalogue essay "The Return of Hank Herron," for the show *Endgame: Reference and Simulation in Recent Painting and Sculpture*, at ICA Boston.

community for months to come" (42). Indeed, it wasn't until 1977 that Douglas Crimp

mounted the *Pictures* exhibition at Artists Space in Manhattan and Appropriation Art as a

movement was coherently stated.

I suspect Duncan's inspiration for Herron came from Elaine Sturtevant. Sturtevant

reproduced Andy Warhol's Day-Glo hibiscus flower canvases, even getting Warhol's

silk-screens directly from him to do so. Warhol was making these works in 1964, and

Sturtevant showed her own versions the following year in 1965 at the Bianchini Gallery

in Manhattan, along with her own copies of paintings by Jasper Johns and Frank Stella.

Sturtevant used the same processes of creation as did the original artists and the

reproductions looked strikingly like their original counterparts. Sturtevant's oeuvre is one

of appropriation; she studies what lies under the surfaces of art, delving deeper than the

surface representations of Pop art.[64] Because Sturtevant began appropriating the works of

other artists in 1965, Duncan's use of Bernstein to critique such practices may seem a

little belated. This may have prevented Bernstein's article from being recognized as an

obvious parody, because critics had already exonerated Sturtevant's appropriation

practices.[65] However, sympathy for Sturtevant's project began to wane in the early '70s,

and this could account for the jibing tone of the Bernstein critique.

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[64] In the year appropriation art officially came on the scene, Bernstein published "Performance as News," (which I will subsequently discuss, below) and moved past appropriation art to lambast the artworld behind the art, in the same manner and while Sturtevant was interested in interrogating the "understructures" of art.
[65] Still, Sturtevant was only initially well received by critics—as she continued to use her method of "repetition" she drew the ire of a few artists, especially Claes Oldenburg (Foxmay, "Elaine Sturtevant").

Yet, plenty of clues remain that would set "The Fake as More" off as parody. Bernstein, in a moment of even sillier parody of French philosophy-cum-art criticism, writes

> Looking at the works of Mr. Herron (whose first appearance in any exhibition this is), we see a lack of development in the artist's refusal to succumb to either a unilateral linear statement or an expression of complete circularity, but rather a synthesis of both in what might be called *circulinear* art, neither *either or* but *both and* (43).

The mention of this being Herron's "First appearance" should have alerted astute readers to the apocryphal nature of the text, but it did not. Nevertheless, I want to suggest that Bernstein's comical *both and* is a prescient take on the postmodern function of parody, as later theorized by Hutcheon. For Hutcheon, parody "may indeed be complicit with the values it inscribes as well as subverts, but the subversion is still there" (102); that is, parody "is doubly coded in political terms: it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies" (97). Parody holds an evaluative function to assess "unacknowledged assumptions" (95). This is akin to performance theorist Richard Schechner's "not-not not" of performance, where the actor is both not the character being played, and not-not the character, and where an effective performance captures the audience's oscillation between the two views ("Performers and Spectators" 123). It is ironic, then, that Duncan's text sought to take part in the "paradigm of liminality" (Schechner's term) that is shared by both parody and performance, yet was too convincing a performance to be recognized as one.

The artworld liked the fabrications of Duncan so much that it simply counted them among the real achievements of its canon. The unacknowledged assumptions that

structured Duncan's parody remained unacknowledged. The artworld's voracious appetite

for theoretical jargon could not be satiated![66] This gullibility could have been exploited to

possible pedagogical effect if the lie was revealed sooner, by Duncan, instead of by Crow

in 1986. This raises the question, was Duncan simply keeping it secret to hold one over

on the stated pseudo-intellectual art historians? In the following chapter, I discuss *artistic*

mystification's ability to teach while it tricks—this seems like a lost opportunity in

Duncan's failed parody. Though indeed a moment of pseudology—the artistic use of

lying—the effects of this work seem to be at odds with Duncan's stated purpose in

drafting it. Duncan felt that the "high-end" art criticism that was in vogue at the time

seemed to play off itself, never really caring about the art being discussed and more

concerned with forwarding and furthering ever-new, ever-more "difficult-to-read"

criticism (Duncan 212). One could say that the criticism Duncan was responding to had

ceased to be art criticism, that is, criticism concerned with art, and had become a

discourse that used art to bolster its own legitimacy by showing how the artistic merit of

art lay in its theoretical and linguistic significance—how art was really like written

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[66] The epigraph to Bernstein's article is from Martin Heidegger's *Being in Time*. Along with the references to other in vogue thinkers being used by the difficult criticism of *Artforum*, like Jean-Paul Sartre, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Immanuel Kant, it sets the tonal register for this little piece of virtual virtuosic criticism. It reads, "The most primordial phenomenon of truth is first shown by the existential-ontological foundations of uncovering." A reader is made immediately aware that s/he will be bestowed complicated-cum-convoluted truths of art-historical pseudo philosophy. The epigraph works doubly well, as it refers to Heidegger's belief that things can reveal themselves to us if we only let them speak. A small metaphoric step reveals irony here: the true nature of Duncan's parodic text was not picked up by the artworld. No uncovering went on, no letting the text reveal its "existential-ontological foundation."

  This is further ironic because Martin Heidegger's writing on existential phenomenology, or how the world outside is met by the *dasein*, or being-in-the-world, used language in a way that demonstrated the closed nature of its semantic system. Heidegger was a key thinker in qualifying ontology with emplaced existence, so it is ironic that, more so than other philosophers, his language exemplifies language's prison house-like nature. This closed, self-referential nature of language and the logics it engenders is, in a way, what Duncan-as-Bernstein was attempting to send up with her text.

criticism, and reciprocally, how written criticism could be said to be art. For instance, Art & Language took this conflation to the extreme by creating a journal of art criticism *as* art. This is precisely what Bernstein showed and supported, pace Duncan's intent.

Bernstein's career broadened when she published another piece, "Performance as News," in the conference anthology *Performance in Postmodern Culture* (1977). This article was also meant to be parody, but again was taken as real. It discusses the events of the Patty Hearst kidnapping as performance art. Duncan sought to parody the artworld suffused by "A narrative in which formal (and conceptual) developments follow trajectories within art discourse with a seemingly autonomous and compelling force of their own" (Duncan 213). The inspiration for this characterization of insular art history and criticism —when observation is neglected in favour of myopic, easy theoretical connections—came from the cartoon character Mr. Magoo, "whose poor eyesight led him into seriously mistaken assumptions about where he was and what was happening around him" (215n2). Bernstein begins the article by stating, "That the Symbionese Liberation Army until now has been undetected as a performance group is largely due to the somewhat overcharged rhetoric of their overt content as well as their deliberate avoidance of any recognizable art context in which their work might be framed" (219). Bernstein places the SLA on the vanguard of performance practice by linking them with Allan Kaprow's concept of the "un-artist." Bernstein explains that the earthworks, happenings, and conceptual art that Kaprow discusses in his 1971 essay do not go far enough, because, although they work outside galleries and museums, they require the artworld to bestow meaning upon them (220). Running with Kaprow's idea, Bernstein writes,

> Unlike the non-artists, un-artists would be socially invisible *as artists* …
> would outwardly adopt other professions, and would utilize television and
> other media … Un-artists would still be vanguard artists, but by
> distinguishing rather than declaring their esthetic intentions, they would
> transcend the paradox of older non-art (220).

Because Duncan's parody of art criticism sends up a sensationalized news media, yet

again is interpreted as genuine, her own work as a writer here employs the very tactics of

the un-artist. Duncan-as-Bernstein distinguishes a mass-media aesthetic through the form

of art criticism itself. In a move that echoes Mass Media Art of a decade earlier, Bernstein

writes that by becoming news,

> The group thereby avoided the expense of advertising and at the same time
> made their work available to a vast audience, even "framing" it on the
> home TV screen. The strategy not only utilized television as a closed feed-
> back system, it also drew large numbers of people into the work as active
> participants. Indeed, the ongoing process initiated by the group involved
> not only Justice Department officials and law-enforcement agents, but
> numerous private citizens, most notably the hostages and the many
> "witnesses" who testified on television concerning the whereabouts of
> Patty Hearst and the Harrises during the flight sequence (222).

Here, news as a medium for art brings the whole nation in as art viewers, and "solves" the

problem of performance recordings and documentation differing from the live event,

raised by EXPORT's work.[67] Yet, if we distinguish Duncan's writing as an un-artist from

Bernstein's, two different types of pseudology can be identified.

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[67] Bernstein writes, "Since the news itself is identical with the work, that is, since the SLA does not exist
except as news, this distortion was impossible" (222). Bernstein calls the SLA an "intermedia guerrilla
group" and comically defines their Kidnapping of Patty Hearst as a "Duchampian gesture," that is, as an
everyday-life venture undertaken by an artist (220). She likens this artist-in-the-real-world move to the
artistic and literal risks taken by Chris Burden (physical and legal), Rudolf Schwarzkogler (mortally injured
himself in performance), Tony Schafrazi (defaced Picasso's *Guernica*), and Jean Toche (arrested for
sending threatening letters to museum staff) (221). The definition is comical because Duchamp's real-life
risky endeavour was to give up art and try his hand at professional chess. So, the Duchampian gesture,
rather than just the usual probing what can and cannot be art or the power of the artist to declare what is in
fact art, is also a move to try living outside the artworld.

Duncan's parodic writing critiques the new order of media spectacle. Yet, her reframing of the Hearst affair as performance art belies a nostalgia for the concrete Truth of modernism. Duncan appears to mock the public's disregard for "real" history and its insatiable appetite for spectacle. Where Bernstein's frame advances the un-artist concept through an analysis of the Patty Hearst affair thus suggesting modes of aesthetic engagement permeate everyday life in significant ways, Duncan's frame repositions the un-artist as misguided or even a sophistic style of lazy artistry ("If life is art, who needs artists?"). Though Bernstein plays with the creation of reality through the fabrication of narrative frames, Duncan retains a faith in an unbiased reality that might only present itself to us if we stop adulterating it with our skewed discursive frames. While EXPORT's pseudology advances the political goal of feminist intertextual subjectivity, Duncan's pseudology seems to harken back to a politics of unbiased facts. Yet, I would like to believe "Performance as News" is more progressive simply because it is so interesting and fun.[68] If Duncan's parody has a double political coding that both legitimizes and subverts news spectacle (to apply Hutcheon's definition of parody; 97), it seems Bernstein reframes news spectacle as art while Duncan subverts any easy conflation of news with proper critique. As in the case of "Fake as More," this potentially subversive function is only accessible once the work is reframed as parody. Without revelation of the lie, this pseudological work was unable to access the critical facet of parody's Janus face.[69]

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[68] Thanks to Liss Platt for bringing me back to the fun side of Duncan's quirky work.
[69] In the following chapter, I discuss the political functionalities of this revelation in pseudology.

Bernstein, Herron, and the art discussed in this chapter, upon reflection, reveal the differential framing mechanism of the metastructures of art— historical anecdotes, institutional labelling, and art criticism. These works suggest that, though the past exists, we may only ever know it through its textual accounts, and though the real, ongoing world exists, we may only ever experience it through discursive frames that construct a sense of reality (Foucault, "Order" 67). Linda Hutcheon writes that postmodern art reveals "the discursive nature of all reference" where "there is no presence, no external truth which verifies or unifies, that there is only self-reference" (119). These pseudological works represent a supposed historical occurrence of artistic creation and in this invented imagery convey and critique the ideologies of their contexts. If we take seriously that "no research of the past is free of socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions" (Hutcheon 121), we can see the ways that pseudological artists politicize truth through their epistemological rethinking of frames and the ontological status of the ongoing world. The pseudology discussed in this chapter is, with *hindsight*, a litmus test for the sociocultural forces shaping the historical interpretive frames used to make sense of art, authority, and the everyday.

Lucy Lippard's *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (1973) recorded a key segment of the Idea Art or Conceptual Art milieu. A "dematerialized" art allowed for art to be produced with slighter and slighter means. For example, Stephen Kaltenbach was doing "influence" pieces, where he would help another artist with ideas and wait to see what materialized (Lippard 86). Kaltenbach also took out

ads in *Artforum*, not giving out information but "passing on possibilities" (87).[70] The

simple sharing of ideas taken as a type of artistic labour was a way of investigating the

power of art, the influence it effected in the real world. Some of these influence pieces

take the form of simple commands, like "Build a Reputation," "Tell a Lie," or

"Perpetuate a Hoax." In the same vein, Bruce McLean lists 1,000 potential art pieces

which reads both prolifically and as parody of the unwieldy inventiveness of Idea Art ad

nauseam.[71] His entry for Piece 171 is "Hoax art work for specific audience" (196).

Kaltenbach and McLean in *Six Years* cite lies and hoaxes amongst possible modes of art

making, revealing a sympathy for pseudological practices in Conceptual art.

     Lippard and Chandler end their consideration of the changing art practices of the

'60s with a lingering question: "Has an ultimate zero point been arrived at with black

paintings, white paintings, light beams, transparent film, silent concerts, invisible

sculpture, or any of the other projects mentioned above? It hardly seems likely" (36).

With the inclusion of narrative—slight, simple anecdotes conveying artistic intent and

performative creation—Lippard and Chandler would have indeed added another base

level to the quasi-nonexistence of artistic media. It is interesting to find these references

to possible hoax works because it demonstrates the wealth of imaginative possibility that

exploded during Idea Art. Not constrained by material considerations, per se, artists were

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[70] This is from Ann Patricia Norvell's *Eleven Interviews*, March-July 1969, initially unpublished. Reprinted in Lippard.

[71] Some of his entries include "109. Major breakthrough (piece) study. … 123. Portrait of artists' pub at lunchtime piece. … 131. Fun at work. … 147. Stepping into reality. Piece. … 184. Edible art work. … 185. Drinkable art work. … 206. Climb every mountain (piece). … 207. Walk every highway (piece). … 208. Climb every rainbow (piece). … 214. Everybody's talking about it (oral piece). … 215. Dig your garden (work). … 216. Mow your lawn (work). … 217. Cut your grass (work). … 218. Edge your lawn (work)."

free to invent simply for the sake of inventing; or, to imagine the possible reaches of art:

how far art could delve into everyday life, or how much influence art could extort over

society, politics, and individual people as a form of cultural labour. The art criticism

imposture published during the late 1960s and early '70s was quite significant in this

regard. This, too, was a way to explore, harness, and critique the power of art and art

criticism through parody. Arthur R. Rose (Kosuth), Cheryl Bernstein (Duncan), and

Robert Morris[72] all published faked art criticism that was meant to critique the artworld

from within. Duncan's failed parodies became "real" through withholding the truth of

their creation. Reeves-Evison maintains,

> If specific acts of deception go unnoticed, no specific act of destabilisation
> occurs, and no aesthetic object is isolated. … Fiction is charged with a
> power from deception, and unstable admixtures between the two have the
> capacity, for better or worse, to have real effects (208).

Duncan's Bernstein shows us that lies have real effects even when or *because* they remain

hidden. And also, though it was just an idea for a performance that was treated as having

happened, EXPORT's *Action Pants: Genital Panic* has remained a lasting provocative

gesture in the history of performance art.

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[72] Morris' "The Art of Existence. Three Extra-Visual Artists: Works in Process," was published in *Artforum*, January 1971. In it he surreptitiously fabricated three fictional artists. Morris wanted to discursively frame his own works so he created a new context for them by inventing other artists that could enhance his own persona. Morris fabricates the life and work of three emerging artists working in the mode of what he calls "existence art," that is, art that escapes the trappings of formalism through "the suppression of an objective source of stimuli that can be located externally and separate from oneself" (117). (Morris relates, "so far as I know these artists are unaware of each other's work" (99): very funny as they are all Morris' own fabrications, so they all intimately inhabit the same space.) All the work discussed in Morris' article is more about experiencing furtive things with the senses at "a highly physical level in which the perceiver's nervous apparatus itself is directly stimulated" (116). This work deals with invisible, ethereal, or sub-haptic materials. Like with EXPORT's work, Morris too puts apparent stock in the physical presence of the body to complicate its importance amid an intertextual network of meaning only later.

At the same time, lying has an economy of means. Carol Duncan is a well-respected Feminist art critic and historian, operating mainly in the 1970s and '80s in the United States, who pioneered a sociopolitical approach to art history. Cheryl Bernstein was a fictitious art critic created by Duncan as a parody, but who was accepted as real and became influential with *only two publications* to her name. Lying offers a practical and easy way to make something "real" and, thus, effective. Once art could be "made" by only pointing to existing thoughts or systems, the ostensible need for physically producing or doing something seemed to vanish for a time ("dematerialize"). But concomitantly, it was this apparent dematerialization that revealed the tenuous connections between the ongoing world and our narrative framings of it. The narrative framing and fictitious criticism of the 1960s and early '70s reveals the importance for certain fabrications to be framed as real. It comes at a time when JL Austin shows us that words have real effects within specific contexts (even though he focuses only on instances of "serious" everyday usage, and not art/fiction) (22). In an authentically avant-garde fashion with an eye to social change, artists began to harness the power of linguistically framing art in the real world.[73] EXPORT's work, for example, attests to the very semiotic ability to envision what is not present, to imagine a world different from the one at hand, one in which the performance in the cinema took place, one in which there

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[73] If, as Hutcheon relates, "Postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context. … there is little of the modernist sense of a unique, symbolic, visionary 'work of art;' there are only texts, already written ones" (Hutcheon 118), we see these concerns develop from Rauschenberg's use of recontextualizing the past to produce a unique and visionary work of art, and EXPORT's exploration of feminist textual subjectivity, to Duncan's literary construction of characters that only ever exist as text and who come to define a real mode of art making.

exists gender parity, both in the flesh and in reproductions. Through this imagining, the world at hand is changed, the realm of possibilities and plausibilities is performatively altered.

The interplay between the picture of EXPORT in her action pants and the narrative that accompanies it produces facticity within the context of the artworld. Through interrogating the narrative framing of reality, this pseudology revealed a power in existence—that is, an authority held by those things we determine to be real. In the following chapter, we will see that this recognition reciprocally highlighted the *necessity* for some works to exist in physical form to gain significance. This strand of pseudology—artistic mystification—acknowledges that some works gain power in taking place in the ongoing world, yet they do not give up the freedom of plasticity that comes with narrative framing. In the following chapter, my analysis turns to artworks which disclose their dissimulation to viewer-participants and I thus seek to determine the aesthetic significance of their constructed facticity.

Chapter Two – Tricks that Teach: Framing Pseudology in Institutional Critique

> *there are only truths in the plural, and never one Truth*
> —Hutcheon, *Poetics of Postmodernism* 109

> *I do believe that to a great extent the issue of Conceptual art revolves around the question of what status we are going to give to the bare sentence "this is art," by which indeed a readymade has been baptized.*
> —de Duve 135

> *thanks institutional critique*
> *the museums are fucking*
> *worse than ever*
> — Havas, tweet

A woman is cleaning the steps of a museum. Two indigenous Amerindians entertain visitors at a natural history museum. A famous Canadian artist successfully applies to exhibit at an artist run centre. What do each of these ubiquitous scenes hold in common? How might each scene function within a program of progressive politics? And, in what manner might each instance be transformed into an opportunity for a self-reflexive public pedagogy?

In this chapter, I examine the development of institutional critique carried out through pseudological practices. I want to consider to what political or critical purposes deceptive performance might be suited. Working from within arts institutions, the pseudological artists discussed in this chapter seek to expose ideological assumptions at work within the sites of artistic production and display. Using the technique of artistic mystification—calculated deception and subsequent unmasking—these artists foster critical evaluations of underlying assumptions governing art, artists, and museum spaces.

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This critical assessment is both aesthetic and political in that it causes one to question the ordinary frames of perception one uses to interpret the world at hand. These tricks that teach intervene in and mold certain *politics*, that is, as Chantal Mouffe explains, "the ensemble of discourses and practices, institutional or even artistic practices, that contribute to and reproduce a certain order" (Mouffe et al 100). Each of these pseudological works questions a certain politics while offering another, critiquing the implicit common-sense conceptions managing the lives of artists, audiences, and the broader public.

Speaking with friends and colleagues about this project, I am aware of the intangible difficulty of reconciling *lying* with *art*. Artist and cultural theorist Coco Fusco, who I discuss in this chapter, has recently exclaimed of lying, "as if artists don't do that all the time!" ("Still in the Cage" 192). If lying is such a common, or even essential, component of art, what prevents the broader public from registering this duplicity?

Modernist humanism can partly account for this lapse: freedom of expressing one's inner vision is widely thought of as paramount in art. Sincerity in art is a modernist concern that stems from the imperatives of originality and authenticity. Pragmatist philosopher John Dewey held that all artists are necessarily sincere in that they follow their interests by any means necessary: "The interest of an artist is the only limitation placed upon use of material, and this limitation is not restrictive. It but states a trait inherent in the work of the artist, the necessity of sincerity; the necessity that [s/]he shall not fake and compromise" (189). Without sincere interest in the making of art its interest becomes "one-sided," "sly and furtive" (ibid). Even though, for Dewey and other

modernists, art is meant to break the norms of form and craft new experiences, and, therefore, is naturally seen as transgressive, it is meant to remain truthful. It might seem, then, that lying breaks with this humanist aim of genuine expression. However, the artists examined in this chapter use lying as an artistic technique to uphold Dewey's call to an unrestrictive and creative art. These artists are faking, but doing so in *opposition* to compromise, to the staid gallery system, systemically unequal politics, or oppressive cultural mores. They use lying to achieve new creative potential under repressive regimes of control that Dewey would most likely be against.

Additionally, in the context of the pseudological art discussed in this chapter, art institutions continue to place stock in art's seemingly inherent, positive enculturating effects, in part to lure public and private funding. An underlying contributing factor to the rise of the museum in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in North America and Europe was an earnest altruism that framed art and artists as tools of humanitarian social assistance. During this time, the modern public museum became a site from which to supposedly build and regenerate the character of the lower classes through exposure to the cultural products of the middle and upper classes. The liberalism of industrialization maintained that material support for the poor only enabled further indulgence in degeneracy; for this reason, the museum was enlisted as a centre for antiwelfare initiatives that eschewed bodily sustenance for the poor in favour of cultural nourishment for the mind and spirit (Fraser, "Museum" 110n13). Therefore, if institutions are to continue to receive this funding, they must not transgress and offend society's moral codes, the very codes meant to be impressed upon the masses.

Yet, remaining faithful to the myths and mores of mainstream society reiterates practices and positionalities that support prevailing power dynamics. To foster recalcitrant ways of life that might introduce new sociopolitics, critical interventions must be made. Here, I return to Duchamp's *Fountain* as a guiding example. This pseudological performance was a critique of the Society of Independent Artists: Duchamp tested the limits of their mandate of artistic openness and inclusivity. Referring to the legacy of Marcel Duchamp, Thierry de Duve makes clear,

> The Society of Independent Artists contributed nothing to the history of avant-garde art in the US. Its only memorable salon is the first one, and then only on account of the one item that was not exhibited! But the fact that the R. Mutt affair took place in that particular institutional context is very much part of the message Duchamp put in the mail in 1917 with *Fountain*. …Anyone and everyone can now be an artist; consequently, anything and everything can now be art (De Duve, "Don't Shoot" 273).

Duchamp's duplicitous institutional critique asked: does this "anyone" really include everyone, or this "anything" include everything? In this way, institutional critique interrogates equality, access, and support experienced by artists; and, insofar as artists labour as cultural workers within specific socioeconomic climates, institutional critique examines the sociopolitics of its context. As art historian Kirsi Peltomäki explains, artists such as Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, and Hans Haacke "were pivotal to the formation of what gradually became known as 'institutional critique' – an investigation of the material and sociopolitical conditions of contemporary artistic practice" (Peltomäki 38-9). Although critiques of the museum and gallery structure continued to appear before the 1970s, it was during this decade and after that a focused criticality drove the work of conceptual artists. While Arthur C. Danto theorized the institutional frames of art in the

mid-60s (Danto, "Artworld"), it was the collective practices of artists grappling with these

frames that cohered into what we now call institutional critique. Artists since Duchamp

have taken up this critical mandate while employing deceptive framing ruses like his own.

