While the future awaits: essays on anticipation, Duchamp and
contemporary Cuban art

by

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Abstract

Anticipation is a basic human condition central to the formation of experience and expectation. This thesis investigates the presence of anticipation within specific continental philosophical traditions and key art histories of the 20th and 21st century. The first chapter focuses on the development of anticipation within particular philosophical traditions and asks what it means to treat anticipation historically and thus open to repetition. It does so by positioning the idea of anticipation within theorizations of the modern, the postmodern, and the contemporary. The second essay argues that Marcel Duchamp's painting *Coffee Mill* (1911) develops, perhaps for the first time, an anticipatory logic central to the artist's oeuvre and legacy. The final essay investigates Duchamp's legacy using two Cuban case studies of contemporary Cuban art: the practices of artist Flavio Garciandía in the 1970s and Sandra Ceballos' art space (*Espacio Aglutinador*) since the 1990s. This study highlights the nuanced role that anticipation plays in the construction of historical narratives.

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The anticipation of the end is a prerequisite of the concrete meaning of