It is the politics of these dissimulative performances that is analyzed in what follows.

Taking cues from Duchamp's pseudological legacy, the artists discussed in this

chapter play with the border of inside/outside the gallery to create a self-reflexive

aesthetic experience through this liminal oscillation. Unlike the previous chapter in which

art was not physically formed as presumed, yet produced concrete effects, the art

discussed in this section manifests through objects and actions first interpreted within

viewer-participants' primary frameworks (as real) and retroactively interpreted within the

artistic frame (as art). I wager that the key component of this reinterpretation is found

within the disruptive aesthetic quality of this modality judgement (a change in the reality

status of what is observed, causing a self-reflexive reassessment). If the first chapter's

pseudologists realize the power of *narrative framing* to create reality and consequently

use lying to discursively generate non-extant works, this chapter's assembly realizes the

aesthetic significance of encountering real objects and normal performances under two or

more interpretive contexts.

To study the ways in which these pseudological practices can interrogate the

contextual framing and ideological underwriting of our experiences of art and everyday

life, I focus on three works: Mierle Laderman Ukeles' *Washing, Tracks, Maintenance:*

Outside (1973); Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco's *Two Undiscovered*

Amerindians Visit the West (1992-94); and, Joshua Schwebel's *Please Do Not Submit*

Original Works (2012). I compare the similar form of these pseudological performances,

each separated by two decades, to highlight the way in which they allow for the aesthetic

reinterpretation of their specific ideological contexts.

      This strategic use of dissimulated divergence plays a pedagogical role in these

artworks, and as such, I see it as linked to the tradition of literary mystification.

Historically, mystification is a metagenre of literature that began in the eighteenth-century

French Enlightenment. Julia Abramson, in *Learning from Lying* (2005), describes literary

mystification as a type of literary fake that, unlike forgery which "conceals its origins and

depends for viability on the cloak of secrecy," hints at "its own art of invention" through

a cycle of deception and unmasking (12, 14). Abramson gives the examples of Denis

Diderot, Louis-Sébastien Mercier, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who each turned

deliberate mystification from a mean-spirited social practice into a textual form that

exposed the conditions that made deception possible (26, 40).[74] Abramson elaborates,

> [mystification] relies on falsehood and prevarication but also on their
> exposure in the service of pedagogy, ethics, and esthetic and intellectual
> integrity. Mystification is illusion, but one that points insistently to that
> which makes illusion possible. Mystification simultaneously imitates and
> is. It manipulates and coerces the reader and would seem to exclude the

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[74] These philosophes and encyclopedists were the leftist intellectuals who worked under enlightenment principles to reform society along those lines. Along with Voltaire, Jean le Rond d'Alembert, and Grimm, they used deceptive educative techniques to circumvent attacks from their numerous conservative detractors (Abramson 28). For instance, deliberate mystification as a pedagogical tool is first found in Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Émile ou de l'éducation* (1762), where Émile is taught by his tutor through a set of deceptions designed to lead Émile to discover for himself the necessary questions and knowledges that would set him on the right path (Abramson 47). Similarly, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1796) reveals the power relation between mystifier and pupil, where Wilhelm sees education as one long routine of deception and discovery; mystification shapes and directs the course of one's life and must be coupled with demystification to foster enlightenment (Abramson 46). Diderot wrote literary mystifications between 1760 to 1784. For instance, his novel *La Religieuse* began as the collection of epistolary correspondence between a nun and Diderot's friend Marquis de Croismare: Diderot invented the needful nun Suzanne to entice the Marquis to move back to Paris. Diderot then turned the apocryphal correspondence into a novel to critique the corruption of religious institutions and the forcing of "inconvenient" young women into nunneries.

> uncomprehending. Yet its power play aims at once to amuse and instruct,
> and to foster a community of the knowledgeable (145-6).

Mystification has the unique capacity to test the aesthetics of deception by pointing to

what makes illusion possible, "to expose the construction of authenticity and value" in

culture (Abramson 48, 146). Other authors, like Anthony Grafton, see mystifications as

diminutive pleasures: "nothing but amusement" (38). But, contra Grafton and following

the work of Abramson, this dissertation examines the extension of mystification outside

the literary into other forms of contemporary art.[75] I focus on *artistic mystification*—

immersive installations or dissimulated performances that interrogate the ideological

construction of their own interpretations by audiences. Artistic mystification maintains

both the pedagogical potential and aesthetic significance of the artistic use of lying. In the

analysis that follows, I argue pseudological practices like those of Ukeles, Fusco and

Gómez-Peña, and Schwebel are artistic mystifications fostering the analytical criticality

of the Enlightenment. If the power of mystification rests in its ability to provoke a wide

and fervent response from multiple communities and stimulate dialogue on topical issues

(Abramson 16, 145), these works form dialogic communities between artist and audience,

exposing the ideological underpinnings of both art institutions and our everyday

interpretive frameworks.

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[75] Abramson focuses on literary mystification specifically through generic form: "In each case, not the physical book or article, but its content or text imitates a recognized form" (14). The work I address in this chapter imitates through physical features as well as content.

Breaking the Frame: The Feminist Pseudology of Mierle Laderman Ukeles

Maintenance is a drag; it takes all the fucking time (lit.): The mind boggles
and chafes at the boredom. The culture confers lousy status on maintenance
jobs = minimum wages, housewives = no pay.
  —Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto" 145

As visitors approached the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford,

Connecticut on the morning of Sunday, 22 July 1973, they witnessed a woman cleaning

the steps of the gallery. With a bucket of soapy water, mop, and rags (cloth diapers), this

maintenance person dutifully washed the concrete entranceway of this cultural institution

whose hallowed halls held the historical fruits of artistic creation. Unsuspecting patrons

would likely not interpret this banal custodial gesture as a work of performance art, and,

consequently, not invest a modicum of critical interpretation into this everyday scene. As

they went on to enter the museum, however, visitors encountered facsimiles of a hand-

written note signed by Mierle Laderman Ukeles and posted to the front doors that read,

> Dear Spectator, / The cleanliness of this area is now being maintained as /
> MAINTENANCE ART / by Mierle Laderman Ukeles, artist. Please feel
> free to continue on your way right through the "dust painting" as she will
> be continuing to maintain it this whole day. (Image in Phillips 61)

Now informed that the maintenance person was an "artist" engaged in a work of "art,"

museum visitors were forced to reassess their initial evaluation (and possible dismissal) of

the scene. Why perform this act of routine maintenance as "art?" What significance does

this redefinition hold? Can we trust this shoddy, ad-hoc signage? This work,

Washing/Tracks/Maintenance: Outside, was part of a series of four site-specific

performances Ukeles carried out over the long weekend at the Wadsworth Museum

between 20-22 July 1973 for curator Lucy Lippard's travelling exhibition, *c. 7,500*.[76]

While each of Ukeles' performances are now the stuff of legend, I focus on *Outside*

because it partakes most in the pseudological aesthetics of the lie through its

dissimulation of artistic context.

This gambit—to take an everyday object or action and proclaim it to be art—is an

act of declarative aesthetics. Thierry de Duve cites as the paradigmatic declarative

aesthetic gesture Robert Rauschenberg's, *This Is a Portrait of Iris Clert if I Say So*

(1961), in which Rauschenberg sent a telegram that stated such to Galerie Iris Clert for

inclusion in their inaugural Paris show, *Les 41 présentent Iris Clert* (41 Portraits of Iris

Clert; Buchloh et al 135). In a similar Duchampian gesture, Ukeles' handwritten signage

certifies anything it designates as art, such as records or materials of cleaning and other

banal duties or objects that might be overlooked (Phillips 45). While the status of Ukeles'

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[76] *c. 7,500* was first shown in Valencia, California and focused on twenty-six female Conceptual artists. At the time, women conceptualists were consistently overlooked in the male dominated artworld. It opened in May 1973 at CalArts, then travelled to eight other venues including London, UK. Ukeles' other stand-alone object works in the show were: *Maintenance Art Album 1973, Maintenance Art Tapes, Maintenance Art Questionnaire,* and *Dressing to Go Out/Undressing to Go In*. On 20 July, Ukeles performed her first two performances, *Transfer: The Maintenance of the Art Object: With the Maintenance Man, the Maintenance Artist, and the Museum Conservator* and *The Keeping of the Keys*. In *Transfer*, she cleaned a vitrine holding a 5000-year-old mummy. In using cleaning spray and a cloth diaper, Ukeles made what she calls a "dust painting" (after Marcel Duchamp's use of dust as an artistic medium in his Large Glass). But, because the vitrine was now designated "art" by an artist, the regular museum cleaner could no longer clean the vitrine, and its maintenance was shifted to the museum conservator who cleaned art objects and artefacts. Ukeles documented the transfer of value and power in a simple hand-drawn diagram, and used her Maintenance Art stamp to certify both the vitrine and cloth as art. In *Keeping*, she periodically took possession of different security guards' keys, washed them, locked doors, and reopened doors after a short period of time (her wrist watch alarm would sound to let her know when). Whenever this would happen in an area of the museum, she would post a hand-written sign notifying visitors and museum personnel. It read: "The security of this area is now being maintained as Maintenance Art by Mierle Laderman Ukeles, artist. It will be normalized shortly and transferred back to the appropriate guard when the alarm rings. Please feel free to wait or to return when the area is transferred" (Phillips 58). The sign was also certified with Ukeles' Maintenance Art stamp. On 22 July, she performed the final two works, *Washing/Tracks/Maintenance: Inside* and *Outside*.

performance as art is of paramount importance, as I will discuss, the significant aesthetic maneuver Ukeles employs in *Outside* is not simply declarative. Instead, she engages in the disruptive shock of pseudological mystification: viewer-participants experience her performance as "not-art" and therefore interpret it through their primary frameworks, only then to experience the performance as "art" by bracketing it with their artistic frames. Though the ontological shift relies on the key moment of declaration (i.e., "this is art"), the aesthetic shift relies on the viewer-participant's prior experience of the performance as not-art.

Ukeles' investigation and exposition of the innerworkings of the art museum belongs to the history of feminist critique. Curator Patricia Phillips writes that Ukeles' four performances "remain vibrant, indicative, and legendary actions of institutional critique" (50). As critiques of modernism gave way to postmodernism in the Western artworld of the 1960s and '70s, gender disparity became a key site for political change within arts institutions. Ukeles' *Washing, Tracks, Maintenance: Outside* plays within the liminal space between, on the one hand, this modernist myth of the solitary male artist engaged in acts of original genius, and, on the other, the overlooked positions of artworld support staff that enable, support, and care for art and artists. *Outside* inverts the cultural power of the artist and arts institutions by foregrounding the behind-the-scenes work that makes possible the creation, display and preservation of works of art. At the same time, Ukeles' performance critiques the role assigned to women in the artworld, disproportionally underrepresented in collections, traditionally kept outside the

institutions of art production and display, and systematically placed in support positions that fall very low on the totem pole of hierarchical valuation.

In October 1969, while living in Philadelphia, a few years before her Wadsworth performances, Ukeles wrote her now iconic *Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969! Proposal for an Exhibition "Care"*. Socio-political revolution was at the forefront of Western culture in 1968, yet Ukeles felt doubly marginalized because she had just become a mother and a wife and, therefore, seemingly fell short of the hip definition of "revolutionary" (Jackson 85). Responding to the gendered and class-based structures of popular culture and the artworld, Ukeles outlined two essential systems that form a traditional dichotomy: *development* is "pure individual creation; the new; change; progress, advance, excitement, flight or fleeing," while on the other hand *maintenance* requires us to "keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; protect progress; defend and prolong the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight" ("Maintenance" 144-5). Recognizing the hypocritical nature of this schism as it played out in the male-dominated arena of conceptual art, Ukeles writes, "Conceptual & Process art, especially, claim pure development and change, yet employ almost purely maintenance processes" ("Maintenance" 145). Ukeles sought to deconstruct the very difference enabling the unequal cultural effects and power relations of this schism. She proclaims, "Now, I will simply do these maintenance everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art" ("Maintenance" 146). By using this declarative aesthetic manoeuvre as a flushing-up-to-consciousness, Ukeles' Maintenance Art sheds light on the hidden gulf between differently gendered systems of valuation,

using the appellation "art" as a frame of focus to make-strange the everyday in order to revaluate it.

By elucidating the dichotomic valuation between "creation" and "care," Ukeles' feminist cultural critique reframes the (continually elided) issue of women in the arts by dismantling the uneven gendering of artistic roles. The art historical canon is populated by artists and artworks valued for their possession of the first term in this binary division, yet comes into being only because of the conditions of possibility manifested by the second term. Because of the gendering of this division, the canon of women's artistic achievements was underdeveloped when Ukeles began to make her Maintenance Art. In this way, she began to deconstruct what art historian Linda Nochlin later framed as the question, "Why are there no great woman artists?" (1971). Such framing of the question relies on the assumption that "genius" is "an atemporal and mysterious power" inherent within "great artists" that naturally finds expression to which social, cultural, geographic, political, and historical factors are never determinant but insignificantly incidental (Nochlin 317). Nochlin exposes these social determinants that perpetuate the self-fulfilling prophecy of the monadic Great Artist Genius suffusing art historical scholarship, recurring frequently in similar discovery narratives of the child prodigy or the posthumously-appreciated virtuoso outcast (318).[77] Both Ukeles and Nochlin make clear that women have been excluded from artistic practices and subsequently their

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[77] Instead, "genius" is the building of "the patterns of adaptation-accommodation" of "a subject *in a situation*" (Nochlin 319), and "art making, both in terms of the development of the art maker and the nature and quality of the work of art itself, occurs in a social situation, is an integral element of the social structure, and is mediated and determined by specific and definable social institutions, be they art academies, systems of patronage, mythologies of the divine creator and artist as he-man or social outcast" (320).

histories because, as is the case in almost all areas of patriarchal culture, they have not been granted the same privileges as men and have actively been discouraged, prevented, disallowed and excluded from cultural practices reserved for men. Though Nochlin states that there has never been a cohesive group of women artists consciously articulating a "feminine" experience through a distinctly women's art, Ukeles' declaration of the aesthetic import of Maintenance Art leaves individual emotional experience aside to focus on the conditions of patriarchal valuation and the *commonality* between actions dubbed "women's work" therein. By performing and conflating the supposed contradictions between "creation" and "care," Ukeles offers audiences a moment of critical feminist pedagogy within the patriarchal art museum.

Ukeles' pseudological pedagogy strategically brings viewer-participants' artistic frames out from the disinterested, apolitical hermeticism of the museum space. Art historian Griselda Pollock, in "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity" (1988), finds "the masculinist myths of modernism," that is, the ideas of lone, white geniuses, creating original works of art, are an implicit pedagogy that teaches gender disparity within art institutions (50). Historically, socially structured sexual difference has determined what was depicted in art, how art was made, and who was able to take on the mantle of artist (55). Because these modernist myths take on a "universal or general meaning" inside the museum that negates the real effects of socially structured sexual difference, the asymmetrical social and economic power relations between women and men are commonly occluded within the artistic frame (56). Ukeles' performance is a reminder that even after the comparatively progressive 1960s there remains enormous gender disparity,

Figure 5: Guerrilla Girls*, Do Women have to be Naked to Get into the Met Museum?* (1989). Photo Credit: Guerilla Girls

especially in professional positions like those in the arts. For instance, the Guerrilla Girls'

poster work, "Do Women have to be Naked to Get into the Met Museum?" (1989),

highlights the little change that occurred in major museums in the fifteen years after

Ukeles' performance (Fig. 5). Ukeles uses the very value judgements that gallery-goers

hold dear—the very foundation for their social distinction and sustaining of the status

quo—that is, the positive enculturating power of "art," to force a re-evaluation of the role

of women in culture. Ukeles' piece asks: If this act of maintenance is art—Maintenance

Art—then why are the normal custodians of art so routinely undervalued, and what does

it mean that a woman washing the steps of a gallery could so easily be dismissed?

Pseudological artworks like Ukeles' seize this pedagogical potential of re-evaluation.

Ukeles' maintenance art performance was a contextual fabrication that played on museum

visitors' normalized frameworks. By blending in, camouflaging herself in the everyday,

Ukeles sought to bring the critical evaluative frame of art to bear on the gender disparity

within the culture of the museum and the world at large.

In this way, Ukeles turns the act of designation, itself, into an aesthetic experience for viewer-participants. There is no unilateral border separating art and reality, but such distinguishability is a necessary task art must undergo for it to exist qua art. As Sandor Radnóti remarks,

> There are no limits … that might enable us to say: Here is where reality ends and art begins. But every work of art, every form of artistic creation defines its own counterpart as the segment of 'reality' from which to distinguish itself, and with which it cannot form an indistinguishable whole (113).

Ukeles' designation of a strip of reality as "art" brackets the actions, objects, and experiences therein for closer analysis. This bracketing is the artistic frame that effects an onto-phenomenological change of the ongoing world into art. Between viewer-participants' redefinition of Ukeles' washing as art, there is a momentary break in the interpretive frame they apply to the scene at hand. This momentary break in frame holds the key aesthetic potential to change the politics supported by viewer-participant's interpretive frameworks.

Breaking frame is a normal, everyday occurrence. Erving Goffman shows us that in any framed activity a viewer-participant retains a "cognitive reserve" as "a wisp of doubt … a slight readiness to accept the possible need to reframe what is occurring" (378). Yet, when a viewer-participant breaks frame, but subsequently cannot find a new frame to understand the situation at hand, this self-aware experience is "negatively defined" in that it cannot be clearly organized using the viewer-participant's current reserve of interpretive frames. For the brief moment when experience is not organized by a frame, Goffman explains that there is a floundering where "Reality anomically flutters"

and the viewer-participant's social rootedness falls into question (379).[78] Viewer-participants become momentarily and radically disoriented, a sociopolitical disorientation that questions the very stability of the selfsame ensemble of discourses and practices that make up the status quo (Mouffe's definition of politics). This "negative experience," that is, experience not positively defined (ibid), is like Brecht's alienation effect: it causes one to become aware and self-critical of what is going on in the scene at hand through making-strange everyday actions and situations (Brecht, "On Chinese Acting" 16). The frame break of a negative experience and its accompanying sense of normlessness, then, stimulates an aesthetic-political shift: the self-conscious reframing of experience itself, a recognition of one's own subjective involvement in doing so, and the push and pull between what one apprehends (what has been made strange) and what one recognizes (what norms limit the framing of the scene).

This breaking of frame I hold as an essential first step to changing the terms of debate for certain events or issues. So, when a viewer-participant of Ukeles' *Outside* begins to reframe her maintenance activity as art, they must rebuild their artistic frame to include Maintenance Art. By including Ukeles' work as art, the disjuncture between one's

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[78] Goffman: "When, for whatever reason, the individual breaks frame and perceives he has done so, the nature of his engrossment and belief suddenly changes. … he becomes unreservedly engrossed both in his failure to sustain appropriate behaviour and in the cause of this failure. Whatever distance and reserve he had in regard to prior events he loses, at least temporarily, along with some of whatever conscious control he had over what was occurring. He is thrust immediately into his predicament without the usual defenses. Expecting to take up a position in a well-framed realm, he finds that no particular frame is immediately applicable, or the frame that he thought was applicable no longer seems to be, or he cannot bind himself within the frame that does not apparently apply. He loses command over the formulation of viable response. He flounders. Experience—the meld of what the current scene brings to him and what he brings to it— meant to settle into form even while it is beginning, finds no form and is therefore no experience. Reality anomically flutters. He has a 'negative experience'—negative in the sense that it takes its character from that it is not, and what it is not is an organized and organizationally affirmed response" (378-9).

artistic frame and the ongoing scene is highlighted. When the disjuncture between the inside and the outside of this frame is foregrounded, a comparative analysis of the inside-outside is possible that was not previously available for use on the ongoing world's undifferentiated whole. That is, now that a woman doing "women's work" is recognized as art and imbued with subsequent valuation, similar scenes in everyday life can be apprehended and recognized, reinterpreted and revalued.

However, even with the possibility of this powerful aesthetic effect, breaking frame alone is not a guarantee of getting critical purchase on the world at hand. As Goffman writes, "It appears that minor frame breaks can readily be allowed, if for no other reason than the fact that they seem to ensure the continuity and viability of the established frame" (382). Though Goffman is here referring to minor distractions that might pull us out of engrossment, like audience members coughing during a theatre performance, I project this realization onto the sociological level. Certain contexts have a greater capacity to mute frame breaks and release their effectiveness. Contexts defined by the artistic frame are one such instance of the easy silencing of radical changes to frame—simply because the artistic frame commonly includes the possibility for hyperbolic, fantabulous invention without real-world consequences (i.e., anything goes in art).

However, the oscillation between the artistic frame and the ongoing world is made aesthetic—engrossing and self-reflexive[79]—when pseudology is at play. Strategic

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[79] "Let me repeat that since frame incorporates both the participant's response and the world he is responding to, a *reflexive* element must necessarily be present in any participant's clearheaded view of events; a correct view of a scene must include the viewing of it as part of it" (Goffman 85; emphasis my own).

dissimulation, when combined with a moment of revelation, can cast a critical eye not only on the deception at hand but onto the broader ongoing world by undercutting the confidence and certainty of our interpretive frameworks. As Goffman relates,

> The way in which strips of activity are geared into the world and the way in which deceptions can be fabricated turn out, paradoxically, to be much the same. In consequence one can learn how our sense of ordinary reality is produced by examining something that is easier to become conscious of, namely, how reality is mimicked and/or how it is faked (251).

Following Goffman, then, I suggest that Ukeles' pseudological performance, because it is in the business of studying how to deceive, is recursively also in the business of learning how to uncover the deceptions of the ongoing world—a sort of reverse-engineered lying used to identify pervasive ideo-material fabrications. By giving us a chance to "learn how our sense of ordinary reality is *produced*" through the framing of the field of recognition, Ukeles' pseudology gives us a chance to become conscious of the frame of our everyday reality and hence critically engage with this ordinary, usually invisible, frame.

Questioning the invisibility of interpretive frameworks is key to changing the reality of our sociopolitical world. When left unquestioned, the gaze of museum viewers is "inextricably bound up with patriarchal forms of control, domination, and behaviour" (Alberro, "Institutions, Critique" 12). Ukeles' momentary deception in *Washing, Tracks, Maintenance: Outside* makes visible museum visitors' everyday primary frameworks (the ones that edit out "women's work" from considerations of significance) by fabricating a banal maintenance activity. By using the artistic frame to gain critical purchase on this maintenance scene, an oscillation between the artistic frame and primary framework exposes the hidden everydayness of the ideological assumptions that sustain gender

disparity—in and out of the museum. As Goffman makes clear, reality is simply the dominant understanding of what is occurring, that is, what we hold to be real "consists of that understanding of what is going on that drives out, that 'dominates,' all other understandings" (85). Ukeles disrupts viewer-participants' normative modes of viewing and necessitates a redefinition of dominant understandings, that is, of *reality*, through artistic mystification, causing a frame break, "negative experience," and subsequent rebuilding of framework.

In taking a pseudological approach, Ukeles can allow her audience to question the easy invisibility of women in the museum. Political critiques of the art museum, whether feminist or ethnographic, have sought to curate a "different invisible," like the exclusion of women from the artworld or the aestheticization of the "primitive," and Tony Bennett warns that any such critiques should be sure to make their new invisibles more legible to a broader public so their messages can be disseminated (172). A "politics of the invisible" is Bennett's term for the systems of exclusion and marginalization of groups through the structures, organization, display methods and didactics of museums and their collections (ibid). By making this act of maintenance legible as art, Ukeles alters both the artistic frame—delineating what, how and who produces art situations—and the primary frame— recognizing and reinscribing the norms of everyday life. What differentiates pseudological works from other forms of artistic illusion is this active intervention in viewers' primary frameworks (i.e., reality). If norms of recognition shape how we apprehend the ongoing world, and these norms structure our interpretive frameworks (Butler, *Frames* 5), then pseudological works like Ukeles' allow us to witness the

presence of these norms, ask how they are formed, and begin to apprehend (and,

ultimately, recognize) the objects, people, and practices excluded by our frameworks.

Lying in art can do this political work by making visible normative modes of viewing, at

the same time allowing the previously inapprehensible to become recognizable, and,

hence, valuable.

Pseudology Vs. the Convenient Colonial Othering of the Museological Frame

> *Is there anyone who really believes that we could be 'post-racial' in a*
> *culture that fetishizes black athletes, equates black style with*
> *rebelliousness, pillages indigenous belief systems for pithy profundities*
> *to satisfy the spiritual cravings of secular materialists, and then depends*
> *on cheap immigrant labor, redlining, and mass incarceration to*
> *safeguard class hierarchies that are obviously racialized?*
> —Fusco, "Still in the Cage" 194

In 1492, Columbus—yadda yadda—and in 1992, North America was engrossed in

the quincentenary celebrations of the "discovery" of the Americas. Coco Fusco and

Guillermo Gómez-Peña's pseudological performance *Two Undiscovered Amerindians*

Visit the West (1992-94) began in response to the government-planned celebrations and

institutional proclamations of multiculturalism that elided the colonization, exploitation,

and extermination of indigenous peoples by European settler nations. As Fusco explains,

"mainstream institutions which had never had a history of engagement or dialogue with

ethnic minority communities all of a sudden had to demonstrate their engagement by

showing a person of colour, preferably a Latin American or Native American" ("At Your

Service" 106). Fusco and Gómez-Peña's site-specific performance toured four countries

and eight different institutions that were looking to capitalize on the official year of American multicultural success.[80]

Dressed as two members of a fictitious tribe from the invented Caribbean nation of "Guatinau," they put themselves on display as grotesque stereotypes of the exotic, primitive Other for gawking audiences. They were led out on leashes for their daily performances, in which they would inhabit a gilded cage as specimens of natural history from the island of Guatinau, heretofore undiscovered by Europeans and Euro-Americans. The cage was populated by a variety of multi- and mixed-media work by eleven artists of colour; Fusco and Gómez-Peña would use these works as well as common consumer goods to interact with each other and audiences while speaking in their "native" tongue (really just a combination of Spanish, English, and gibberish).[81]

The camp exhibition parodied the same anthropological practices that were essential in founding the institutions in which they performed. The practice of exhibiting indigenous people from continents outside Europe began in 1493 when Columbus violently captured and transported several Arawak peoples to the Spanish Court as proof of the success of his voyage. This practice quickly morphed into the exhibition of humans as "specimens" of natural history. As Fusco explains, it was "an important form of public 'education'" that was "[d]esigned to provide opportunities for aesthetic contemplation,

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[80] The eight sites were: 1) University of California-Irvine; 2) Columbus Plaza, Madrid; 3) Covent Gardens, London; 4) Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; 5) Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C.; 6) Australian Museum of Natural History, Sydney; 7) Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago; 8) Whitney Biennial, New York. In this analysis, I focus on the iterations performed in the natural history museum contexts.

[81] Curators: Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco, with Nancy Lytle and Stephen Erickson. Artists: Maria Magdelena Campos, Enrique Chagoya, Richard Lou, Inigo Manglano-Ovalle, Pepon Osorio, Leonard Peltier, Alfred Quiroz, Angel Rodriquez-Diaz, Maruca Salazar, Robert Sanchez, and Ernest Whiteman.

scientific analysis, and entertainment for Europeans and North Americans" that supported

the cohesion of mass cultural identity during Western urbanization, colonialism, and

expansionism ("The Other" 148-9). As sites of public pedagogy and cultural identity

formation, museums played key roles in the popularization of this violent transcultural

exhibitionism. Fusco and Gómez-Peña's parody was designed as a cutting critique of the

continued exhibitionism, tokenism, and opportunism of the contemporary counterparts of

these institutions that sought to capitalize on the multiculturalism panacea of 1992 while

eliding the real violences of colonialism celebrated by Columbus Day.

Initially, Fusco and Gómez-Peña banked on the over-the-top campiness of the

work being sure signs of the artistic frame at play—that is, the artists felt the piece would

be clearly read as fictional performance. Yet, surprisingly for the artists, large portions of

audiences took the satire at face value and accepted the performance as true (Fusco, "The

Other" 155).[82] This surprising finding was further exploited by Fusco and Gómez-Peña as

they re-enacted the performance in different venues: the performance within the cage was

accompanied by a didactic panel that highlighted the extensive chronology of exhibiting

non-Western peoples; a fake map showed the island of Guatinau in the Gulf of Mexico;

and, a fabricated *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry explained the history of these

"Amerindians" to audience members. When the performance was scheduled for a new

venue, the artists limited prior news-media framing of the event to

> create a surprise or "uncanny" encounter, one in which audiences had to
> undergo their own process of reflection as to what they were seeing, aided

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[82] "Consistently from city to city, more than half of our visitors believed our fiction and thought we were 'real,' with the exception of the Whitney, where we experienced the art world equivalent of such misperceptions: some assumed that we were not the artists, but rather actors who had been hired by another artist" (Fusco, "The Other" 155).

> only by written information and parodically didactic zoo guards. In such
> encounters with the unexpected, people's defense mechanisms are less
> likely to operate with their normal efficiency; caught off guard, their
> beliefs are more likely to rise to the surface" (Fusco, "The Other"148).

Though Fusco and Gómez-Peña first relied on this campiness to allow spectators to apply

the proper interpretive frame, but subsequently added additionally deceptive framing cues

as the piece was performed over two years, the required active engagement of audiences

to distinguish fact from fiction puts this piece squarely in the realm of artistic

mystification.

As an artistic mystification, Fusco and Gómez-Peña's performance critiqued the

fad of multiculturalism sweeping institutions in North America in the late 1980s and '90s.

For Julia Abramson, literary mystification relies on falsehood but, unlike forgery, invites

critical commentary on the fake itself; it is an elegant way to explore new ideas and avoid

the pseudo-criticality of burgeoning fads (18). For instance, during the triumphal

celebrations of multiculturalism in the early 1990s in North America, indigenous peoples

were what postcolonial cultural theorist Eva Mackey calls "conceptual exiles" (373).

Columbus celebrations perpetuated a broad social amnesia, contributing to an editing out

of indigenous peoples of the history of North America. This active exclusion

demonstrates "the practice of multiculturalism as distinct from its ideology" (Mackey

370). The cultural politics within the rhetoric and discourse surrounding the term

"multiculturalism" is mobilized to bolster interpretive authority, or the claim to truth, for

the dominant culture. Token inclusion and display of indigenous peoples and culture

within majoritarian institutions fails to conceive of indigenous peoples as viewers of

exhibitions or as active contributors to national history and culture. Instead, the trope of

multiculturalism is a legitimating intellectual weapon mobilized by the dominant culture

through the pedagogical site of the museum: multiculturalism is used both offensively (by

the eliding of minority groups from the dominant, imagined community) and defensively

(by assuaging charges of systemic racism through appeals to the museum's purported

openness and inclusivity) (Mackey 378). Though communities of conceptual exiles are

called upon to symbolically enhance Euro-American mainstream culture through a

borrowed authenticity effect—as is the case with the fad of multiculturalism—these same

communities are disallowed possession of subjectivities that would allow them to make

truth claims on their own behalf (ibid). Thinking about individual subjects through

multiculturalism or plurality does not form the language of interdependence necessary for

rethinking power relations and social policy (Butler, *Frames* 31). In this way, Fusco and

Gómez-Peña's performance sought to expose the way truth functions implicitly within

Euro-American discourse through the mobilization of the vast material and symbolic

power of the museum. *Undiscovered* takes seriously the necessity to contextually

investigate and uncover the unequal ground created in the discursive confrontation of the

museum as a site of public pedagogy because it is where shared primary frameworks—

world views—are constructed.

My purpose here is not to rehash the old debate as to whether *Undiscovered*

critiqued ethnography or was itself ethnographic (Taylor; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett), but

rather to expand upon the discussion of the importance of the institutional framing

context in which the performance was cast. Though Hal Foster writes that institutional

critique had come to a dead end by the 1980s (*Return of the Real* 101), institutional

authority and the exclusionary effects of the museological frame still functioned invisibly.

This leaves the museum's power to claim truth intact. For *Undiscovered*, as Fusco

expresses,

> Some people took it seriously and believed that we were the real thing.
> When we performed in places like the Museum of Natural History and the
> Smithsonian, or the Field Museum in Chicago, this tendency was
> intensified by the institutional framework in which the work was presented
> ("At Your Service" 107).

As a site of immense social, economic, and cultural power supporting majoritarian claims

to authority, the museum is host to key performances of everyday cultural politics. The

museum could be described, following Foucault's work on truth and history, as a "place

of inevitable loss" because it is in museums that "the truth of things is knotted to a

truthful discourse" which is then "hardened into an unalterable form in the long baking

process of history" (the unalterable form, of course, being what we call truth)

("Nietzsche" 372). The special commingling of institutional authority, truthful discourse,

and cultural calcification allows the museum to encourage a *museological frame*—an

interpretive matrix tied to a physical site that performatively ensconces what it contains in

the weight of history, tradition, and the truths of convention.

The power to bestow authenticity through the museological frame is at stake in

Fusco and Gómez-Peña's pseudological performance. Sometimes inside and other times

outside the educational site of the museum, the simple proximity to these places of

earnest, passive pedagogy renders uncritical audiences' application of their museological

frames. In *The Birth of the Museum* (1995), cultural theorist Tony Bennett explains that

earlier museum displays in the European context were aimed at sensationalism and

provocation, as opposed to the modern aim of Euro-American museums for didactic instruction through the scientific ordering of objects to teach typology, evolution, and political narratives (2).[83] In the museum, art and artefacts are classified so the public can learn primarily their shared "common culture" (Bennett 90).[84] In this way, the museum is a tool of political control meant to cement the high and low classes in a common goal of civilization. This pedagogical function of the state in its aim to civilize (the state as "educator") is bound up with a bourgeois-democratic politics. The Western museum has historically been a site of normalization, a "technology of behaviour management," and "an exercise in civics" (Bennett 101-2). This universalizing mandate is partly applied through what is shown—the "superiority" of the European white, bourgeois male, positioned within a narrative of human progress that museum visitors would spatially perform in viewing exhibit installations—and partly through how the "machinery for the regulation of behaviour" normalized ways of comportment, such as, "to respect property and behave gently" (ibid).

The ability of the museological frame to authorize historical accounts as true or authentic is supported by the very architecture of the site. Museums architecturally put in place the "division between the producers and consumers of knowledge", where

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[83] Bennett outlines a political genealogy of the modern Western public museum from its early influences and policies to its present-day instantiation. The common narrative of the evolution of the museum begins with the nineteenth-century's rationalizing and ordering of the chaotic clutter of the cabinet of curiosities and the triumph of "science's progress from error to truth" (Bennett 2).

[84] After the French revolution brought about the emergence of a new democratic "truth" ("a new rationality" ordering the everyday lives of citizens), old forms of control were put on display in the museum along with new democratic artifacts to demonstrate the success and superiority of this political transition (Bennett 89). To foster the aims of democracy, museums were spaces where both high and low classes could come together as a newly formed "public" (Bennett 92).

knowledge is created in the hidden spaces of the museum and then passively consumed

by the public in its open areas in which the public's bodies were "rendered docile" under

constant surveillance (Bennett 89). This dominance-docility relationship is mirrored back

to audiences in *Undiscovered* using both the real and symbolic submissiveness of the

cage, the infantile or animalistic feeding Fusco and Gómez-Peña underwent at the hands

of audience members, and the leashes used to transport Fusco and Gómez-Peña whenever

in museum areas outside the cage. This separating stagecraft, intended to provoke critical

responses in audiences, is used by museums for opposite effect. That is, the museum's

stagecraft serves to do more than simply entertain: it attempts to instruct in specific

ways.[85] Fusco and Gómez-Peña's use of pseudology, however, calls attention to the

similarity of these endeavours. As Lambert-Beatty writes, "in parafictions institutional

authority is a crucial ingredient in plausibility" and it is called forth through the material

structures of institutions that are forged (Lambert-Beatty 131). In calling upon the

pseudological technique of mystification, Fusco and Gómez-Peña could decisively

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[85] As Carol Duncan describes, in *Civilizing Rituals* (1995), "The museum's sequenced spaces and arrangements of objects, its lighting and architectural details provide both the stage set and the script" (12). For example, craniology was popular in the late-nineteenth century and placed women's craniums behind the evolution of men's, and colonized peoples of colour several places behind white Europeans at a remove precluding the ability of their "civilizing" (Bennett 190). By structuring the physical movement of bodies and the narrative progression of discourse within museum displays, museums fostered the "inner-directed practices of self-interrogation and self-shaping" (Bennett 189). How well or much a visitor could perform the evolutionary narratives museums constructed within environments that would educate as they civilized was dependent on "the colour and gender of their bodies" (ibid). Though European and North American museum rhetoric has historically called for open access by an undifferentiated public and for the adequate representation of cultures and values of the public's various sections, museums function pragmatically as engines of cultural reform employed by the ruling class. Though museums welcome an undifferentiated public, they function very well at differentiating this public, and the dissonance between these aims ensures the perpetuation of continual, if benign, museum reform.

interrogate the passive spectatorship and easy didacticism of the public's museological frame.

The key here is implicating audience members in the construction of the museological frame. As Goffman explains,

> Whatever it is that generates sureness is precisely what will be employed by those who want to mislead us. For surely, although some evidence will be much more difficult than other evidence to fake, and therefore will be of special use as a test of what is really going on, the more it is relied upon for this reason the more reason there is to make the effort to fake it. In any case, it turns out that the study of how to uncover deception is also by and large the study of how to build up fabrications (251).

The deception uncovered in this instance was the authority of the museum to mint what goes on inside as infallibly true. Because of this, as Fusco explains, the performance "generated all kinds of controversy and tense dealings with cultural bureaucracies, because some people were really angry that we were not telling the truth" ("At Your Service" 107). But because, "There is no appropriate reaction, no "true" or "false" response to this performance" (Taylor 169), the performance made palpable the discomfort of disarticulation by calling into question the veracity of the museological frame and its implication in the violence of historical and contemporary colonialism.

Museums fall under what Louis Althusser positions as Educational Ideological State Apparatuses, pedagogical sites which inculcate subjects with the know-how of the ruling ideology (155-6). The museum is naturalized as a neutral environment purged of ideology (Althusser 156-7). Inside, traditional pedagogy aims to create subjects that will benefit the bourgeois lifestyle, not challenge dominant ideology, and leave critical

questioning outside normalized society.[86] When visitors to a museum think critically, they do so within the bounds of the authority of the institution. This structure programs visitors to enact that which they learn, "whether or not visitors can read its cues" (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 12). The veracity, certainty, or stability of this authority is not interrogated under normal circumstances. In this way, museum visitors are interpellated as subjects of a one-way pedagogy—the museum feeding visitors the knowledge they lack. The museum is an ideological state apparatus in the sense Althusser makes clear, in which "the individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely… [and] make the gestures and actions of his subjection 'all by himself'" (Althusser 182). True democratic agency and reform, then, is at odds with the traditionally passive spectatorship the museum has attempted to foster; therefore, to stimulate agential viewing, problematizing the museological frame is of paramount importance. Indeed, by offering a counter-pedagogy, *Undiscovered* attempts to foster the learning to unlearn what Gramsci called "common sense," where dominant ideologies are embedded in one's needs and are channelled through one without thinking.

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[86] When education reform took root in the 1960s, the continual internal reform of the museum took on a new and critical aspect. Art historian Claire Bishop connects the emergence of institutional critique in the early '70s with the immanent critique of education, typified in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), where both moved "away from authoritarian models of transferring knowledge and towards the goal of empowerment through collective (class) awareness" (Bishop 243). Critical agency as fostered by a pedagogy that promotes autonomous political subjects is hostile to the damaging effects of the museum's oppressive separation of art from everyday life—the schism driven between inside and outside the museum. As radical pedagogue Paulo Freire notes, an enactment of oppressive pedagogy creates in people the dangerous assumption that they exist separately and discreetly in a dichotomy with the world around them (75). This invariably has harmful consequences for a person's critical agency and their potential to shape and mould their and others' lived experiences, because, as Freire remarks, in this situation "a person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others; the individual is spectator, not re-creator" (ibid). Freire reminds us that, "The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not 'marginals,' are not people living 'outside' society. They have always been 'inside'—inside the structure which made them 'beings for others.' The solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings for themselves'" (74).

Fusco and Gómez-Peña's pseudological performance is a model for how a subject

may *dis*interpellate and begin to question the authority of the museological frame.

Disinterpellation, writes critical theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, is the process of

bowing out of the assumed consensus invoked within social performances. Sedgwick

considers the social context of performative utterances and the need for a "silent witness"

in this space of reception. For example, "I dare you" needs addresser, addressee, and an

implied witness. The witnesses are interpellated as sharing the position of the addresser,

whether they share the same opinions or not. Sedgwick explains that "'I dare you'

invokes the presumption, but only the presumption, of a consensus between speaker and

witness" and even the addressee (69). Sedgwick terms the situational context of

performative acts "periperformative," where "the performative can be the site of powerful

energies that often warp, transform, and displace, if they do not overthrow, the supposed

authorizing centrality of that same performative" (75). Examples in the museological

context are the mock-constative utterances of didactic panels which, by stating "just

facts," performatively create authority through the interpellation of museum visitors

within an assumed consensus of professional valuations.[87] Therefore, conventions of any

sort easily interpellate groups where "any given iteration reinscribes a set of presumptive

valuations more deeply" thus giving them more authority (Sedgwick 70). So, it's harder

to disinterpellate through negative performatives like "count me out" in contexts with

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[87] An example of the periperformative at work in the current political context is found in Donald Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again." It attempted to performatively create authority through interpellating the US population into an assumed consensus with the presumptive valuation of a dearth in American "greatness." Though I do not have room for an extended analysis here, I find that what this presumed dearth surreptitiously attempts to point to are the decentralization of American whiteness and its concomitant racial prejudices.

more rigid, formal performative procedures (like, weddings or museums: we rarely hear of anyone who opts to air their piece in either venue). The exposition of consensual context through the frame break of pseudology brings to the fore the assumptions constructing the appearance of contextual cohesion. That is, given the chance to realize the two humans in the cage were performers, audience members could question why it was they so easily believed it was real.

And for those viewers who believed it was real and did not receive additional stimuli that would have them break frame (like overhearing another group of visitors discuss the fictional status of the performance art), disinterpellation is still possible. Fusco writes, "Trying to determine who really believes the fiction and who doesn't became less significant for us in the course of this performance than figuring out what the audience's sense of the rules of the game and their role in it was" ("The Other" 158). The mass of visitors within the performance context creates a supposed implied witness that constitutes the space of the museological frame. What assumptions underwrite this witness, this supposed ideal viewing context? That is, Fusco and Gómez-Peña were interested in what norms of comportment and sociopolitical assumptions structured viewers different museological frames. In this way, a periperformative is like a "mobile proscenium" or "itinerant stage" through which we view a scene (Sedgwick 75). The cage acted as a proscenium arch, metonymically linked to both the museum, and by extension the museological frame. Even though, as Sedgwick finds, threats to this frame, this social view of the world, this shared interpretation, are the most egregious and policed, pseudology can offer up this frame for self-reflexive analysis.

It is the museological frame that is exposed during *Undiscovered*. A change in consciousness occurs when the audience becomes cognisant of the easy truth with which they invested the performance because of the museum site. Fusco and Gómez-Peña's performance, then, reveals the ways in which museums are sites of pedagogical performances with which audiences performatively create their primary frameworks. In this way, Fusco and Gómez-Peña's pseudological performance is a site of radical subjectivity and political resistance. bell hooks considers that while working within white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal culture, it is necessary to use performance as both survival (performance as a mask, an act of complicity) and play (performance as artistic critique, critical intervention) ("Performance Practice" 211). In this way, hooks shows us that performance is able to create contexts in which one can transgress cultural norms. Performance can move people to action and transform the world by functioning as a site of "pedagogical resistance" (ibid 218). When performers and audiences share space they enter into dialogue, and in this interaction they may change consciousness or share critical knowledge and ways of being; thus, for hooks, performance can be a political site of "radical subjectivity" (ibid 220). As sites of interpellation, museums form us as subjects in/outside the majoritarian frame. To resist indoctrination from Eurocentric biases, and resist becoming conceptual exiles, performance can be a "critical ethnography" that gains power through its proximity to the context to which it responds (ibid 214). Performance can be a site of identity formation outside of normative culture, in which it creates pedagogical and emancipatory possibilities for audiences members (what hooks calls liberatory subjectivities). By exposing the museological frame and its power of authority,

the pseudological performance, *Undiscovered*, intervenes in the primary frameworks of audience members while forming an impromptu dialogic community. Fusco and Gómez-Peña show this exposition work of the pseudological frame break as a powerful artistic tool able to create self-reflexive moments of critique. This is especially important given the eliding of the museum's complicity in the violences of continued settler colonialism.

Getting In to Get Out: Pseudology and the Institutional Power of Art

Access to and privilege in art institutions is a mainstay of institutional critique. Pseudology is often used both critically, to analyze the political effects of this privilege, and pragmatically, to gain access to art institutions. For instance, working for the Art Workers Coalition in the 1960s, Joseph Kosuth designed and produced multiples of a fake membership for entry to The Museum of Modern Art (Lippard, *Six Years* ix-x). The physical replicas were part of a larger artistic gambit to open access to the art institution to a broader public. Starting in 1988, David Hildebrand Wilson and Diana Drake Wilson's *Museum of Jurassic Technology, Los Angeles*—a fake museum filled with forgeries and misleading didactic panels—plays with the authority of the institution as pedagogical site by short-circuiting the reality effect of the museological frame.

Most notably, Andrea Fraser's *Museum Highlights* (1989) critiqued the commerce of art institutions, the supposed separateness of art from society, and the inherent symbiotic relationship between art and the dominating class. Fraser is a student of Pierre Bourdieu, sociologically investigating the social order of class division. As her fictional character Jane Castleton, she mimicked a museum docent and toured groups through the

Philadelphia Museum of Art using verbose and overly dramatic language. For instance,

stopping her group outside the museum's cafeteria, Fraser as Jane Castleton remarks:

> Oh, I've known happiness; intense happiness, exquisite happiness, here in
> the museum, beside these tiles, or across the room from those or, or over
> there, between these two. It's nice to feel alive. I'd like to live like an art
> object. Wouldn't it be nice to live like an art object? "A sophisticated
> composition of austere dignity, vitality, and immediate quality; a strict
> formality softened by an exquisitely luminous atmosphere." How could
> anyone ask for more? ("Museum" 121)

The quoted material Fraser pulls from a description of art in *The Metropolitan Museum of*

Art Guide (1983), yet during her tour she furtively integrates references like this into her

own speech—her character becoming a quirky if jarring patchwork of different

discourses, concerns, and cadences. Leading the group to the back corridor with the

telephones, coat room, and restroom, Castleton draws her language from a *Tenth Report*

of the Board of Public Education, School District of Philadelphia (1928), proclaiming,

> Let's not just talk about art. Because finally, the museum's purpose is not
> just to develop an appreciation of art, but to develop an appreciation of
> values ... "By appreciation of values we have in mind the ability to
> distinguish between the worthy and the unworthy, the true and the false,
> the beautiful and the ugly, between refinement and crudity, sincerity and
> cant, between the elevating and the degrading, the decent and indecent in
> dress and conduct, between values that are enduring and those that are
> temporary" ("Museum" 122).

In this way, Fraser cobbles together scripts from aesthetic theory and corporate

campaigns that rationalized the universal appeal of art to help educate and enculturate the

lower classes while also framing art institutions as international playgrounds for the rich.

She pairs this lofty rhetoric with the practical structures of the gallery, the cafeteria, the

water fountains, the rare vistas of the external, banal, industrial city. She dresses up the

everydayness of the art institution in the common art-speak that vaunts art and clothes

patrons in cultural status to expose through bathetic juxtaposition the way they work together in the art space: capital funding the arts, doing "good works," yet simply acquiring cultural creditably to offset its ethical deficits. Fraser exposes for consideration the oft-overlooked labour relations of the artist, gallery, and patron triumvirate by making this invisible relationship tangible through her awkward juxtapositions of text. Though after a time a careful tour member could discern the camp critique of art institutions and mythos, it was important the tour be presented first as real (that is, not a self-aware piece of performance art) to allow the viewer-participant time to experience the aesthetic of lying that comes from being duped. Fraser exposes the hypocritical altruism of the arts, analyzes through her hilarious pseudology the gallery's hermetic seal, its isolationism, and its discreteness from the "external" everyday working conditions of artists and the broader public.

Similarly, the idea of access has been taken up by many artists since the 1960s, by closing the gallery for the duration of the exhibit—with or without the flourish of pseudology. For instance, in 1969, conceptual artist Robert Barry closed Art + Project Gallery, Amsterdam, for the duration of his exhibition. Visitors were notified by a sign posted outside the gallery and numerous invitation cards that read "During the exhibition the gallery will be closed." Santiago Sierra created *Space Closed by Corrugated Metal* (2002), for Lisson Gallery, London, which read like a redo of Robert Barry's 1969 piece, except unsuspecting visitors showed up for the opening to find the space closed. In a more open way, Maria Eichhorn closed the Chisenhale Gallery, London, and gave the gallery staff a paid month off, in her show *5 weeks, 25 days, 175 hours* (2016).

Joshua Schwebel's *Please Do Not Submit Original Works* (2012) is a

pseudological work about access designed specifically for the artist-run centre (ARC)

Articule in Montreal. Schwebel was interested in the working conditions for emerging

artists as members of neoliberalism's "creative class." Schwebel impersonated famous

Canadian artist Micah Lexier to propose a project to Articule. Schwebel forged Lexier's

CV, employed sample images, a Facebook identity, and a fake email all to convince the

programming committee at Articule that Micah Lexier was indeed proposing a project for

the ARC. However, a well-orchestrated impersonation was not Schwebel's endgame.

ARCs are ostensibly art spaces in which young or emerging artists are protected from the

nepotism of the artworld because ARCs determine programing based on quality not

reputation. Part of Articule's mandate states, "While special consideration is given to

emerging artists, we also respect those who have already established important

precedents, who continue to test the limits of aesthetic gesture, and who commit

themselves to the ideals of experimentation and risk-taking" (Articule, "Mandate").

However, Schwebel's proposal was of intentionally poor quality—it did not "test" the

efficacy of risky aesthetic gestures.[88] It was, surprisingly, accepted by Articule,

whereupon Schwebel revealed he had faked the whole application. As former board

member Amber Berson states, the board members of Articule were "Faced with the

realization that we had been tricked into admitting we were perhaps programming equally

on the basis of reputation and quality, we were put in a position to reassess the role of the

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[88] Under Lexier's name, the accepted proposal was to provide a newspaper free of charge to gallery visitors.

artist-run centre within the larger discussion of nepotism in art"[89] ("Faking in Artist Run Centres"). Schwebel's piece "fictionalized conflict" to bring this discrepancy to the surface. Schwebel's project pushed the ARC to support its mandate because they were becoming too traditional and supporting artwork based on reputation and not conceptualization.

Schwebel did go on to mount a show at Articule, *Please Do Not Submit Original Works* (2012), which was not the flimsy project he had proposed under the more notable name. Instead, in conversation with Lexier himself, Schwebel's project addressed the topic of reputation in the artworld and ARCs along with the role of nepotism in both through the display of Schwebel's devious correspondence, fabricated application materials, and a panel discussion with two art "experts" who read prewritten, almost identical statements, leaving the audience with a lingering sensation of doubt (Berson, "Classic Fake-Out" 75).[90] I see this feeling of ubiquitous uncertainty as the hailing affect of the current neoliberal cultural climate (something I return to in the Conclusion). Schwebel's pseudology not only harnesses this doubt to foster a critical reflexive

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[89] Berson, in a conference address given at *Fail Again, Fake Better*, the 13th Annual York University Graduate Student Symposium, on March 14th, 2014, maintains that ARCs must actively work against rote institutionalization. She cites the systematic directing of artists' projects through avenues like grants that push for material arts as one mode of this trend.

[90] Now, I know Schwebel's work may seem out of step with the more overtly politically engaged works I have discussed in this chapter, but I feel it important to have a discussion of Schwebel's work in conjunction with these. It is vital to acknowledge the first two works are part of great strides in sociopolitical change. Though political impact is clearer in Ukeles' feminist and Fusco and Gómez-Peña's anti-colonial works, the normative modes of viewing (and understanding) that Schwebel exposes pervade our culture and are structured through numerous discourses, including discourses on art or that are circulated in art venues. Schwebel, as an artist labourer grappling with being confined by the art world, is also addressing more broadly the inability to take up certain subject positions, about invisibility and erasure—which in the end are large political dynamics. Open access to arts institutions is vital if works like Ukeles and Fusco and Gómez-Peña's are to find public voice. Thanks to Liss Platt for these insights.

experience for Articule's programming committee, but translates this doubt into the take-away affect for the secondary audience of gallery visitors.

Berson suggests it may be less "fun" when critical works like Schwebel's are easily accepted by the institution being critiqued. For instance, the work may lose its aesthetic or pleasurable dimension and become mainly pragmatic, effecting "only" practical change. Yet, this idea of institutional acceptance as suppressing art's criticality is an old, somewhat fraught argument. For instance, Peter Bürger maintains that institutional critique is rendered inauthentic when works become accepted by the institutions they seek to critique (53). Though arts institutions may function as sites of continual social reform, they abstain from calling into question their own viability or relevance. It is assumed that, though 1960s and '70s artistic practices were critical of museums and galleries, they ultimately lost their critical edge, or worse, were never capable of immanent critique from the outset, because they gained recognition from and were supported by these same art institutions. However, Andrea Fraser reminds us that this is a misconception of what institutional critique was and is. For Fraser, institutional critique is about engaging the boundaries between art and its opposite, the inside and outside of art. A student of Bourdieu, Fraser identifies the "institution of art" as the *habitus* whence the competencies, dispositions, concepts, and modes of perception spring "that allow us to produce, write about, and understand art, or simply recognize art as art" ("From a Critique"103). Importantly, it is this institution of art, what this dissertation terms the artistic frame, that shapes "the interests, aspirations, and criteria of value that

orient our actions and define our sense of worth" (ibid).[91] What lays outside the institution of art is simply what lays outside the artistic frame—that which is not art. Therefore, for Fraser, "Institutional critique has always been institutionalized. It could only have emerged within and, like all art, can only function within the institution of art" ("From a Critique"104). In this way, institutional critique is an open acknowledging of the discursive framing which the pseudological practices of Chapter One used to their advantage. Institutional critique has always been institutionalized because it has always been viewed as art.

But, this does not mean artists and art cannot be critical of the artistic frame. In fact, they must do so, by speaking truth to power and protecting the institution of art from predatory and unethical political and socioeconomic interests. And this is not to say that institutional critique is not political or economic, but concerned with how best to use the institution of art to expand the sociopolitical rights of many. Because "the institution of art is internalized, embodied, and performed by individuals" (Fraser, "From a Critique"105), it becomes the job of individuals within the frame of art to shape the values and practices of the institution—define what it means to be institutionalized. If we do take Schwebel's work as a fictionalized conflict, the slight disappointment we feel when the inherent critique is registered by Articule in an open way may stem less from a loss of aesthetic or political opportunity than a negating of our expected outcome to such

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[91] Fraser: "The institution of art is not something external to any work of art but the irreducible condition of its existence as art. No matter how public in placement, immaterial, transitory, relational, everyday, or even invisible, what is announced and perceived as art is always already institutionalized, simply because it exists within the perception of participants in the field of art as art, a perception not necessarily aesthetic but fundamentally social in its determination." ("From a Critique"103)

confrontational, parodic, or derisive "conflicts."[92] Indeed, the success of Schwebel's work

is precisely its ability to make aesthetic—that is, self-reflexive and engrossing—the

sociopolitical determinations of art's programming, and questions the gallery as a

neoliberal institution with invisible barriers.

    Please Do Not Submit is not Schwebel's first hand at pseudology. Schwebel has

previously crafted artistic mystifications that bring about conflict and subsequent frame

breaks. Take for example his MFA thesis show (2008) at NASCD, as it,

> consisted of exactly zero works. Prior to the show, Schwebel had for
> months been showing up at scheduled seminars gabbing about his
> "massive thesis project" and sporting "injuries" from working on it. One
> of NSCAD's largest galleries was specially reserved for his thesis work.
> On opening day, it was completely empty—excepting some outraged
> peers. An image of Schwebel "working in the studio" that ended up in a
> NSCAD brochure was staged. (Sandals, "Class of 2008")

Schwebel says, "What I ended up doing was creating the expectation of work, of content.

I created evidence that it would be fulfilled—without fulfilling it" (ibid). Schwebel holds

there is an aesthetic pleasure in being tricked in this and similar "discursive projects" by

other artists. In this way, Schwebel follows the pseudology I outlined in the preceding

chapter, which responded to modernism and its drive for material purity that brought

about the need for an open managing of the narrative frames of aesthetic encounters.

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[92] "So the time has come for disclosures, and I must confess that I am not entirely prepared. [/] Disclosures always bring with them a disappointment of expectations, a disenchantment. Disclosure forces us into an encounter with reality, with things as they are, instead of things as they might have or could have been. I always feel exposed in these unavoidable affairs. Exposed, and then unwanted, forlorn… my fantasy couldn't endure and I must make do with those who will accompany me past who I say I am, or who I fashion myself to imitate. [/] I confess that I appropriated Micah Lexier's name, CV, portfolio and career to accompany an application for an exhibition at articule without Micah's knowledge or consent. My (Micah's) application was accepted, and so, the exhibition (exposition) came to be. [/] Sincerely, Joshua Schwebel" (Schwebel, "Micah Lexier").

Hidden parody or artistic mystification like Schwebel's disrupts the status quo because it reveals the equivocality of the dichotomies upon which power relies. To test this equivocality, Jean Baudrillard suggests one "Go organize a fake hold up" and see what would happen; even the fake is folded into the real and produces real effects and consequences ("Simulacra" 182). Baudrillard's thought experiment holds practical weight, as demonstrated by Schwebel's work. As Butler points out (in a tongue in cheek discussion of the Sokal Hoax of 1996), "It is impossible to perform a convincing parody … without having and wanting an intimacy with the position one takes in or on as the object of parody" ("Merely Cultural" 266).[93] In the case of Schwebel's pseudology, he held an earnest wish to gain access to the ARC. Schwebel's work reveals a life lived in the open. Open to scrutiny, open to review, Schwebel's practice paints a stark portrait of what it is to exist as a artist labourer in a neoliberal culture. His work takes part in an apparent transparency: a willingness to disappear into the averted angst and humdrum homilies of emails and tracking records, applications, and institutional memoranda. Schwebel's pseudology highlights the "work" of cultural work—the administrative addendums and permeating professionalism of art making today. In the tradition of

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[93] Alan D Sokal was a professor of physics at New York University who published "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity" in the cultural studies journal *Social Text*. The article was a hoax. Sokal's second article, "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies," published in *Lingua Franca,* explained the motivations of his hoax: he wrote the first article by patching together quotes from various humanities texts, and by having it published, sought to demonstrate the "haphazard appropriation" of scientific terms by the humanities. He sought to argue against the tendency in the "intellectual Left" to reduce the world to rhetorical and social constructivism thereby neglecting objective reality. It was covered on front page New York Times, by letters in New York Review of Books, the Times Literary Supplement, and in conferences and internet discussions.

institutional critique, Schwebel questions the accessibility of arts institutions and power

dynamics of privilege that operate therein.

…

These pseudological works actively hide their relationship to the artistic frame and

initially purport themselves to be real. They critically create an oscillation between what

is real and what is fake, which provides the viewer-participant with a keen perspective

askance to common experience. This is a form of hyperrealism, a "trompe life" as

Baudrillard phrased it. Ukeles', Fusco and Gómez-Peña's, and Schwebel's situation-

responsive interventions address the use of this form of lying. Interestingly, these artists

see themselves as working in a mode of conceptual art. Conceptual art progenitor

Douglas Huebler has said that he does not care at all about the documents that represented

his imperceptible location works—they were just means to get the work to "enter the

mind" of the viewer (Rose 143). While Idea art downplayed the significance of its

material substrates, even while being "about" material, its aesthetic significance

purportedly lay in the noncorporeal idea. Distinctly, these contemporary conceptualists

acknowledge the essential component their material makes to the possibility of aesthetic

experience.

These artistic mystifications demonstrate that truth is not neutral but always part

of some cultural force, some performative creation working within to support, rebuke,

rebuild or deconstruct the matrix of socio-political norms that constitute our interpretive

frameworks. An ethics of truth is sensitive to the uses of truths by actors, agents, citizens,

and subjects, and the remainders of subjectivity negatively produced through these

motivated or implicit uses of truth. That is, an ethics of truth is concerned with those human lives denied access to the effective truths of the dominating classes as much as it is with the ways in which truths circulate amongst conscious actors. Who can make claims to truth, who is barred access to the benefits of the "true life," and who remains supressed by the truths of others? Experiential truths revealed through participating in lies, being duped and gaining a critical distance from the worldview produced therein, show the remainder of the subject—the subject's objective remainder. By framing and reframing an experience, identities within artworks can change. In this sense, subjectivity is contingent on the interpretive frame employed. If the subject cannot be reduced to subjectivity—that is, if a human life remains more than the sum of the sociopolitical positions a person inhabits implicitly and explicitly—then perhaps these lies remind us of this objective remainder.

In some ways, biopolitics is keenly aware of this remainder, governing human lives through the material remainders of the living body. Lies are used to both govern the lives of subjects and to desubjectify human lives from governmentality. As Foucault said of critique, it is the process by which we may become governed less, by which we may free ourselves from under the thumb of the sovereign ("What is Critique?" 45). Critique is the process by which we seek to self-govern. But lies, since they gift us alternate worldviews in the manner of critique, reveal the arbitrary nature of common sense (the truths at hand). Lies allow us to create sense and meaning from the world, and these senses and meanings compete with other possible interpretations of the ongoing world, bringing in the need for belief, even highlighting belief as integral to truth, and thereby

revealing the affective aspect of truth.[94] What is outside the realm of lies, what cannot be lied about, is precisely what cannot be semantically understood. The remainder of the subject, the objectness within the subject, is exposed in the revelation of a lie like the punctum of an image, piercing through the realm of representation from the Real, from the unpresentable, the unknowable. The experience of the revelation of the lie exposes us to the arbitrariness of our framing of the ongoing world (our understanding of what is true and real) and marks an absence, the durable yet unpresentable remainder to human understanding. An ethics of truth must acknowledge this radical unknowability of the subject and the world.

Artistic mystification can break through the ideal sphere of art and cause an oscillation in and out of the artistic frame. While mystification grows from the roots of institutional critique, it is not just about the gallery or museum, as the findings of institutional critique artworks have been extrapolatable beyond brick-and-mortar institutions, as well. Mystifications are a sort of institutional critique *plus*, that is they take the artistic frame as an institution and expose the oversight in our reliance on semantic communication to convey a true depiction of reality. The technique of mystification allows for works to be taken in and taken on by institutions because they first appear to be rather benign strips of everyday life. As viewer-participants begin to uncover the deception of the works, they are offered an aesthetic experience of befuddlement, reinterpretation, and self-reflexive critique. Pseudological works of institutional critique,

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[94] This affective aspect of truth is discussed in the following chapter on the work of artist Iris Häussler, and in the Conclusion in regard to the Presidency of Donald J. Trump.

like those of Ukeles, Fusco and Gómez-Peña, and Schwebel give the institutions and their staff the rare experience of being turned into unsuspecting viewer-participants themselves. This pseudology highlights cultural bias, critiques interpretive conventions, and interrogates enunciations of authority—especially its own. In this twist, truths are exposed, constructed, and argued for. By placing our interpretive frames under review, this pseudology helps us to see the world and the institution of art anew.

Chapter Three – Iris Häussler's Legacy of Pseudology

Now do you suppose that if a person were able to make the original as well as the image, he would seriously devote himself to the image-making branch? Would he allow imitation to be the ruling principle of his life, as if he had nothing higher in him? / I should say not. / The real artist, who knew what he was imitating, would be interested in realities and not in imitations; and would desire to leave as memorials of himself works many and fair; and, instead of being the author of encomiums, he would prefer to be the theme of them. / Yes, he said, that would be to him a source of much greater honour and profit.
      —Plato, *Republic* Book X

If the lie had been expressed through words it would have been a mere lie; since it is expressed by a drawing [or other mark making schema], it is usually enjoyed as a joke. ... Thus, the fake is amusing for two reasons: (1) it is an elementary case of artistic skill; (2) it falsifies something that was commonly believed to be non-falsifiable, that is, the product of a non-intentional agent. Men are supposed to lie, things aren't; thus, to make things lie seems to be a rather curious achievement. So, we laugh.
      —Eco, *Theory of Semiotics* 304n25

But because most artists cannot survive economically, intellectually or emotionally without the approval of the academic art world for grants, teaching positions, exhibitions, critical reviews and ego survival, they set their sites within the art world and are satisfied making a political statement about the hermeticism or corruption of that small arena. It would be ideal if work could break out of categorical boundaries and be simultaneously avant-garde and popular but, in practice, this is difficult to achieve.
      —Becker, "The Education of Young Artists" 55

Realness bestows power. Toronto artist Iris Häussler builds this power into massive, immersive art installations through not only verisimilitude but by discursively framing them as real. Häussler's hyper-realistic narrative installations are produced in myriad domestic locations including apartments, hotel rooms, and houses, and her fictitious characters unfold as visitors explore their spaces and material remnants. Plato's

charge that only the "real artist" surpasses mimesis to mold the world, though steeped in

an idealism out of favour in the contemporary Western artworld's adopted poststructural

uncertainty, is still pragmatically employed in the everyday aesthetic evaluation of the

ongoing world as "real" or merely "imitation." Indeed, philosopher Tom Leddy explains

that our valuation of *rightness*, that is, what seems "real," "authentic," "novel," or "true,"

is a baseline aesthetic judgment we make every day (9). Aesthetic judgements of the

rightness of our experiences of the ongoing world are made continually through our

primary framework. By playing with our expectations of the everyday, ongoing world,

Häussler's artistic mystifications play with this liminal operation of our primary

framework. That is, when she hoaxes us with aesthetic forgeries, she toys with our

primary framework's ability to distinguish the modality of elements in the ongoing world.

By putting stress on our primary frameworks, fakes cause us to assess the ontological

modality of the world at hand. This necessary requirement of the aesthetic judgment of

rightness produces the global appeal of hoaxes. Hoaxes are amusing: they make us laugh

by causing the world at hand to lie, as Umberto Eco suggests. In everyday life, that is,

under our primary framework, things are not supposed to lie. By playing with our

supposition of the earnestness of everyday life, Häussler's work can surmount the avant-

garde/popular dichotomy that Carol Becker finds characteristic of works of institutional

critique. Through a play with our primary frameworks, Häussler's work engenders a

comprehensive criticality in participants of multiple backgrounds.

     In this chapter, I interrogate the ways in which Häussler's pseudology operates

within different interpretive frames and laminations. What I am calling Häussler's *hoax*

art is work developed in the vein of three-dimensional novels: stories that are to be lived

by participants. But equally as important, these stories are meant to be experienced as

real, so they initially are not experienced by participants through their artistic, theatrical,

or fictional interpretive frameworks. Indeed, for Jane Roscoe and Craig Hight, a hoax is

the manipulation of the contextual factors of a text's reception to encourage an audience

to use a documentary frame of reading, while in fact the text is fictional (144). While

Roscoe and Hight focus on filmic hoaxes, Häussler's hoax that I explore in this chapter

falls under the fine art categories of performance and installation art. Picking up where

this dissertation began, I analyze the pseudological work that initially spurred this

research project: *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach* (2006). Above the heightened sense

of reality, what does Häussler's use of lying in this performative installation achieve, and

what, if any, are the concomitant political effects? What political manoeuvres does this

pedagogical hoax propose?

     This work brings an invented history to life through the experiential framing

mechanism of the archive and combines pedagogy and performance to craft unique

experiences for participants. In combining pedagogy and performance within an

immersive environment dotted with clues to its constructedness, Häussler continues in the

Enlightenment practice of mystification endorsed by the institutional critique of the last

chapter; that is, Häussler's works are fabricated hoaxes or tricks that teach. While

mystification has traditionally been a literary metagenre, as Julia Abramson has shown,

Häussler expands its diagnostic potential by constructing immersive spaces infused with

narrative framing that produce an immense significance for participants. In Häussler's

pseudology, art is suffused with everyday life in a manner that exposes the active framing of all experiences of reality. When this active framing is exposed through the revelation of Häussler's deception, participants undergo a negative experience (negative, not in the sense of detrimental, but in the sense of indeterminate, as opposed to a positive experience in which one's interpretive framework is straightforwardly applied) (Goffman 379). While the negative experience is wildly unframed and disorienting, its productive effects have potentially constructive results. For Häussler, lying in art is an indirect tool of critique, allowing participants to aesthetically experience their active framing of the world and thereby concomitantly expose the continual framing of reality by other agents in the public and private spheres.

Häussler creates artworks that are material remnants of fictional lives. These conceptual installations are often immersive, engaging, and explorative, allowing viewers to become participants in the performative creation and dissemination of fictional histories. Häussler explains that she "draft[s] figures like a writer does, inventing their biographies, setting their lives into an urban, inconspicuous environment, equipping them with visually productive life-habits that lead into intensely sculptured interiors" ("Artist's Statement"). Viewer-participants physically step into intimate spaces, often domestic interiors, and forensically construct the stories of past inhabitants. As viewer-participants inside these works, we experience the need to attribute narrative sense and cohesion to the often-strange objects we find. Häussler calls these installations "fictive legacies."

Häussler began making fictive legacies in the late 1980s. Her first, *ou topos – a Synthetic Memory* (1988-89), was situated in a community housing complex in Vienna,

Austria.[95] Visitors to apartment 9 on the second floor of the building at 105 Herbststrasse found the sparse living space of an absent tenant. Personal belongings told the story of an obsessive loner: the bedroom of the apartment had been filled with makeshift shelves that overflowed with canned goods wrapped in sheets of lead and stamped with their expiry dates. The living room had become an ascetic sleeping space, furnished with a rustic single bed and stool. What was this tenant hiding from? For what were they amassing food stores? And, why had they obsessively sealed each can in lead? Häussler's *ou topos* contained many of the themes and details her subsequent fictive legacies would encompass: the constructed biography of an absentee; the loneliness, solitude and isolation evoked by the material remnants of odd, obsessive behaviours; and, the transformation of a private domestic interior into both an intimate space of creative production and a public space of exhibition, inquiry, and dialogue. The apartment was open to the public as an art installation for one month before it was cleared out and re-rented. Visitors to the apartment came under the auspices of seeing installation art and were treated to an enigmatic haunting scene.

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[95] From their titles, I imagine the *ou topos* are like safe havens for their fictional occupants. This Greek term meaning no-place or nowhere was used by Sir Thomas More to create the term Utopia, which has the added sense of *eu topos*, or good place. It says much that Häussler's fictive legacies unfold in spaces hidden from or in a precarious relationship to the flow of capital. They are spaces that are not owned by their odd absentees, but rather rented. These spaces are on loan, to both the fictive characters and to Häussler herself. They are borrowed burrows, allowing a psyche refuge from the deluge of capital and the constant pressures of imperative imagination. Their asceticism mirrors our desire to whittle our lives down to manageable parts. Their clutter mirrors our desire to collect. They break out of the mould of the good house. They are dead zones in which we imagine their occupant luxuriating in obsolescence, singularly focused on a task of their own choosing; or, maybe a task over which they have no control, only a compulsion that drives their daily routine? The dream of a place unceded to capital is realized, or illustrated, in Häussler's fictive legacies. A dream that is soberly labelled as no-place.

Häussler has continued to stage *ou topos* scenes, since.[96] The modus operandi of

fictive legacies like the *ou topos* series fits nicely within Antoinette LaFarge's conception

of fictive art and Carrie Lambert-Beatty's conception of parafiction. Fictive legacies do

indeed walk the line between fiction and reality, and so partake in the "fictive" and

"parafictional." Indeed, Häussler is an artist for whom "narration is everything," and all

art is already "cloaked in narratives" ("Failed Practices"). Häussler seeks to construct

these narratives intentionally, creating the material evidence for a hyperrealism that uses

real materials instead of trompe l'oeil, "like walking through a three-dimensional novel"

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[96] One was created the year after the first, in an apartment in Munich, and another built in a mobile trailer home in Toronto in 2012. Each iteration uses different materials and methods, and each comes with its own fictive biography. For instance, at the backhouse of 37 Kazmairstrasse in Munich's Westend neighbourhood, visitors found a tiny apartment containing thousands of white candlesticks donning newspaper portraits of victims of violent crimes. These candles where numbered, stacked in bookshelves and along baseboards, and each haunting image corresponded to its related story which was catalogued in a series of notebooks. The apartment became a haunting memorial to the victims of violent crime, each with corresponding devotional candle, and this evocative and melancholic documentary act was made even more poignant by the concomitant absence and anonymity of the apartment's occupant. Again, like in the Vienna *ou topos*, once the exhibition concluded the apartment was cleared out and put back up for rent.

     The *ou topos* staged in 2012 for Nuit Blanche in Toronto was a sort of sequel to the Vienna installation. The constructed character around which this fictive legacy revolved was the grandson of the Vienna man who had wrapped canned goods in lead. The main character, Tino, was a 23-year-old astronomy student at the University of Toronto. He was born in 1989, the year his grandfather died in Vienna. Tino's mother had recently given him a box of his grandfather's belongings. Tino found old canned goods wrapped in lead, letters and other sundry, and began to realize that his grandfather's obsessive hoarding was spurred on by both a fear of nuclear fallout after Chernobyl and the loss of his friend, Ukrainian filmmaker Vladimir Shevchenko. As Häussler says in a interview with *NOW Magazine* reporter Fran Schechter, "Investigating his grandfather's surreal, more poetic than functional provisions, Tino is infected by the underlying angst of a quarter-century ago... that's regained power after Fukushima" ("Artist Interview"). Häussler's Tino, obsessed with the consequences of nuclear fallout and radiation, drops out of school, family, and society, and continues his grandfather's ritualistic food hoarding in a camping trailer he has camouflaged with stencils of deformed oak leaves (collected by a real-life Shevchenko after the Chernobyl disaster). The trailer/installation, part of the *Museum for the End of the World* program curated by Michael Prokopow and Janine Marchessault for Nuit Blanche 2012, is framed as having been found in the spring of 2012 within the Toronto City Hall underground parking garage by the curators and included, in situ, in the Nuit Blanche programming. Though in practice, Häussler's name took front billing in the programme, this reiteration and embellishment on a work staged 23 years earlier, illustrates well the expansive narrative web that Häussler weaves with these fictive legacies. As a sequel to the Vienna installation, *ou topos – Abandoned Trailer Project, Toronto* (2012) is a stunning elaboration on the themes and details that reoccur in Häussler's work.

(ibid). Philosopher Mark Kingwell submits that Häussler makes "haptic conceptual art: [an] art of ideas that functions by way of immersion, even ravishment" (Kingwell, "Legacies"). Additionally, however, in the case of *Joseph*, Häussler actively frames this immersive three-dimensional novel as real. With this contextual fabrication, working on and within viewer-participants to cause them to initially approach the installations with primary frameworks as opposed to fictional frameworks, Häussler's artwork ventures into the realm of the hoax.

The functionality of the hoax structure allows Häussler to build the affective charge of her work. Of her experience exhibiting the first fictive legacy in Vienna in 1989, Haussler recounts,

> Only a handful of people saw this—and a bus of old folks who were informed about this project by the Volksbildungswerk Wien. These old people did not come across my name, but just tumbled in; however, I loved them as an audience as they did not treat this as an art project but rather as "an apartment left behind by someone like themselves" ("RE: ou topos").

This radical connection viewers formed between the absent subject and their own everyday lives is intoxicating for both viewer-participants and a cultural worker dedicated to generating affective connections with history. Of the fictive legacies, Häussler contends, "I love when they're experienced as discoveries, because you're engaging emotionally in a deeper way than with a composed piece" (Schechter, "Artist Interview"). Häussler works on and within the heightened emotional register of our primary framework—that is, the raised sense of significance conferred when a spectacular encounter is experienced as real. While each of the fictive legacies is designed with a vivid realism, it is only in the occlusion of the artistic frame that these works can

transgress this liminal divide between art and reality. While the aesthetic approach of realism seeks to make any medium transparent to impeccably convey reality, the phenomenological shift from *realism* to *reality* requires creating and concealing a discrepancy between the ontological state of the scene at hand and one's interpretive framework.[97] With *Joseph*, Häussler steps into the realm of reality.

Häussler transformed the residential property at 105 Robinson Street in Toronto's Queen West neighbourhood into Joseph Wagenbach's home. A small bungalow-style house, 105 Robinson was easy enough to overlook, and I probably passed it without record a hundred times over the years. I suspect I would have passed it as usual, if not for the suitably large and official signage posted on the overgrown lawn. The posted notification board let the neighbourhood know that an "Assessment Unit" from the "Municipal Archives" was undertaking a "Legacy Assessment" for "Joseph Wagenbach, 105 Robinson Street" (Fig. 6). The city of Toronto logo certified the endeavour. Luckily, and (what would later seem) strangely, the notification board also read "OPEN" and suggested that "All visitors must report to the field office." I investigated.

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[97] This dissimulation of discrepancy, as I outline in the introduction, is to lie. By fabricating framing mechanisms that lead viewers to adopt inappropriate interpretive frameworks—to lead viewers to approach the scene as real and not fictional—Häussler creates situations in which viewers can reach a heightened level of emotional engagement. Because of the high level of realism in the fictive legacy series, viewers are persuaded to question the possible reality of the scene in which they find themselves. As Häussler articulates, "Our desire to suspend our disbelief, to get our longings confirmed, makes us want to protect the story" (Schechter, "Artist Interview"). Though this suspension of disbelief is made easier by realism, the need for such a fictional frame is seemingly made obsolete by the dissimulating of the fictional status of the story. It is this use of lying as a conscious artistic strategy by Häussler that this chapter investigates.

Figure 6: 105 Robinson Street. Photo Credit: Iris Häussler

The sign for the field office informed me that Senior Archivist Iris Häussler was

on hand. Behind the fence that crossed the driveway, a white-tented headquarters had

been setup. I knocked on the door. Archivist Häussler answered and I entered the

anthropological outpost and took a seat in a wooden office chair. Häussler sat at her desk,

a suitably banal, two-tier work station holding an assortment of logbooks, loose paper,

and a medley of office comforts: namely coffee and snacks. Her work in progress was

visible: mapping out the rooms of the house while cataloguing its contents. If the desk

was somewhat cluttered, the remainder of the small field office was hermetically clean. A

set of cataloguing drawers sat in the corner and housed various artefacts and sculptures.

Häussler explained they were made by the house's occupant, Joseph Wagenbach, who

had recently suffered a stroke and was luckily rushed to hospital after being found by a

neighbour. However, it looks as if his hospital stay will be permanent. With no family or

relatives, the task of packing up Wagenbach's rented house fell to the city. The Municipal

Archives set up shop in July, and after discovering a wealth of sculpture housed inside,

have since opened the assessment of the house's cultural worth to the wider community.

As it was close to the end of the day, the senior archivist suggested I return to view the

house with her on a guided tour the following afternoon. We made plans and I left.

The pseudological framing of *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach* had begun. The

official signage, the archivist character, the anthropological field office, the preliminary

sculptures catalogued therein, the bric-a-brac of office life, all combined to produce the

everyday aesthetic judgement of *real*. The house, its absent owner, and the cataloguing

work undertaken on the premises were framed squarely within my primary framework.

This was an ordinary commute home, albeit with an extraordinary interlude.

Upon returning the following day, I met with senior archivist Häussler and joined

a small group of people preparing to enter the house. We procured white lab coats from

the field office, and followed her to the front door. Häussler knocks before entering the

house—she says it is out of courtesy. It gave us the clear indication we were entering

someone's private space. Inside, it took our eyes time to adjust to the dark. But almost

instantly we could feel the heavy air of a well-lived in home. If the idea of being privy to

the innerworkings of a legacy assessment seemed interesting before arriving, our visit

now had the added twinge of trespassing inside someone's sanctum. It felt wrong, if

exhilarating, a feeling to which you learn to pay heed after making the many mistakes of

an inquisitive teenager; but, because an archivist working for the City of Toronto guided

us, we could relish the sensation once again.

Here, we find another framing device: the lab coats. The borrowed article

functions both literally and metonymically as our referential frame. By donning the garb

of science, we visitors assumed an affinity with the archivist and are likely to shift to our

versions of what we might call an archivist or anthropological interpretive frame. Curator

Rhonda Corvese explains,

> We [Häussler and Corvese] needed a mediator, an access or entry person,
> a guide to the life and work of Joseph Wagenbach to tour the visitor
> through the house without revealing that the house was actually a
> contemporary art project ("Position").

As a surreptitious narrator, the archivist identity acts as a position of authority and

security, easing visitors into an acceptance of the fantastical scene at hand. We found

ourselves in a curious reality: standing in the home of someone still living, someone

whom our archivist defined as a recluse, and whose house is clearly not prepared for

visitors (some areas one must squeeze through, short of disrupting standing sculptures

and piled possessions)—and assessing their belongings. The lab coats enabled a frame

shift mirroring our archivist leader: the *archivist frame*. This frame functions with what

Rebecca Schneider terms the logic of the archive: a "trace-logic emphasizing loss—a loss

the archive can regulate, maintain and institutionalize—forgetting that it is a loss the

archive *produces*" (104). Intent on catalogic order, value assessment, and preservation we

now had pragmatic, civically dutiful reasons for making aesthetic valuations of

Wagenbach's life for posterity. The lab coats combined with stepping over the threshold

into the house—the threshold made more significant by the archivist's knocking—

allowed us to *thread* our justified aesthetic assessments of the archivist frame up and

through our primary frameworks: this was, indeed, the real house of a real person, and we

were random strangers having a shared, extraordinary experience. The frame threading

made possible by the lab coats comingles the archivist and primary frames, allowing the

norms and values that shape each to associate and differentiate. However, the self-aware

comparative aspect of this frame threading remains untapped at this point in Häussler's

three-dimensional novel, so I return to its significance below when I discuss Häussler's

revelation of the lie.

Taking in the scene, it became clear that the house was darker inside because the

windows had been pasted over with newspaper in an attempt at absolute privacy. After

our eyes adjusted, details started to emerge: the floor spackled with wax and plaster;

stuffed-animal rabbits bound with nylon cord; a face smooshed and disfigured—or is that

a pillow bound with cord to resemble a face?[98] Turning around, I was floored by the sheer

number of bizarre oddities that populated the rest of the living room. The room was

overflowing with strange columns and eerie figures (Fig. 7). Faced with the confounding

amount and utter disorderliness of the sculptures, the objective strength of our adopted

archivist frame was heightened. Roland Barthes writes in "The Reality Effect" (1968) that

discourses that aim for objectivity tout an "obsessive reference to the 'concrete'" bric-a-

brac of the world as that which is outside significance and, therefore, in its very

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[98] Once my eyes stopped flitting in amazement, the first thing they landed on for any length of time was a blanketed old couch. We were in Joseph's living room. The couch: the way it sagged, the head depressions on the pillows, the assortment of medications on the side table, all suggested Joseph had been sleeping there. Was this a change he made after falling ill? Was he ill before his stroke?

meaninglessness, must be real (146).[99] Guided by the historical imperative our archivist

Figure 7: Iris Häussler, *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach* (2006), detail, Joseph's livingroom. Photo Credit: Iris Häussler

frames, we set out to make sense of Wagenbach's history, "to report 'what really

happened'" in his house (to use Barthes' phrase; ibid).[100] Our entering the house in the

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[99] "The pure and simple 'representation' of the 'real,' the naked relation of 'what is' (or has been) thus appears as a resistance to meaning; this resistance confirms the great mythic opposition of the *true-to-life* (the lifelike) and the *intelligible*" (Barthes, "Reality Effect" 146).

[100] In the hallway, opposite hung clothing, a fading map of Deutschland is push-pinned into the wall. Our guide shows us a small black *X* made on the map, and explains that this is where they believe Joseph to be from. While the heaping up of biographical "facts" increases our sense of the reality of the scene, our archivist guide also uses the breaches in Wagenbach's biography to allow the weight of history to seep into our experience of the house: "Only very limited facts have become available that pertain to Joseph Wagenbach's biography and there are major gaps. Joseph Wagenbach was born on January 18th, 1929, in Winsen (Aller), a small town in Lower Saxonia near Celle, North of Hannover. Register records show him to be the fourth child in a family that ran a small rural inn, the "Wagenwirt" near the northern edge of Winsen, which had an attached farm. Joseph spent his early years working at the inn and helping out on the farm. He attended elementary and secondary school in his home town. His oldest brother was drafted into the army in 1939, the second son in the family followed in 1941. Nothing is known of Joseph's sister, the third child. Finally, in 1944, Joseph's father too was drafted to military service. When both his older brothers died in the war and his father went missing, young Joseph became responsible for the inn.

middle of the Municipal Archives assessment project clearly framed what we were seeing

as self-sufficient—that is, real and "strong enough to belie any notion of 'function'"

(Barthes, "Reality Effect" 147). In Barthes' semiotic view, the real is what we assume

cannot lie because it is without meaning; as Eco makes clear, all things that can be used to

convey meaning can be used to lie. What lay in front of us defied all comprehension. The

more the extent of this confusion was revealed to us as we toured the house, the gap

between our intentions of catalogic order and the confused concrete reality of the scene at

hand also grew. This increased disparity was a force that compelled us to strengthen the

resolve of our archivist frame.

This heightened strength of the archivist frame meant that the longer we spent

with Wagenbach's sculptures, the more we came to understand an implicit order.[101]

Though clearly treading in the chaotic bric-a-brac of a reality effect, the house seems to

come to order under the frame of the archivist. Häussler leads us through each room,

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However, German records show that Joseph's father returned in 1946 as a Russian prisoner of war and Joseph left the inn only two weeks later to move to Berlin. In 1948, he apparently married a French woman, who was employed with the administration of Berlin's French sector" (Häussler, "Biography").

[101] One unfinished columnar sculpture gives clues to Joseph's working practice. At the top of the totemic shape is the exposed head of a doll. The doll is wrapped in a blanket or towel, and the whole mass is glued together with a mixture of wax and cement. This sits atop of the middle portion of the sculpture, which is cast plaster in the shape of the fabric it was cast in. This all sits atop a base of cement and plant matter, and a chaotic network of twine fastens the whole ensemble together.

Our archivist guide directs our attention to a picture tucked into the frame of a painting. Now things start to make sense. An old photograph of a small girl holding a bunny. On a farm, maybe? Is this his sister? Could this be Wagenbach's inspiration? In the cramped hallway, our guide points out a wooden ladder that leads to what we learn is an unfinished attic with a peculiar view. Our group takes turns climbing the ladder, one at a time, to take in the haunting scene. A hole has been crudely cut through the ceiling of a closet off the cramped hallway. I climb the ladder and poke my head through the hole to survey the mysterious space. In one nook, close to the ladder, a spotlight has been wired in. The old wiring looks like a fire hazard. Turning my gaze into the blackness of the attic, the dim spotlight slowly reveals the attic's rural-gothic cavern of roof trusses and fiberglass insulation. The spotlight is trained on a bunny figurine with human breasts that sits atop a column that protrudes through the ceiling from the living room below.

directing our attention at the minutia of Wagenbach's life, each detail forensically embedded into a nebulous narrative budding within us. Once the reality effect establishes our outermost lamination—everyday reality—visitors can relish the frameshifts necessary to make sense of the house: the archivist frame, Wagenbach's frame, art historical frame, etc. Each frame shift demands the use of a provisional *what if*: what if the Municipal Archives decide certain sculptures are not worth saving? What if Wagenbach was hoping to exhibit these sculptures? What if the sculptures are bought and sold, where will they fall within the art historical canon—where will they exist?

Outside, we said our thank-yous and goodbyes. The next morning, I awoke to a peculiar confessionary email:

Iris Häussler <iris@haeussler.ca>
10/14/06

RE: Postscript - The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach

Dear recent visitor to the Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach,

Some of our visitors these days are being sent by friends or neighbours, to visit the legacy of the infirm artist. Others are drawn by reports of an art-installation, created by me. Every visitor comes with their own story, background, and concepts. As I do routinely, I am contacting you at this time with a postscript, to confirm that Joseph Wagenbach's life-story is a fictional narrative, set into three-dimensional reality. The initial phase of the project was designed to permit the unfiltered experience of discovery; the project is now being placed back into the art context from where it originated.

As visitors with such different perspectives on the site have mixed over the last days I have noted a common theme among them: an appreciation for the power of imagination whoever the author may be. Indeed, the question remains what it means to say Joseph is or is not "real" in the face of the sculptures, and how reality is created through the context we bring to its perception.

In case you wish to learn more about the project, I can direct you to its Web pages at http://www.haeussler.ca/legacy.

On these pages, we are bringing together supplementary material from the narrative, as well as contributions to the discussion of the project as it evolves.

Kind regards,
Herzlichst –

Iris

This is what Jochen Mecke would call a "literary lie," lying through aesthetic choices in literature to trick the reader in some way ("Aesthetic" 149). For Mecke, fiction can lie if the divergence between the conviction of the writer and the style of their utterance is hidden and this divergence is used for some purpose ("Aesthetic" 144). What was Häussler's purpose in hiding the divergence between her artwork qua art and the absolute stylistic realism? Häussler's aesthetic lie coopted the aesthetics of archivization (a style of documentary). Her disclosure of this fact caused in us viewer-participants what Roscoe and Hight term a "latent reflexivity," triggering reflective interpretations from visitors because of the uncovering of the fictional status of the work (53). When documentary's aesthetic forms are used in fiction, it forces audiences to ask which elements are true, rather than simply increase the credibility of the work (Cramerotti 42-3). Even the possibility of being tricked can stimulate aesthetic engagement. For example, the ambiguity of truth in the genre of autobiography causes aesthetic pleasure in the investigating and questioning of its veracity (Mancas 324). Häussler's performative biographical installation employed innumerable aesthetic lies that manipulated the material environment to have people draw their own conclusions. As we saw in the previous chapter, works of artistic mystification can promote critical reading, creative instability, and the questioning of authority. But what is the authority under interrogation in *Joseph*? To answer this, I spend some time unpacking three phrases from Häussler's revelatory email.

Häussler's email informed visitors that our visit to Wagenbach's house was just the first part of the experience the artist had crafted. She writes, "The initial phase of the

project was designed to permit the unfiltered experience of discovery." While our experiences of the house were filled with discovery, more was going on than a straight use of our primary frameworks. Even if Roscoe and Hight hold that the documentary mode of viewing is assumed to be a relatively unmediated reflection of reality (54), Häussler's archivist frame heavily influenced visitors' reading of the house. Our sense of discovery is heightened by the archivist filter, and the vividness of our experiences is made fuller by the self-aware adoption of this frame. However, something interesting happens with the concealment of the artistic context of the work, which does increase a sense of unmediated experience.

The concealing of the artistic context requires the fabrication of disidentity between Häussler and Wagenbach. Häussler must distance herself from Wagenbach to produce a context in which visitors to the house would apply their primary and archivist frameworks. Yet, the working strategy of an unfiltered experience relies on Häussler identifying *with* as well as separating herself from Wagenbach. Häussler must inhabit the protagonist Wagenbach to create. She writes, "this has led to an exploration of artistic work that I could never have anticipated 'to come out of my hands'" ("Artist's Statement"). The archivist's presence then validates the artistic accomplishments of Wagenbach, to build the inquisitive, delicate attention applied by visitors casting the house and its contents as momentous. ("Why else would city officials find this house intriguing if not for its cultural value?") This impression of importance is like the artistic frame applied in a museum setting, in which works exhibited are assumed already to be of significance. Yet, the unique situation of nascent discovery invests the archivist frame

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with a quality of exceptional, unmediated transcendentalism, the kind of experience

modernists sought in creating art qua art. Mark Rothko envisioned transcendental

experience through confronting strange and unfamiliar objects (563-4), and, compared

with the humdrum of everyday life, poking through an elderly neighbour's sanctum of

odd and eccentric objects is transcendental, indeed. This work's relation to its creator is

significantly different from Modernism's autonomously functioning art objects, though. It

is the archivist frame that not only casts the contents of the house as potentially valuable

art, but a trove of outsider art waiting to be *discovered*. In fostering the viewer-

participants' active engagement in discovering what lay around each corner of the house,

the archivist frame allowed Häussler to reach the level of realness she sought while

constructing a transcendental everyday experience.

      This trope of the posthumously-appreciated virtuoso outcast frequently reoccurs in

discovery narratives of art history. Linda Nochlin explains this self-fulfilling prophecy is

simply the myth of the artist as social outcast and monadic genius, where, instead, "art

making, both in terms of the development of the art maker and the nature and quality of

the work of art itself, occurs in a social situation" (318-20). Häussler's performative

installation explodes these myths by first having visitors inhabit the roles of archivists,

curators, patrons—the characters forming arts institutions—and then reveals the hoax

which creates a dialogic community between artist, visitors, and the wider public (the

news media reported widely on the work). Though Nochlin writes that great art is never

"the direct, personal expression of individual emotional experience, a translation of

personal life into visual terms" (315), Häussler shows visitors the extent to which

connecting artworks to human creators is indeed of great significance. Rather than show the valuation of art as a rigid philosophical process of forms and theory, or a whimsical practice carried on by artworld elites out of touch with a shared reality, Häussler offers visitors a chance to inhabit the intimate space of the social production of meaning.

With the revelation of the fabrication, Häussler adds a lamination to our understanding of the house and has us reflect critically on our exercises. She writes that "the project is now being placed back into the art context from where it originated" (Häussler "RE: Postscript"). *Joseph* offers a layering of different modes of realism necessitating different interpretive frames. Trompe l'oeil and attaching real objects to canvases ("new realism") breaks our interpretive bracketing of artwork and links the work with the rest of the space in which it is exhibited (Goffman 411-12). When this work is an entire house, personae, and narrative, as is the case with *Joseph*, the outer context with which it is linked after a frame break is the ongoing world. Häussler's artistic mystification directly links her art with everyday life—something artists have sought to do since the dawn of Modernism. In this way, visitors' return to the artistic frame after the disclosure of the hoax allows us to self-reflect on the different frameshifts we underwent while viewing the house and the assumptions we made therein. This orchestrated return is a form of "sensual pedagogy" in the sense that Ben Highmore gives the term: "a shaping of perceptions, of sentiments, of discernment" that structure our social lives (53-4). This assemblage of values, concepts and modes of perception are the norms that form our artistic frames and are reiteratively maintained through repeated practices.

These norms are made visible and sensual, open for us to reflect upon, with the

frame break provided by the return to the artistic frame. For instance, in a tongue-in-

cheek *mise en abyme*, Häussler included a miniature museum inside Wagenbach's home.

To the right of Joseph's study at the back of the house, one walks into Joseph's

improvised gallery. A mudroom of sorts that's been turned into a mirrored colonnade,

either wall lined with works from which archivist catalogue tags now hang.[102] The nesting

of this artistic context inside the archivist frame inside the primary framework, to then be

repositioned inside the outermost lamination of an additional artistic frame, highlights the

differences in norms constituting these frames. The house sits in our everyday framework,

to blossom under discovery and order of the archivist frame, to reveal the deeply intimate

self-framing of sculptures in Wagenbach's artistic frame—sentimental, lonely, anguished,

fallibly human—only to be threaded through the above two laminations, imparting and

sharing attributes between each frame, to finally surface as a metonymic core to the

outermost artistic frame—Häussler's installation. It's clear that a heightened emotional

register develops in viewer-participants through the threading of these frame shifts

because the threading of frames produces Schechner's "not-not not" and Bernstein's

"both and". Most importantly, this threading leads to the political realization of our own

creation of reality through framing. Häussler writes, "reality is created through the

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[102] One straw and cement sculpture without a column or plinth looks like it could be a cat. Did Joseph have a cat? Is this an effigy for a pet? Are these figures effigies for someone Joseph lost? Many of Joseph's sculptures are a variation of this theme: columns topped by human or rabbit or rabbit-human figures. The columns often receive their height from bases of plaster pots stacked on atop the other in sequence. They resemble the emaciated figures and stacked forms of Brancusi and Giacometti. The solid plaster pots were made by filling terracotta or other common household pots with plaster, and then removing the cast. The rabbit-human figures are most often female, suggested by the presence of human breasts.

context we bring to its perception" (Häussler "RE: Postscript"). *Joseph* and the many

frame shifts needed to experience it, attest experience is always framed and we should not

naively accept reality as unmediated. By shifting through frames, we can begin to see

through the tricks, comprising what otherwise would appear real. Häussler's house is a

trick that nurtures the self-aware critical perception of our framing of reality.

  Häussler's hoax art is an attempt to play with these tricks of authenticity and

remove her artwork from the overdetermined historical narrative of the museum. It is

fitting then that Häussler asserts "historic houses are already tricks" where visitors are

taken in by the romance of "history" and easily overlook the fact that these are

constructed and managed spaces ("Failed Practices"). As we saw in the first and second

chapters, in the museum, art is delineated as art through material separation from the

outside world. Inside the museum, art is ontologically produced qua art through the

performatives of institutional supports, physical definition, and specific popular modes of

perception. The common narrative of the museum is its triumph of rationalized ordering

over the clutter of the cabinet of curiosities (Bennett 2). Häussler exposes the porous

nature of this aesthetic schism by turning museological mechanics into deceptions. In the

late eighteenth century, the same time museums "conquer" the chaos of the world through

catalogic ordering, the word "hoax" entered the OED (c. 1800).[103] Another example of

the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and deceit; without the condition of

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[103] The term began as hocus-pocus, the dissimulative incantations of court conjurers. Historian Douglas Harper writes: "*Hocas Pocas*, common name of a magician or juggler, a sham-Latin invocation used in tricks, probably based on a perversion of the sacramental blessing from the Mass, *Hoc est corpus meum* "This is my body." The first to make this speculation on its origin apparently was English prelate John Tillotson (1630-1694)" ("hocus-pocus"). It is not until the late eighteenth century that it is verbified and contracted to *hoax*.

possibility of being hoaxed, the museum cannot define and lay claim to its opposite: objective truth. By removing her work from the museum but also playing on museological authenticity, Häussler's hoax art makes us viscerally aware of the enabling connection between knowledge and deceit.

The museum's foundations are built upon this form of object stagecraft. Nineteenth century aesthetics was interested in unvarnished reality (Tatarkiewicz 279), with a European obsession with letting objects "speak for themselves" (Mitchell 220). Timothy Mitchell outlines how the conceptual creation of an external, objective reality able to be tamed by catalogic order is a unique mode of perception produced in the modern West that structured what and how Europeans experienced the world: "as an exhibit: as mere objects recalling a meaning or reality beyond" (222). The extent to which something could be experienced as real was made possible by the extent to which it could be containable, viewable in its totality, from a supposedly objective viewpoint from which the subject had been edited out. When nineteenth-century Europeans travelled abroad for authentic and objective experiences of this reality beyond, this objective view of the ongoing world was only achievable through deceit. Travelling Europeans sought to dissimulate their identity, attempting to blend in to the culture being visited to be able to observe without being observed—observe objectively the untainted authentic scene before them (232). This deceit was meant to erase the relationship of the viewer to the world (as "the *thing itself*") to gain the authority of objectivity—an experience unhampered by subjective bias (ibid). This paradoxical "double desire" of modernism— for direct and immediate immersion in the world and for the distance to organize and

categorize the world through representations of it thereby rendering it meaningful (Mitchell 231)—continues today through the aims of art museums that seek real and authentic experience through objects. For instance, Naomi Stead shows that museums work to make objects appear self-explanatory through placement, lighting, and signage that embeds objects in a designed narrative framework; but, because this narrative framework remains furtive the apparent obviousness it lends the objects is a lie (38). Additionally, art museums lie because they want artists with real political engagement but they also frame this work as ineffectual—as "just" art (Lambert-Beatty 140). Contemporary museum culture uses both the constructed objectivity of hidden narrative frameworks and the peripheral political engagement of the artists on exhibition to maintain the authority of authenticity with which European modernism was obsessed. Even in contemporary art institutions there is a push for the experience of sincerity, a shift that transmutes the authentic object into the authentic experience. Häussler shows that, even as there is a shift in museology from authentic objects to authentic experience, inauthentic objects can still speak authentically (Stead 40).

In Häussler's work, the archival frame bestows a sense of order onto the chaos of everyday life. This potential for categorization enflames our mythic desire for summative meaning divined from the piecemeal melee of random existence. The potent power of the archive is illusory, however, and Häussler's use of lying in art exposes this illusionism by playing with the usually distinct and earnest museal norms of authenticity and mimesis. By drawing attention to our expectations of cultural production and display, this work reveals the malleable way we imbue value into the material of life. By doing so, this work

shows us that to imbue with value is a political act in which we are performatively a part

as active, reiterative inscribers of meaning. By being lied to, Häussler shows us that the

generative and inventive creativity that is a condition of possibility for semantic

communication is also at work in our very perception and interpretation of the ongoing

world. This is an object lesson we internalize, we feel, it is a form of sensual pedagogy.

A New Genre: Häussler's Artefactual Hyperrealism

> *Fiction is a dignified form of lies*
>   —Balzac

> *Real literature has never told the truth. It has imposed lies as truth*
>   —Mario Vargas Llosa

> *The problem with things is that they are dumb. They are not eloquent, as*
> *some thinkers in art museums claim. They are dumb. And if by some*
> *ventriloquism they seem to speak, they lie*
>   —Crew and Sims 159

Though it is clear Häussler's works are indeed three-dimensional novels, her use

of pseudological framing employs the authority of texts, sites, and personas (like the

conservator tags, field offices, and archivists) that are, under normal circumstances, *not*

addressed with a fictional frame that would render them benign.[104] As *Joseph* shows us,

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[104] The traditional benign view of fictions holds that it uses non-propositional utterances to create, whereas truth and falsehood remain in a separate realm of cognition bounded by the laws of rationality and nature (Tatarkiewicz 303). In the same vein, John Searle separates lies from fiction—fiction is not lying because it does not make explicit assertions about the real world (Loxely 64). Searle separates all pretending into lying or make-believe (as if), where "fiction is a non-deceptive psuedoperformance" (Loxley 66). The "shared pretense" and convention of fiction distinguishes it from lying (Loxley 70). The separate realm of fiction allows us to experience illusion without being deceived. The "fictive" or "illusive" mode of vision (frame) is used when looking at art to prevent one from being taken in by the deception yet allows one to enjoy the deceptive techniques used to create the illusion—this is what defines art as fictional or illusive, not delusional (Black 114). Art can give us "fictional truths" and its "fictional truth value" is relative to the make-believe context (Walton 300). For Searle, Black, Walton, and Aristotle before them, fiction cannot lie and is non-effectual because it is categorically isolated from the real-world and its effects.

fiction deceptively bleeds into the real.[105] But, rather than invalidating Häussler's claim to this novelistic status, the liminal play between fiction and reality in her works makes them more like novels in a specific historical sense: by employing paratextual elements to increase realism and suspend disbelief.

Marthe Robert, in *Origins of the Novel* (1980), writes that the birth of the novel as a storytelling method came with a host of new paratextual modes of veracity employed to convince readers of the truth of the tales told (15). Novels were a "willful delusion always created in the name of truth but for the sole purpose of deceiving" (ibid). Deceit played a large part in determining what, how, and when to use framing fictions. Short prologues or other paratextual elements were used to mark off what follows as direct reportage on real occurrences, no matter how fantastical (the now-tropic use of the epistolary form is one such technique). Margaret Russett argues that the literary forgeries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are "generic novelties that help to define, by transgressing, the ethical limits of framing fictions" (17). For example, Horace Walpole published *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) under the pretext that the manuscript was "found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England" and it was from sometime between the first and last crusades. Russett explains that

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[105] Aristotle writes that "Homer more than any other has taught the rest of us the art of framing lies the right way" (*Poetics* ch. 24). The fiction functions with a certain suspension of disbelief, that is, it works with our ability to allow a fictional world to unfurl before us, by us, within us and to become lifelike, if only momentarily. As a corollary, we know for certain that this imagined world is not, in the final instance, real. This is to say that, for all intents and purposes, fiction exists within a bubble that shelters its fragile speculation from the phenomenological flow of everyday experience. The certainty that fiction is set apart from an everyday reality in which we live is routinely used to tautologically justify or instrumentalize its purpose: that is, because it is not *of* everyday society, it exists *to* mirror, design, and critique society. However, this certainty of fiction's separateness is a tiny lie.

> This pretense supplied him with his excuse for retailing a story that featured giants, ghosts, and animated portraits, in blatant disregard for probability. Only in the second edition of 1765, when he acknowledged authorship, did he append the label 'Gothic' to his subtitle and thereby found a genre. … before it became a type, Walpole's text was a forgery. (13)

Russett argues, there is a "criminal/aesthetic divide" of which artworks fall on either side depending on how they are received—those left without imitators are consigned to remain seen as forgeries and not fictions, criminal and not aesthetic inventions (17-9).[106] If the hoax is both a criminal and artistic activity—a "recoupable transgression" (Russett 7)—Häussler's pseudological framing in *Joseph* suggests a redefinition of the field of art and the creation of a new genre of hoax art has already begun. Rather than simply an art hoax or forgery, Häussler's *Joseph* helps define a type of pseudology I will refer to below as artefactual realism.

Similarly, within historical fiction and archeology, both spheres of study that sought truth and authenticity as access to the historical past, there were foundational forgeries that helped define them as disciplines (Haywood 91). As Ian Haywood makes clear in *Faking It: Art and the Politics of Forgery* (1987),

> Most of the literary forgers of the eighteenth century were producers of historical fiction which evolved from and satisfied many of the needs of contemporary literary-historical inquiry. In doing so the forgeries laid bare the processes of evaluation and judgement concerning 'genuine' art that might not otherwise have been subjected to scrutiny (ibid).

For Haywood, forgeries are subversive artifacts that cause the radical revaluation of common assumptions, judgements, and norms; the act of forgery reveals the text to be

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[106] Russett explains, a "forgery can sometimes be understood as a failed or dead-end innovation" (19).

part of cultural processes with vested interests (Haywood 13-4). Ultimately, Häussler's

pseudology stimulates cultural growth through newer and more refined modality

judgements and sensitivity to the framing of reality.

Joseph's plight with realism echoes Häussler's own grappling with it. The realism

with which Wagenbach continually tries to recreate the visage of his lost female

companion is strikingly more traditional than the grotesque veritas employed in the rabbit

figures and cocoons. As the emotional heart of the house, the bedroom was sealed off,

with the closer "realistic" renderings of Joseph's companion inside.[107] If Joseph sought

realism at first, it was traditional—outside the bedroom, the realism instead became

traumatic. Hal Foster gives the label traumatic realism to repetitive artistic practices that

are starkly realistic, not because they produce visual similitude, but because their very

repetition creates a punctum to a more emotional reality (136).[108] Taking a different

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[107] Off the kitchen again, behind a curtain there is a cramped hallway leading to Joseph's bedroom. A plaster columnar sculpture stands from floor to ceiling obstructing the passageway. Joseph's coats and jackets hang on hooks, and a chest of drawers is topped by boxes spilling papers. Visitor move down the hallway carefully. The space became very intimate.

The bedroom door at the back of the hallway was sealed shut with newspapers dating Saturday, 15 March 1975. Inside, a life-scale sculpture of a female figure reclines on a table beside single bed. It looks as if someone could have just risen from the ruffled sheets—a room frozen in time. A bedside table drawer left open reveals amongst the bric-a-brac old black and white photographs of a woman in a kitchen. Statuettes adorn this room as well, except they are simpler, refined, honest attempts at creating the likeness of a woman. The plaster used to model this figure is coated by only a thin layer of beeswax, and in some cases this gives the figures the appearance of being polished, or having a translucent human-like skin. There is a plaster cast of a woman's face, so lifelike it must have been made from a mold of a real person. Its realism stands out from the remainder of the statuettes and the hoards of columnar figures in the rest of the house. Is this a death mask for whomever Joseph lost? He tries again and again. His memory morphs and she is a small child holding a bunny. The sculptures become bunny-like. He begins to make molds of real bunnies, skinned, dead.

[108] In this seminal essay, Hal Foster locates in art practices of the 1980s and mid-1990s "a turn to the real as evoked through the violated body and/or the traumatic subject" (xviii). Foster sees contemporary ways of looking at representation falling into two categories: referential, where images have real referents; and, simulacral, where "all forms of representation (including realism) are auto-referential codes" (128). The Simulacral reading of pop art was advanced by poststructuralist critics (Barthes, Foucault, Deleuze and Baudrillard) who see it as only surface (128), while the Referential reading of pop art ties it to other sectors of social and industrial life, as was done by Thomas Crow (1987) whom saw Warhol in tradition of "truth

approach, Häussler's realism is also traumatic—not only through repetitive practice (the molding of rabbits and human-rabbit figures and continual encaustic entombing), but through the jarring frameshift produced once the hoax is revealed. Häussler creates the possibility of intimate connection with Joseph's character through framing the house as real. This is a sort of *artefactual realism*, in the sense that we treat the sculptures and Wagenbach himself as real artefacts of history, and in the sense that these "facts" are artfully composed, created with skill, and retain the designation "art."

Häussler's artefactual realism might be a sort of hyperrealism—even within a defined medium, hyperrealism can dissimulate the medium and hides its own constructedness. As Tom Gunning points out, especially since the advent of photography, the illusion of immediacy persists anytime the "vividness" of what is represented seems to dissolve the medium itself; there is a common belief that it is the telos of media to

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telling" (130). Foster wants to bridge these two ways of seeing; he calls them both interpretive "projections" and wants to show how they are both right (130). Foster moves from discussion of the art object in a system of signs (whether open or closed, referring or self-reflexive) to the art object as coping totem or communicative attempt by a subject regarding an external world through what he calls traumatic realism. This occurs, for Foster, in the *Death in America* series by Andy Warhol in the technique of repeating banal images to the point of making them glaringly significant (134). Foster says: "repetition in Warhol is not reproduction in the sense of representation (of a referent) or simulation (of a pure image, a detached signifier). Rather, repetition serves to *screen* the real understood as traumatic. But this very need also *points* to the real, and as this point the real *ruptures* the screen of repetition" (132). Therefore, Foster concludes that there is a significant shift in art practices and theory "*from reality as an effect or representation to the real as a thing of trauma*" where the real is unpresentable but arrests the viewer and artist tangentially (146). For my purposes, what is depicted in the artistic practices Foster describes is less an image than a way of reading the world that, when performed, when enacted as a pedagogy of the real, allows a viewer to experience a specific sense of "realness."

Though Foster explicitly states he see this art as moving away from "reality as an effect" (146), Foster moves from an ontology of the image to a performative *use* of images within the aesthetic navigation of the world by a subject (132-4). Warhol is this traumatic subject, for Foster, who attempts to make sense of the traumatic real through repeating things onto a screen from which the real may be experienced by a phenomenological subject. The real, or realness, then, could also be said to be a quality felt by the subject in their making or reading of images through a performed repetition, through a coming-to-understanding by the live creature with his/her circumstantial environment.

"disappear from consciousness" or become transparent (181). Yet, hyperrealism's

overextended illusion fosters "truthiness"—a closing of our critical faculties nudging us

to accept what we see as obviously true (Gunning 183). But, Häussler's use of

pseudology breaks the frame of her hyperrealism. Instead, *Joseph* reveals realism is

always a constructed stylistic effect, an interpretation through a set of frames—one can

only attempt to gain insight from the constructed nature of realism (Benamou 158). In this

way, Häussler's artefactual realism can have us grapple with what makes reality seem

real.

In this light, deceptive framing narratives could be a temporary salve for the

painful restrictions of artworld fashions and overdetermined gallery spaces. If,

historically, the novel's fantastical creations had to be similarly justified by paratextual

lies, thus creating the modern definition of fiction as a willing suspension of judgement

and the gothic novel as a new genre, Häussler's self-described more-traditional artistic

creations are justified by contextual fabrications and false provenance. This revealing

reversal of the aims of contextual fabrication, from supporting the supernatural to

supporting the honourably humdrum, highlights what it is to dream in the current

neoliberal culture, an analysis I take up below.

Authentic Expression and Deviant Labour Practices

> *Of all the frames, envelopes, and limits—usually not perceived and*
> *certainly never questioned—which enclose and constitute the work of art*
> *(picture frame, niche, pedestal, palace, church, gallery, museum, art*
> *history, economics, power, etc.), there is one rarely even mentioned today*
> *that remains of primary importance: the artist's studio.*
> — Daniel Buren, "The Function of the Studio" 51

> *I didn't want to perform in a gallery or a museum, as they were too
> conservative for me, and would only give conventional responses to my
> experimental works. It was important for me to present my works to the
> public, in the public space, and not within an art-conservative space, but
> in the by then so-called underground ... When I was performing my actions
> in public, on the streets, in the urban space, new and different forms of
> reception developed. In the streets, I provoked new explanations. I wanted
> to be provocative, to provoke, but also aggression was part of my
> intention. I wanted to provoke, because I sought to change the people's
> way of seeing and thinking ... If I hadn't been provocative, I couldn't have
> made visible what I wanted to show. I had to penetrate things to bring
> them to the exterior.*
> —EXPORT, *VALIE EXPORT* 148-9

For Conceptual artist Daniel Buren, an artwork possesses a "reality/truth" when
viewed in relation to the context of its making. This context includes the work's subject
matter, but also the artist's studio, including other works in various states of completion,
and the artist herself (56). This creation context is irretrievable once the work is
transferred to the space of "installation" in the gallery or museum. For Buren, once works
are "Torn from their context, their 'environment,' they [lose] their meaning and die, to be
reborn as forgeries" (ibid). Commonly understood as a neutral place heightening the
viewing of art, the discursive framing of the museological frame dissimulates the
significant gap between places of production and display. Buren explicitly labels this the
greatest "deception" of the studio/museum transfer: the loss of some existential energy,
the "reality/truth" of the work it produces when viewed in relation to its creation context.

For Buren, Constantin Brancusi deftly sidestepped this seemingly inevitable fate
of artworks by navigating the neutralizing and alienating frame of the museum and the
whims of distant curators. Buren writes,

He is the only artist who, in order to preserve the relationship between the work and its place of production, dared to present his work in the very place where it first saw light, thereby short-circuiting the museum's desire to classify, to embellish, and to select. The work is seen, for better or worse, as it was conceived. Thus, Brancusi is also the only artist to preserve what the museum goes to great lengths to conceal: the banality of the work (58).[109]

Wagenbach's sculptures mirror the form of Brancusi's, while also displayed in the place of production exposing the banality of the work (Fig's. 7 and 8). Häussler can show us that the banal is extraordinary. In *Joseph*, Häussler lived and worked in the house, turning it into live-in studio. She transformed the domestic space into a work space, turning the archival eye to the chaos of the home.[110]

Häussler's work deconstructs the home, studio, gallery triumvirate

Figure 8: Constantin Brancusi's Studio at 8 Impasse Ronsin, Paris, c. 1925. Photo Credit: Constantin Brancusi.

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[109] That the Centre Pompidou now includes a dedicated building that is an exhibit of Brancusi's studio is testament to the validity of Buren's thesis and an example of the encompassing power of the museum to classify, embellish, and select even that which Buren thought secure. Thanks to Mary O'Connor for this reference.

[110] Joseph's kitchen was cluttered with dirty dishes and rags. Two large unfinished works hung from the ceiling like meat in a slaughterhouse. The kitchen countertop, cupboards, and other nooks of the house, held half-used, dated products whose packaging and price tags gave one the sense of stepping back in time. This added to the museal feeling of the house while also creating a sympathetic portrait of a shut-in occupant that seemed to hold onto the past with a depressed longing. Laundry hung from lines overhead in the kitchen: stained undershirts and black socks. From the ironing board standing in the corner dangled wax-splattered shirts and plaster casts of teddy bears. Wire was used to string up the plaster bears, as well as to design a makeshift paper towel dispenser suspended from the wall in the manner of a truck-stop bathroom too creepy

in a way that is both influenced by and critical of neoliberal labour formations, feminist

critiques of home and gallery, and pedagogical programs of museology. In the home of

Wagenbach we find a misuse of spaces, a command of the house and its physicality, a

reworking of its structure to suit the occupant's occupation, a malleability of space one

cannot grasp in the privatized, vacuously redolent world of rental denizens.[111] We want to

take command of the world around us the way Wagenbach could, paradoxically by

shutting the world out and himself inside. His house is reminiscent of the new obsession

with hoarding. Everything must move, continually, and accumulation only slows down

movement. Hoarding is an object lesson in society's corpulence, used to demonize

aberrant uses of time and space. If neoliberalism functions through what David Harvey

terms "accumulation by dispossession," where the monopolization of wealth by the

economic elite comes by way of dispossessing most of society of wealth and land through

privatization, valuation, and capitalizing off crisis (Harvey 74), then Wagenbach made

use of his home in a way threateningly cancerous to capitalism and its upward flow of

funds. What Wagenbach did with his home is what we all secretly long for and

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to use. Little twists of wire hung from rusted nails. The cream-coloured wall was itself coated by wax, grease, and grime: the patinas of life. The tools of the kitchen had become tools of the artist. Pots heated wax instead of food. Knives scraped wax and cut fur. Tables held hotplates and old newspapers. Dress shoes used as studio wear, covered in wax, left in the kitchen ready for the next encaustic session. In one pot blackened by tar-like wax there sat a clump of broom straw ensnarled in a ball. The black wax used to ensnare and derange the everyday household material gave the straw an almost lifelike, uncanny quality.

[111] The tiny bathroom had been converted into studio space as well. The bathtub had clearly not been used for bathing in quite some time. It was filled with buckets for plaster casting, bags of plant matter, blankets, and hair. A bag of cement sat atop the washing machine. Bags of twine were stored alongside Joseph's old vacuum, cleaning products and polydent. The toilet and sink area of the bathroom were comparatively very clean. The tiles remained shiny, the sink was spotless, and folded white towels sat atop the toilet.

Off the kitchen, toward the back of the house is a small study with a desk and lamp. Here, too, sculptures in various stages of production clutter the scene. A bookshelf holds an assortment of hammers and other tools, glasses and mugs filled with miscellaneous screws and bits, paint brushes, duct tape, sandpaper; boxes and bags of rusted nails and dishes topped with sundry.

simultaneously are made to feel repulsed by: the obsessive habits of our private selves are heightened through the standardization and categorization of the archivist frame. Why must we give up our personal peculiarities to stay fiscally buoyant in the flow of capital? What was once an economical conservation of resources is now seen as a disease. To bow out of continual consumerism is vilified and medicalized. Citizens outside the leisure class with the intention of building reserves are the outliers of society, ripe for gawking at and moralizing over ("Be fastidious with your belongings because you belong to the fastness of late capital"). The slow accumulation or employment of resources is a retardation of the neoliberal economic system.

In one register, the transmutation of private home life and habits by/into the processes and procedures of labour marks a neoliberal turn in this sort of dioramic still-life. The outsider, forgotten, neglected people and spaces of Häussler's invented legacies can in one way be read as the remains of failed attempts at neoliberalization. If "Neoliberalism is the name for a collective fashioning of the self, which is experienced as anything but collective (its processes involve constant separating and specializing in the name of competitive individualism)" (Highmore, *Ordinary* 165), Häussler's characters individuate to the point of reclusion. As Angela McRobbie writes, "Individualization is not about individuals *per se*, as about new, more fluid, less permanent social relations [that mark] … a space of social conflict" (518). Häussler's characters have disinterpellated from this conflict—*Joseph* is the individual spirit gone awry, making private surplus through deviant modes of invention. What is it to catalogue a life occluded or left undefined by the rhetorical certainties of industrialist triumphalism? Häussler's

pseudological forgery and its material fetish and revival of artisanal creation suggests a

nostalgia to a pre-print capitalist era and ideas born in the physical act of expression.

Häussler's haptic conceptual style makes this a material reality.

Häussler's need for pseudology may come from the oppressive suasion of theory

in artistic practice. How does Häussler reconcile the will to create something out of step

with contemporary artistic fads or contemporary theoretical rubrics? How do we reconcile

older modes of making, especially modes uninhibited by theory? For the first two months

of the exhibition, the public was not aware of its pseudological nature. Häussler

positioned the house and Wagenbach outside the context of contemporary art—quite

literally so. The house could not be construed as a professional gallery, the artist was an

outsider creating Art Brut, and the sculptures only vaguely reference the history of the

avant-garde. Häussler could frame the type of objects she wanted to sculpt to make them

significant for the contemporary artworld. She writes,

> it is a psychological experiment for me to slip into another gender, time
> and condition for the production of the body of work. Having my hands
> working as proxies for a fictitious other raises questions about the
> necessity to change one's identity to work in a traditional manner while
> remaining in a contemporary art context ("Artist's Statement").

Would the tragic emotional intensity of Wagenbach's narrative history developed through

the primary and archivist frameworks, and the deep significance of the sculptures within

the house, vanish if they were exhibited earnestly in the white cube? Margaret Russett

reminds us that fabricated stories of disclosure or provenance are not significant for their

falseness as much as for fictionalizing artistic production itself, "by making the interest of

the text depend on how it came into being" (Russett 25). Haussler's use of the "outsider

artist" trope invents people living and creating artfully out from under the thumb of the artworld. Wagenbach was the first character she explicitly framed as an artist, yet all her characters have some fervent need to create idiosyncratic works (Häussler, "RE: ou topos").

Additionally, we might say *Joseph* is a continuation of the pragmatic and critical feminism of Ukeles' Maintenance Art. Our twentieth century hangover holds the studio space as a masculine space of creation, work, and industry—linked to the museum. Leo Steinberg characterized the shift in painting practice in the early twentieth century as a shift from the vertical plane of the vista to the horizontal plane of the work table (84). There was a ruddy masculinity to the works of Pollock, Rauschenberg, and Johns with whom Steinberg was dealing. Ukeles' performance work of the early 1970s revealed the way that this masculine space, and the ruddy work that was performed therein, along with the exhibition space of the gallery and the artworks on display, were propped up by the largely unrecognized labour of support staff who were often women. Along with the work of artists like Judy Chicago and Carolee Schneemann, the critical feminist practices of the '70s served to displace and dispel some of the masculinization then taken for granted in these spaces. Häussler's work extends this critique by combining the space of the home with the studio, and ultimately with the exhibition space. The characters at the core of her onion-layered fabrications toil in private, creating masterful works of art which are only later shown to the world, as their domestic spaces become exhibitive. Häussler's superposition of both these spaces and the adopted genders of the artists working within them joins *creation* to *display* in the performative manner of a novel's leaves.

As well, Häussler's pseudology is employed to tease out and overcome the contradictory relationship between modernism's (and now neoliberalism's heightened) proclamation of self-reflexive authenticity. The modernist imperatives of sincerity and authenticity precluded dissimulation and reserve a special classification for inferior art that "lies" through its aesthetic dishonesty: *kitsch*. For modern theorists and neoliberal tastemakers alike, art and artists should above all be authentic, and authenticity in the modern and contemporary epochs means a rigorous honesty that precluded the muddling of genre in the mires of mendacity. Kitsch is "ersatz culture" and a "fake" experience (Greenberg, "Kitsch" 12). Yet, artistic media can fail the artist's aim for genuine experience. For Barthes, when the rigidity and conventions of form are taken for granted by an author this oversight causes an author to lie—to express inauthentically or duplicitously (*Writing* 26-7). An inauthentic text is created either when an author cannot find adequate utterances to express his/her convictions or when, in an objective way, the stylistic conventions of genre or language itself restrict authentic expression. *Joseph* suggests that the range of artistic media available to the contemporary artist, though theoretically infinite, has calcified and thus limits novel modes of creation—especially when this new creative output resembles the now-easily-digested sculptural works of Modernism. Häussler's pseudology primes audiences with the myths of authenticity and originality, before negating both. In this way, Häussler's hoax art bares the mark of esotericism as a strategy to produce work in a climate that may be unamenable to her chosen working style, a style of folk or outsider art that needs theoretical buttressing to be read as significant. As Perez Zagorin writes, dissimulation is not just used by rulers and

governments but by people "under the pressure for conformity" where dissimulation is "a

defensive response" (9).

The type of artistic dissimulation Häussler employs has historically been valued

for its enrapturing display of virtuosic talents. For instance, the sixteenth century

Renaissance revival of the arts of antiquity came with a concomitant revitalization of the

aesthetics of lying: to successfully deceive one's audience was the epitome of success in

the arts.[112] In this way, Häussler demonstrates a preternatural mastery of her medium—

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[112] Tatarkiewicz writes, "In tragedy as in painting—so the ancients wrote—the greatest artist is the one who best leads the viewer into error, producing things that resemble the real things. In praise of Parrhasios the ancients repeated the anecdote that birds would peck at the fruit he had painted" (277). This is not so distant from contemporary valuation of art. David Carrier sees representations as displays of skill, we don't really buy into so much what is being represented, but care more about the skill that goes into it (*The Aesthete* 121). Dennis Dutton's "Artistic Crimes" (1979) explicitly states our valuations of art come from our apprehending skill in it—something done artfully (176).

Artists in the Renaissance recognized that there is something foundational about the relationship between art, discourse, and lying, and subsequently during the Renaissance one artistic use of lying was to demonstrate artistic skill. The value of forgery in Renaissance Italy was to prove an artist's genius; to imitate another's artworks successfully was an eerily good show of virtuosic talent, even prized higher that the imitation of nature. For example, Raphael famously painted a portrait of Pope Leo X in 1519 for the Medici family. The Marquis of Mantua, Federico II Gonzanga, saw the portrait while visiting Florence and through hints and papal influence was bestowed it. But before the Marquis received the painting, Ottaviano, the head of the Medici family, secretly commissioned a forgery to be done by artist Andrea del Sarto. Proto-art historian Giorgio Vasari was a former apprentice of Andrea and very close to the Medicis and witnessed the making of the forgery; Vasari also disclosed this information to the Marquis while visiting Mantua. The painting had fooled even Giulio Romano, a former student of Raphael. For both the Marquis and Giulio the revealed forgery did not in the slightest diminish the value of the painting, but it even increased its show of virtuosic talent, so much so that Guilio said,

> I value it no less than if it were by the hand of Raffaello, nay, even more, for it is
> something out of the course of nature that a man of excellence should imitate the manner
> of another so well, and should make a copy so like. It is enough that it should be known
> that Andrea's genius was valiant in double harness as in single (Keats 3).

The lying used to frame forgery, to turn a mere copy into a forgery through discursive framing, was in the Renaissance a way to prove preternatural human achievement. To create work under false pretense was to trick, and subsequently, surpass the experts.

The importance of artistic deception communicated through anecdote continued in the Renaissance. For instance, when Michelangelo was a boy he was apprentice to Domenico Ghirlandaio, a Florentine painter. Michelangelo borrowed an old-masters drawing to copy, but returned the copy to the owner after he had artificially aged it with smoke and the deception went unnoticed. Michelangelo's deception was found out when he bragged to a friend, and when the two drawings were placed side by side the original could not be discerned. This story gained Michelangelo a reputation as a gifted artist, according to Ascanio Condivi, Michelangelo's first biographer (Keats 12).

the everyday experiences of viewer-participants—while also taking the neoliberal need for authenticity to task. Visitors are confronted with the sheer immense scale of the work. Häussler creates a magical piece of theatre. With dilapidation, wear, and outward signs of turmoil, the house feels buried under 30 years of suffering. Walls are coated in grime and wax, cupboards and drawers contain consumables discontinued before the 1980s, and the sheer density and number of items, both artistic and everyday, combine to effect an extraordinary admiration in the knowing visitor. Analogous to Pierre Menard's aesthetically superior word-for-word rewriting of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (Borges 51), Häussler's amassment of chronologically specific life-stuffs is a greater and more impressive accomplishment than if Wagenbach had truly lived as a neglectful homemaker. The fact that Häussler set up the house as a physical frame and the archival project as an encompassing frame, allowed us visitors to read the lab coats and other archiving or anthropology props as real, that is, following Barthes, as connoting the insignificance of reality.

Joseph created controversy because it hid the fictional frame and portrayed the installation as reality through a constructed narrative. A fundamental nature of mystification is to illicit very strong but contradictory responses in those involved.[113] Häussler defends her work against claims of unethically creating and showing fakes—she has received letters to that effect—and admits that "If no one said anything about it being an art project it would have been fine" (Häussler, "Failed Practices"). Indeed, part of the

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[113] After the fictional framing of the installation was leaked prematurely, press articles appeared in the Globe & Mail (Dick, "Portrait of the artist as a young fake", 16 September 2006), the Toronto Star (Whyte, "Homage to a man's faux life", 16 September 2006), and the National Post (Cosh, "Reclusive downtown artist a hoax" and Agrell, "Does the artist's story affect the art?", 12 September 2006).

popular and critical success of Häussler's works has been the lies—that is, the success, intricacy, elaborateness, etc., of her realism. Häussler's *Joseph* shows how authenticity, originality, and providence are ways the artworld manages the relationship between works of art and reality. As the case of *Joseph* implies, fictional worlds are only "real" fictional worlds if created with the proper intention, at the right time, and vetted by the right authorities. Authenticity is not a quality of the object but a perceptual effect, and it helps to produce what is understood as "real." The very embeddedness of an object, practice, or scene within the interpretive cultural matrix of authenticity produces the experience of reality. Authenticity is only ever achievable through the active negotiation of the frame of the real/fictional.

In this way, Häussler crafts experiences we can share.[114] Even if we all come to the installation with different histories and points of view, she makes an immersive installation that can fall under the umbrella of "an experience." Even if what constitutes that experience is different for all of us, it is this shared umbrella, this shared frame, that allows us to have the feeling of sharing it together. This framing is also her lie. It is the lie that hides the fabrication of the scene and allows us to collectively partake in the having of an experience.[115] In a way, Häussler shows us how powerful a shared sense of reality is: the deep feeling of connection and satisfaction, the sublime possibilities of infinite meaning within the finite world. Häussler's pseudology points to the importance of the

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[114] In another legacy work, Häussler's fictional Anthropology Services Ontario has a mission statement that includes: "we all share human experience" (Häussler "Anthropological").

[115] The revelation of the lie in accounts of virtuosic talent is axiomatic. When this disclosure is not adequately transparent, the hoax art gambit can backfire. In the case of *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach*, a neighbour of Wagenbach's was adamant that his father delivered groceries to Joseph for years. He chastised Häussler for claiming Joseph's work for herself (Aldarondo 161).

relational boundary between what is real/unreal and the social construction of this boundary's aesthetic aspects. This concern is at the heart of lying in art. When a fictional construction is linked to our experience of its manifestation in the real, our aesthetic vacillation between the two interpretive frameworks has us navigate the intendant consequences of such a thing existing. It reveals the way in which each of us is active in the construction of reality and the ways art has the potential to help us become aware of this construction.

Conclusion – Pseudology: Politics, Privilege, Critique

> *Say: This is real, the world is real, the real exists (I have met it)—no one laughs. Say: This is a simulacrum, you are merely a simulacrum, this war is a simulacrum—everyone bursts out laughing. With forced, condescending laughter, or uncontrollable mirth, as though at a childish joke or an obscene proposition. … Yet it is much rather reality and obviousness which are obscene. It is the truth we should laugh at. You can imagine a culture where everyone laughs spontaneously when someone says: "This is true," "This is real."*
> —Baudrillard, "The Perfect Crime" 267

> *The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the dedicated communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist.*
> —Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* 474

Summary of Findings

This study sprang from my experience of Iris Häussler's pseudological performative installation, *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach* (2006), and has sought to interrogate the ways in which lying is used as a framing mechanism in artistic practice. I formulated this study as a starting place from which to understand the political import of the aesthetic experience of art that lies. What I identify as pseudological art are works which actively play with viewer-participants' performative interpretation and experience of reality through the concealment of discrepancies, that is, specific acts of deception in any of three tiers: between an utterance and belief, between an utterance and interpretive context, and between the norms that produce an interpretive framework and one's best interests (pervasive ideology). I investigated the political valence of hidden fictions, outright lies, and pedagogical hoaxes in art from the birth of postmodernism to the

present. Key to this political analysis was an understanding of aesthetics as imbricated with both public pedagogy and everyday life. Separating the phenomenological experience of artistic illusion from artistic lying, I sought art that forced viewer-participants to grapple with the very ontological understanding of the world at hand.

To understand the importance of this self-reflexive aesthetic judgement, I first analysed the functionality of lying used to discursively frame artworks. Specific works by Marcel Duchamp, Robert Rauschenberg, VALIE EXPORT, and Carol Duncan revealed the power of the lie to create originary events that could justify or deconstruct prevailing ideology, while also creating new conceptualizations of art and artmaking. Adopting a frame analytical method, I looked at works by Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and Joshua Schwebel, to better understand the ways in which artists play with the contextual framing of performances. I found that when these artistic mystifications revealed their lies, viewer-participants were forced to change the interpretive frameworks they used to understand what was going on. This frame break could elicit self-reflexive analysis of the norms that allowed the initial frame to be so easily applied. I found that when this self-reflexive revaluation could take place, it constituted a sensual pedagogy that might allow viewer-participants to reframe the ways in which they view the ongoing world. That is, the oscillation between interpretive frames caused by the revelation of the lies in these artworks is an aesthetic experience that fosters political change. This occurs through the self-aware reshaping of the norms that comprise these interpretive frames—what viewer-participants apprehend and recognize in their day-to-day lives.

Each of the works I addressed in the second chapter engaged in this self-aware reshaping of interpretive frameworks in different ways. For instance, Ukeles' pseudological performance *Washing/Tracks/Maintenance: Outside* (1972) could trick viewer-participants into revaluating the role of women in both the arts and in broader society by having the valuation inherent in the artistic frame come to bear on the everyday maintenance actions of washing and caring. Similarly, Fusco and Gómez-Peña could have museum visitors revaluate the authority bestowed upon the museological frame by implicating visitors in the construction and maintaining of the museum's colonial othering. Performing as *Two Undiscovered Amerindians…* (1992-4), the artists duped many visitors of natural history museums even though the performance was overtly camp. This demonstrated the modality strength of the museological frame to mint its contents as "unmediated reality." This function of making-real allows museum contents to function as both explicit didactic instruction and implicit pedagogy. By disrupting this passive spectatorship, through either having visitors disinterpellate or realize the performance was a fake, Fusco and Gómez-Peña could create the productive space of the lie—an aesthetic distancing in which visitors were forced to confront their gullibility and the role public museums have played in normalizing colonial violence. Finally, Schwebel's pseudological institutional critique *Please Do Not Submit Original Works* (2012) exposed the danger of nepotism in the programming of Artist Run Centres by playing on the passivity of the programing board at Articule. Schwebel's work follows in a long line of conceptual artworks that critique the supposed open accessibility of art institutions. By using an artistic mystification to dupe and then reveal the oversight in the

board's interpretive framing, Schwebel could create a moment of self-reflexive analysis for Articule and initiate institutional reform—while also gaining access to the institution as an exhibiting artist.

Finally, in my last chapter, now equipped with the theoretical approaches and findings of the previous chapters, I analysed the artistic framing techniques Iris Häussler employed in *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach* (2006). Through forcing viewer-participants to thread various frames together to comprehensively experience the house as an unmanaged strip of reality, a site of archival research, the working studio of an outsider artist, and the installation-performance of a contemporary artist, Häussler could reveal our active framing of everyday life and the affective nature of our construction of a shared reality. Häussler's artefactual realism can have us grapple with what makes reality seem real. The nesting of her artistic context inside the archivist frame inside the primary framework, to then be repositioned inside the outermost lamination of an additional artistic frame, highlights the differences in norms constituting these frames. Most importantly, this threading leads to the political realization of our own interpretive creation of reality through framing.

The writing of this study overlaps with broad changes to what is considered truthful or deceitful in the public sphere of politics. To measure the import of pseudological art now, it is imperative to review this unstable, shifting climate. The concept of a "shared reality" has been problematized by a contemporary prevalence of lying in the realms of public culture and politics proper. The huge successes of infotainment comedians like Stephen Colbert, Seth Myers, and John Oliver demonstrate

the fulsome laughs to be had by opponents of prevailing political truths; and, reciprocally, the political condescension of news media's truths demonstrates an equally successful gambit. Mockery, ridicule, lambasting—these are the social regulators of truths and the sense of shared reality to which they contribute. To *make Truth obscene*, as is called for in this conclusion's epigraph from Jean Baudrillard, is to wed the real or true to the simulacral or false by social propositions and the regulative actions of ridicule. Even though Baudrillard's articulation of culture seems to aim to eschew the simulacral world of images and return to the real world of peer-to-peer interaction, it at the same time reveals the necessary critical practice of interrogating what we hold as real or true by acknowledging the constructed nature of these human designations. In conjunction with this critical political program, Hannah Arendt reminds us, in this chapter's second epigraph, that the human construction of fact-fiction and truth-falsity distinctions remains integral to political debate and action—even if, or especially because, consensus here ultimately remains speculative.

Yet, the way Baudrillard conceives of the "everyone" in the counter-hegemonic population falls out of step with current theories of the balkanization effects of networked news media (Prior 2007), where "curated flows" of news media are limited not only by conventional newsmakers but individual media users, social contacts, advertisers, and computer algorithms (Thorson and Wells 2016). Assumed in Baudrillard's important articulation of the social constructedness of shared reality and truth is a unified resistance to prevailing, state-sanctioned truths—like the Pentagon Papers of 1969. American journalist Dan Rather, in a recent New York Times segment, *Conspiracy's Grip*, opined

that when Kennedy was assassinated there were only a few sources of information in the

US that people overwhelmingly trusted as "honest brokers of information" (7:15), yet

now, "We've moved fairly quickly, fairly deeply into a post-truth, post-fact era, that is, an

era when any number of people including some in the highest reaches of our own

government can say, 'Well, facts are fungible'" (11:16). The feeling amongst media

historians is that the sense of authority that major news outlets once held has dissipated in

the current media landscape dominated by disjointed archipelagoes of online information

(Thompson, "Why Do").[116] This lack of a "common reality" allows people to produce

their own facts, and because these "alternative facts" (to use a phrase recently made

infamous by U.S. President Trump's Counselor Kellyanne Conway) are broadcast via the

internet, they can germinate and engender a climate of continual conspiracy

(*Conspiracy's Grip* 7:27). But if, as this dissertation has attempted to make clear, facts

are indeed fungible, in that a fact is always a motivated use of some representation of the

ongoing world, how do we move forward in a "post-fact" political climate? What is the

cause of the novel feeling in contemporary Western society of the increased magnitude of

mendacity? What does the prefix "post" signify in contemporary neoliberal culture?

Finally, does the pseudological work examined in this dissertation offer models for new

political-aesthetic practices or theories that might help navigate our current "post-truth"

media quagmire? In a time of anxiety about the recognizability of truth and our ability to

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[116] When recently asked if they trust news media for fair and accurate reporting, only 32% of Americans responded, "Great deal, or Fair amount" (Thompson, "Why Do"). If the results are broken down by political party, as of 2016 51% of democrats trust news media, while 14% of their republican counterparts do. The proliferation of news sources means those who do not agree with the mainstream news can find sources that support their beliefs. Trump gives people an additional source of news that supports their beliefs.

judge what is real or fictional (on social media or reality TV), pseudology offers us

important lessons. In what follows, I focus on the importance of the pseudology analysed

here and test my findings by interpreting the lying of the Trump administration as both a

proponent and opponent of fake news, alternative facts, and post-truth.

Interpretation of Findings

To answer these topical questions in our post-postmodern era, my analysis must

articulate the interconnections of race, privilege, and neoliberalism (both economics and

culture). I would like to argue that the hoax has become the narrative structure de rigueur

for entertainment, politics proper, and the news that covers both, and this generic ubiquity

tells us much about our post-postmodern epoch. As the genre form of melodrama sought

to express the sociopolitical anxieties of a labour population experiencing the vicissitudes

of nineteenth-century industrial revolution and the then-new economic formation of

liberal capitalism (Singer 2001), so too do the genres of fake news and hoaxes express the

sociopolitical anxieties of a globalized labour force unmoored amid the violent

undulations of neoliberal info-capitalism. Information has become anxiety-inducing

(Bawden and Robinson 2009); representations of populations by news media perpetuate

systemic racism and the material and moral violences that follow (Gist 1991; Coltrane

and Messineo 2000; Downing and Husband 2005; Pérez and Solorzano 2015). Today, the

globalized precarious workforce should laugh at the ridiculousness of Milton Friedman's

neoliberal earnestness—stabbing your neighbour openly, scrupulously, to increase capital

gain.[117] If the concept of a shared reality is in question today, there remains a cultural

constant informing our experiences of our balkanized spheres—this pervasive info-

anxiety that gives way to an overall sense of incredulity.

Rather than the productive skepticism of Descartes' Enlightened grappling with

the possibilities of constant deception, the pervading sense of incredulity in our post-

postmodern neoliberal times generates a din of precarity internalized by global citizens

(as the under- or unemployed, itinerant workers, migrants, and refugees). Disbelief

pervades the lived reality of citizens of the West: "this sort of sexism can't exist, surely

not now"; "this systemic racism can't *still* be going on, can it?"; "a reality TV star can't

be the President of the United States, can he?" What this pervasive disbelief holds in

common with the critical scepticism of the Enlightenment is precisely what it today lacks,

that is, a belief that progressive political change is needed, that governing bodies are not

governing well, and the ideologies that infuse our daily lives are unethical infringements

on our human needs. Descartes sought to lift science from under the governing thumb of

the church, to test the very bounds of human knowledge, to show that skepticism can

produce knowledge rather than obscure it, and to promote an individualism that would see

subjects use logic to gain agency over the course of their lives. The incredulity we feel

today is less a strategic deployment, like Descartes' radical skepticism, than a sense of

being hopelessly blinded by the neoliberal dystopian blanket of "post." If we believe the

conservative commentators, there remain no reasons for failure in Western societies

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[117] "There is one and only one social responsibility of business—to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud" (Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* 112).

except personal shortcomings—our post-feminist, post-racial, post-fact, post-truth cultures have leveled the playing field—hence, we are told, efforts that strive for social justice by pinpointing real inequality should be brushed aside as good-meaning-yet-misled antiquarian counter-culture (see, for instance, Wente 2014; Stossel 2014).[118] The anomie of incredulity is our lived reality, and neoliberalism our enveloping culture—it is our real world. And we should laugh at it, begin to break it down, as Baudrillard envisions. It's killing us.

And laugh we shall, by taking the working strategies of the pseudology analyzed in this study as models for a counter-politics that might dislodge the world at hand from its weighted inevitability through the disruptive effects of humour (the way Eco suggests fakes make us laugh because the world is not supposed to lie). If Duchamp revealed the conditions of possibility of art qua art—that is, art's discursive framing—Robert Rauschenberg used lies to justify the modernist quality of originality he sought to bestow his *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953). In this light, we can see the Trump administration's lying about the American Healthcare Act of 2017 as simply a strategy to bestow upon it a quality of inevitable superiority over the Democrats' Affordable Care Act of 2010 (Yglesias, "AHCA"). Yet, just as Rauschenberg's lie bolstered the modernist myth of the lone male genius, Trump's lies bolster the bourgeois myths of self-sufficiency and radical freedom (from social bonds). Similarly, if VALIE EXPORT creates a new event through the pseudological framing of a proposed performance, thereby deploying

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[118] On 24 May 2017, head of the United States Department of Housing and Development, Ben Carson, declared poverty "a state of mind."

the weight of "history" in support of Feminist Actionism, Trump's "Bowling Green massacre" discursively produced "evidence" supporting increased border security and a racist travel ban. Further, if Carol Duncan's use of lying brought about the creation and support of a new mode of art making and a new concept of non-originality, Kellyanne Conway's use of lying brought about the need for the concept of "alternative facts" (Swaine, "Donald").

Though initially derided in mainstream news, "alternative-facts" has given a name to the working practice of contemporary politics. In a way, differing facts have always been employed to support competing arguments. Yet, what this new use of alternative facts reveals is at once an acceptance of the mutability of facticity while at the same time upbraiding the use of facts alternative to the ones used by the Trump administration. This combined explicit acceptance and implicit (though at times explicit, as I'll mention below) denouncement contributes to the dangerous dismissal of the distinctions between fact-fiction and true-false, even if these distinctions are always socially constructed and highly contested. It is as if the Trump administration is attempting to reify the poststructural malaise of relativity theorized in the late twentieth century and instrumentalize it to render the American public more docile and malleable to the violent turns of fancy of the ruling neoliberal economic elite. How, then, might we effect change to this pervasive use of lying in the political sphere?

As models for political practice, the last four artists discussed in this dissertation all revealed their artistic lying to effect change through aesthetic experience. What is missing from the egregious lies of the Trump administration is the self-criticality that

defines artistic mystification—the revelatory structure and reconciliatory function of lying. For instance, Mierle Laderman Ukeles used artistic mystification to reveal the gender biases of the norms constructing our artistic and everyday frameworks; whereas Trump has used lying to enforce gender bias and cash in on patriarchal domination. Take, for instance, his use of "lying crooked Hillary"[119] to disbar Clinton's presidential campaign on moral grounds. Trump himself, on the other hand, was able to use overt gender bias to his benefit by spinning his recorded admission of sexually assaulting women as a macho style of male comradery (Spayd, "Why 'Locker Room Talk'"). This unethical machismo is upheld by the patriarchy that also grants men in power seemingly unending chances for success in the face of continued screw-ups while women must maintain the impossible standard of perfection lest they be demonized as failures (take, for example, Australia's first female Prime Minister who has said "women going into politics should expect rape threats"; Anderson, "Julia Gillard"). Lacking the revelatory and reconciliary effects of Ukeles' artistic mystification, Trump's deployment of lying makes use of and reifies the disparity of gender norms within Euro-Western patriarchy.

If, on the one hand, Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña's *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West* (1992-4) revealed passive spectatorship and allowed for spectators' own revaluation of their reliance on the museological frame and its production of authority, the Trump administration, on the other hand, *promotes* passive citizenship

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[119] Not only in speeches and tweets, but even a slick website, www.lyingcrookedhillary.com, where one finds Clinton's "10 Legendary Lies" beside a form allowing one to signup for the Donald J Trump for President newsletter and donate to the Trump campaign. The site's banner reads: "She's at it again. Spinning lies and weaving a tapestry of deceit that she hopes will cover the truth. Her despicable scandals and defenses place our country – and Americans like you – in jeopardy."

Figure 9: Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), "The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!" 17 February 2017, 1:49 PM. Tweet.

by damning all news contrary to their agenda (and Trump's personal image) as "fake"

(Fig. 9). This encourages the idea that only President Trump is the voice of truth in an

otherwise corrupt society, reinforcing a patriotic frame which, like the museological

frame, often includes the blind acceptance of authority. In this case, Trump's use of the

hashtag "FakeNews" dons the guise of demystification by cohering mainstream

journalism into a single entity whose lies can be exposed, isolated, and resisted and whose

credibility is thereby depleted. Similarly, White House Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon

has explicitly called the free press "the opposition party" (Grynbaum, "Trump"). In a

move that follows Carl Schmitt's friend-enemy politics, Trump's application of the

appellation "fake" to news sources that do not share his world view is an attempt to

disgrace and discredit other interpretive frameworks, while spreading his own through the

bubble universes of polarized social media sources. Appearing to deploy the

demystification tactics of Fusco and Gómez-Peña to critically revaluate the authority

granted news media, the Trump administration instead aims to suppress self-reflexivity

and usurp the authoritative role of news-maker.

      Fusco and Gómez-Peña's *Undiscovered* attempts to create a scenario in which

museum visitors might self-reflexively consider their own roles in maintaining the

museological framework that casts the violences of colonization in a narrative of

socioeconomic progress. Instead, the Trump administration has framed what "has been"

(as an idyllic, pre-diversity America) to manage plausibility and enforce a social amnesia

that willingly forgoes the social justice problems of the present for a nostalgic return to an

invented past, thereby also restricting the future. Derrida writes that the lie looks to the

future as what may be (it tries to produce some future in which it is the case), while truth

looks to the present and the past as what is and what has been ("History" 66). But, as far

as the lie takes hold and alters reality (that is, our perceptual interpretation and

understanding of the ongoing world) it either requires a certain congruence with the past

or present, or requires interlocutors to forget the past or present. What "has been" allows

us to envision what can be, and thus determines to what we are willing to grant

plausibility. And plausibility is the aesthetic congruence of an interpretive framework and

the world at hand.[120] Henry Giroux has written about a willing social amnesia that makes

certain populations disposable (*Youth* 179).[121] And to a large part, the rhetoric of the

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[120] For example: "The world could be this, or mean this, if you look at it like this, and that seems correct, or at least could be."

[121] Giroux stresses that for political resistance to work one must begin to examine "how neoliberalism as a pedagogical practice and a public pedagogy operating in diverse sites has succeeded in reproducing in the social order a kind of thoughtlessness—a social amnesia of sorts—that makes it possible for people to look

Trump administration encourages citizens to willingly forget: the plight of their

neighbours, the consequences of history, the benefits they accrue from a social safety net

(Paletta, "Trump to propose big cuts to safety net"). But as we saw in just the first ten

days of Trump's presidency, the press has the hard job of maintaining and contributing to

this public shared reality. This ability to shape public record is one of the reasons Trump

decries the bad press he receives as "lies."

This reliance on oppressive ideologies of the past need not persist. But, while

Häussler's pseudological performance revealed the active framing of everyday life and

the affective nature of a shared reality, the Trump administration instead uses lying to

conceal the frame, thereby naturalizing the inclusions and exclusions the frame makes.

For instance, the Trump administration continually tries to erase the significance of the

distinction between fact-fiction and true-false, thereby making the frame that would

distinguish these realms through aesthetic qualifiers insignificant (that is, hidden). We see

this in Conway's plea for citizens to give Trump "the benefit of the doubt" where news

media "always want to go with what's come out of his mouth rather than look at what's in

his heart" (Benen "Conway"). Here, Trump seems to take the definition of lying back to

the middle ages, quite literally. As Augustine wrote at the turn of the fifth century, "false

statements told in belief are not lies" ("Lying" 55). Trump's administration has

continually defended his lying by stating he believes what he says and admonishes

anyone who would judge him by his statements, not his intentions, advising the public to

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away as an increasing number of individuals and groups are made disposable, relegated to new zones of
exclusion" (*Youth* 179).

interpret his rhetoric "symbolically" not literally (Benen, "Trump"). However, Trump's

"telling it like it is" hides the structures that have produced his truths. Unlike artistic

mystifications like Häussler's in which a frame break comes from the revelation of the lie

and can call for self-reflection on how we structure the power and inclusion/exclusion of

our interpretive frames, Trump's lies are mystifications that, even when revealed by the

press as fabricated, continue to function for a large portion of the population as true.

Socrates argues that the voluntary liar is better than the involuntary liar, because the

voluntary liar possesses wisdom, truth, power, knowledge and prudence, while the

involuntary liar possesses simply ignorance (Plato, *Hippias Minor*).[122] Trump seems to

have harnessed the agency implied in this authoritative logic to present himself as a savvy

navigator of the "swamp" of politics and its quagmire of lies. Though a sense of shared

reality is a continual battleground of differing facts, figures and the frames that enlist

them to construct truths, the epigraph from Hannah Arendt at the outset of this chapter

reminds us of what is at stake with the importance we give to this continual heave-hoe.

Once, the distinctions of fact-fiction (experience) and true-false (episteme) are eschewed

by politicians and the populace alike, the conditions of possibility are ripe for the

affective suasion of totalitarian rule.[123] Arendt reminds us that the transitional processes

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[122] Dialogue between Eudicus, Socrates and Hippias. Socrates questions Hippias as to whom is the better person, Odysseus or Achilles. Hippias says that Odysseus is false and Achilles true, but over the course of the dialogue Socrates shows that a person who voluntarily does wrong is a good person, whereas someone who involuntarily does wrong is a bad person. For example, if justice is a type of power or knowledge, and if a person with the greater power or knowledge is a more just than someone more ignorant, then Socrates concludes that a good person will voluntarily do wrong while a bad person does so involuntarily. Socrates makes the jump in logic at the end to assume that "he who voluntarily does wrong and disgraceful things, if there be such a man, will be the good man".

[123] Indeed, Trump has been repeatedly charged with employing totalitarian tactics (Isaac, "How Hannah"; Williams, "Totalitarianism"; Khan, "Bernie Sanders"; Bilton, "How Trump").

of culture, inverting the everyday reality to change it, goes through an anomic state, in which fact and fiction, true and false rewrite themselves. The pseudology discussed in this dissertation emphasizes that *fiction* is what humans imagine possible (Rancière, *Politics* 39), yet, to change the world, we need new fictions to lose their fictionality—that is, operate in the ongoing world (Iser 12). This is precisely the aim of the pseudological art analyzed here.

These artworks follow Arendt in prompting us to remember that the distinction between the two arenas, though elements are moving from one to another, must retain its usefulness lest we become susceptible to the big lies of totalitarianism.[124] Indeed, as journalist Masha Gessen writes of the Trump administration, "*Lying is the message. … to assert power over truth itself*" ("The Putin Paradigm").[125] This assertion of power taps

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[124] In the same vein, the fact-fiction, true-false distinctions are at risk with the rising poetics of Trump's version of neoliberal culture where deception and fraud are reframed as savvy business practices. Take, for example, Trump's use of bankruptcies (O'Connor, "Fourth"), cheating of clients (Cassidy, "Trump University"), and lying to contractors as examples of fiscal ingenuity (Parloff, "Why"). In Aristotle's *Poetics*, *poiesis* means something closer to imaginative writing; Aristotle writes that poetry is the art of framing lies properly (§ 24). As the successes and failures of Trump's lies abound, it is easier to see now that his lying is a type of political poetry, one that engenders the reality to which it refers.

[125] Routinely, Trump's lies are so obvious, or his statements so clearly motivated by deceptive intent, that one might be tempted to call his rhetorical style "bullshit." Philosopher Harry Frankfurt calls obvious lying "bullshit." Bullshit, unlike other types of speech, is impotent. It does not effect change in the world. Frankfurt defines bullshit as the deceptive misrepresentation of reality that remains different from lying because, contrary to the liar, the "bullshitter" does not try to deceive (6–7). Yet, Frankfurt's insistence on the aesthetic capacities of the proverbial "bullshit artist," where bullshitting is "not a craft but art" leads bullshit, like truthiness, to achieve a semblance of truth for pragmatic ends (6-7), and thus suggests that even obvious manipulations of language have real effects. To many people, the information Trump uses in speech, press releases, and tweets is obviously untrue. Yet, we would be hard-pressed in 2017, after only two months of his administration, to say that these obvious lies are ineffectual. If lying can create the feeling of an adulterated world, skew our interpretive framework, and alter how we evaluate what is and is not going on in the world at hand, and if these alternate interpretive frameworks are normalized as ongoing primary frameworks, then the lies Trump tells truly have effective power. What of the insidious nature of all lies qua lies, where we must understand something to refute it, envision its existence to reveal its fabrication, and this required initial instant of realness or truth sticks with us. We must contend with the power that Trump's lies hold even after they are exposed as lies. Here we have a profusion of lying destabilizing political discourse, eroding trust the way Bok finds. Lies are also not self-contained entities; "a lie" as an object is infectious. Though it may be removed, discredited, it leaves a stain on our

into and fosters a rising sense of incredulity which it instrumentalizes for the political

promotion of a passive populace. As Arendt remarked in a 1974 interview, "a people that

no longer can believe anything cannot make up its mind. It is deprived not only of its

capacity to act but also of its capacity to think and to judge. And with such a people you

can then do what you please" (Arendt, "Hannah"). In our post-postmodern conjuncture,

the neoliberal imperative of individuation applies to experiences of reality. The tenets of

poststructural theory have been instrumentalized by capital: if the subject is dispersed,

fractured, and constructed by external forces, neoliberalism capitalizes on that

individualization of experience by withdrawing support from any social safety net that

assumes commonality—community programs, minimum wages, basic healthcare. In fact,

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understandings of other things—like the reputation of someone or our trust in institutions, it changes our affective responses to people, things, and issues, so we end up *acting as if* we believed the lie was true even though we do not. Lies linger. They adjust our conceptual matrix of the world, and after they leave, our matrix remains changed; though it changes again as they leave, it does not "reset" to its prior state. This is the ideological aspect of lying: a persistent distortion of our perception of the situation in which we find ourselves that in turn affects the decisions we make now and in the future.

  If Frankfurt's bullshitter cares about the impression of truthfulness but bluffs, uses falsehoods as well as truth-telling "so long as it produces the impression he seeks to promote," philosopher Colin McGinn's mindfucker seems to collapse truth and truthfulness. For McGinn, where both lying and bullshitting "are concerned exclusively with the beliefs of the listeners, while the mindfucker is concerned with the listener's beliefs *and emotions*. … The mindfucker is not satisfied if he can make you *think* certain things that are not true; he wants you to *feel* a certain way … The mindfucker aims at the psyche as a whole, while the liar and the bullshitter are content to focus on the belief component of the psyche" (31, 33).

  In this way, truths are charged with an affective register. This is the significance of the sense that lying is pervasive in this historical conjuncture. Indeed, the ambiguity of fact-fiction and true-false has been mobilized by neoliberal culture to promote the heightening of bourgeois ideology. With a loss of significance between these distinctions comes an easier acceptance of the spectacles of hope and success. ("If you dream it, it will come.") In this way, Trump follows Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952) where "truth is subordinate to attitude" (Cederström, "They're not lies").

  McGinn's practical examples of mindfucking are so broad as to render any time someone feels an emotional shakiness when learning something as mindfucking. To the extent that people are not emotionless automaton when dealing with "rational" or "cognitive" problems and basket cases when emotions are involved at all, McGinn's universal subjects seem to be straw dogs. I like to take this sketch of this concept and instead of drawing strict taxonomical delineation, like McGinn does (he is a philosopher very cognizant and supportive of mind/body dualism), use some of the characteristics outlined here to elucidate the functions of lying in art.

the divisive politics of neoliberalism renders the very idea of commonality threatening to

socioeconomic stability: unions, political reform, and social justice movements are all

framed as impediments to the free flow of atomistic capital (Couldry, "The Future" 142;

Couldry, *Why Voice Matters* 114). Nick Couldry maintains that, to move past rigid ideas

of community and collectivity that fix identity into rigid forms, we must keep "an

openness to each other's narrative languages," and develop those sites where people can

engage in public discourse of a shared nature, in "institutions where, across differences of

collective identity, we can exchange narratives of past experience that, through their

exchange, encourage shared narratives of the future" ("In Place of a Common Culture"

18). Following my analyses of the pseudological art in this dissertation, I argue that the

fostering of individuation occurs at the level of everyday aesthetics, turning our very

experience of reality and the aesthetic judgements and narrative framings we make to

constitute it, into a political sphere infused with neoliberal ideology. The managing of

everyday experience through the imposed self-monitoring regulations of neoliberalism

turns the very sphere of our everyday interpretation of the ongoing world into a political

arena shaping the sociopolitical policies, institutions, and admonishments that produce

reality.

What the pseudological art discussed in this dissertation has shown is that the

production of the effect of realness differs between media, as does our ability to judge the

accuracy of these depictions of the ongoing world. Frequently, we hear of the power of

new media to shape shared reality. This techno-deterministic stance leaves little room for

the necessity of active negotiation of reality that the artworks in this dissertation convey.

The digitally networked media through which the Trump administration publishes its lies retain a lingering reality effect from previous media forms.[126] But let me be clear: I am not making a ludditic argument for a return to the past of publishing ("Make Media Great Again"). Instead, I am interested in the ways in which the pseudology studied in this dissertation has suggested the need to interrogate passive acceptance of an evidentiary everyday aesthetics. This in turn affects the way we make modality judgements in the ongoing world (what Liddy called aesthetic approvals, like "original," "authentic," "novel," and "real"; 12). Yet, the authenticity metrics we use to vet evidence—the norms that make up our modality judgements framing things as real-fiction, true-false—are carried over from older inscription media. One of the aspects that made reality TV so enticing when it started was that it operated in the documentary frame which lent it a strong reality effect. Though that veneer of reality has faded, Trump's status as "real" reality star carries with it a residual reality effect. In the same vein, photography is more ubiquitous than ever before, and we rely on visual evidence more to justify claims. Take, for instance, the need for the creation of cellphone apps that record police conduct during traffic stops to safeguard against police brutalizing people of colour (Finley, "This App"; Dubois, "Stopped by Police?"; Waller, "App sends alert"), and even the new trend of

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[126] The effectiveness of Trump's lies is in part accounted for by a residual reverence we hold for the means of communication: news media, we assume, have already been vetted. Platforms like Twitter mimic traditional news media in several ways: speed of publishing, i.e., its *current*; short headlines; links to further reading; a community of readers; a veracity imparted by its content (the real, ongoing world). If the example of Trump's blind reliance on WikiLeaks for "information," if to say nothing of the skewed versions of reality he overtly labels as fact, is any indication, Twitter is not like traditional news sources in that it is not vetted, other than by the court of public appeal. Therefore, believability, truthiness, or the intentional nature of all "truth" exposed by artistic lying is of such import today. In the absence of consensus as to the authority of news sources, social media platforms have become the agora of the digitally privileged citizen.

"sickie selfies" to prove one is indeed home sick (Elliott, "How to Play Hooky from

Work") or out cheating social assistance ("£22,000 benefit cheat," *BBC.com*).

Photography has come a long way from its nineteenth-century status of transparent

recorder of reality.[127] Not only do we have a heightened aestheticological understanding

of photography's ability to create and enforce specific versions of reality through active,

physical and discursive framing of what is seen (Butler, *Frames* 67), but never have the

editing technologies that allow us to manipulate a photo's content been so ubiquitous.

Häussler's *Joseph* showed us that the context in which any image is shown substantially

affects the interpretive framework applied to understand it. Though photography as an

inscription medium should now hold less evidentiary significance and thus the modality

judgements based on it more fraught, in our post-postmodern era the opposite is true.[128]

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[127] Even with the plethora of photographic evidence out there which serves to incriminate people, those in power still find a way to evade punishment. The primacy of narrative power to reframe even "obviously" incriminating photograph evidence to suit majoritarian interests is made eloquently and succinctly by Judith Butler in her reading of the Rodney King case in "Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia" (1993). One might argue that, although ultimately the justice system still tends to fail oppressed minority groups, photographic evidence does play a very important role in swaying public opinion and in helping individuals and groups form alliances and find support. Though the justice system systemically benefits white citizens, the public circulation of images of injustice helps to keep conversations about racial prejudice and violence at the forefront of the media. For instance, I wonder if Canada would be having a different conversation about the murdered and missing indigenous women if there were more videos out there that caught police brutality or prejudice in action? Regarding police brutality in particular, although individual perpetrating police tend to be acquitted, the wave of protests and the activist movements that such photographic evidence has sparked is quite amazing. And in that sense, the reality of racial prejudice is very much legitimized and depends upon photographic evidence.

[128] Trump continually cites print media in support of his fabrications. For instance, in an interview with *TIME Magazine* in March 2017, Trump supported his recently debunked claim that the Obama administration had wiretapped Trump Tower by saying "I have articles saying it happened," even though FBI Director James Comey definitively stated the contrary. Trump is now threatening newly-fired Comey with exposing taped recordings of their meetings—again playing on the evidentiary authority of a dated inscription medium, one which generates a wealth of irony given the sorted past of President Nixon, the oval office, and tapes. Further, when *TIME* brought up Trump's endorsing the conspiracy theory that links American Senator Ted Cruz's father to Lee Harvey Oswald, Trump again cited the authority of print media:

> That was in a newspaper. … No, no, I like Ted Cruz, he's a friend of mine. But that was
> in the newspaper. I wasn't, I didn't say that. I was referring to a newspaper. A Ted Cruz

Our post-postmodern, nascent stage of new inscription media remains in need of novel modes of accountability.

It is precisely this ambiguous modality status of contemporary media that constitutes the increase in online "hoaxes." Between reality television, internet memes, phishing scams, "real" fake news, and any news someone elects to call fake, our contemporary moment is rife with a feeling of being tricked. Pseudological art provides us with a bracketed experience onto which we can retroactively apply the terms *fiction*, *hoax*, and even *lie*. After these experiences, other world views can exist within our single ongoing primary framework. In following radical yet proper decorum, they exist as other worlds, though not claiming to be "true" after the fact, they may continue to challenge what we view as "real." Through Trump's continual discrediting of other information sources, his lying threatens to performatively remake what is "true" and "real" through not only making himself the arbiter of truth but surreptitiously undermining the important sociopolitical distinction between true-false and real-fake. If Arendt finds lying the basis of political action ("Truth" 564), it is Trump's discrediting of other world views and instrumentalization of modal ambiguity that lend his lies' "effective productivity" (the same tactics that are the basis for totalitarianism as outlined by Koyré; 291).

Part of my aim in this project was to examine generic and disciplinary restrictions in art. But unlike modernist disciplinary concerns that sought the development of the field

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article referred to a newspaper story with, had a picture of Ted Cruz, his father, and Lee Harvey Oswald, having breakfast" ("Read" *Time.com*).
The reputable newspaper was the *National Inquirer* which had run a story about Ted Cruz's father possibly standing next to Oswald in a grainy photograph of Oswald from August 1963 (which was thoroughly debunked) (Rothman, "Donald"). In this way, Trump calls upon a residual medium-specific accountability to lend his linguistic constructions the air of authority.

as its own end, these pseudological practices are concerned with transgressing the restriction in and on art as a formal category of human production alienated from everyday life. Not only does lying in aesthetic practice exemplify this, but it is a specific response to this historical-conjunction in which the compartmentalization of everyday life along with the labourization of everyday life has rendered dissent increasingly difficult. In one way or another, each of the pseudological artworks discussed in this dissertation use lying to critique labour relations in some way and make those relations aesthetically tangible. Lying used in crafting aesthetic experiences is part of a broader use of framing narratives in everyday life that limit the scope of and manage the effect of democracy. It is language's ties to lived human lives that mark it as effective—though discourse is iterable and now more than ever seems to float around us like a magical miasma—framing individual iterations of the norms that compose the frame of a shared reality remains a social affair. Reality becomes obdurate and obscene when used to justify inequality and maintain the status quo. By exposing falsehood in designated social spaces and instances, the status quo is seemingly challenged yet can be maintained through a consistent discursive framing of the ongoing world. Inversely, the use of falsehood in undesignated spaces, while unnoticed can reframe reality, if exposed can employ the aesthetic of the lie as a space of contradiction rendering the discursive framing of the world tangible. The art discussed here highlights this limiting and reveals the power narrative framing holds in experience and subsequent discourse, and in so doing I would like to think it participates in an emancipatory pedagogy designed to give citizens the will to monitor the application of interpretive frameworks vigilantly and critically. What these

pseudological artworks show us as models for the political aesthetic of lying is that the

need to debate the very tenets of reality constantly and continually is of paramount

importance in any ethical relationship, especially the communal relationships of a

democracy.

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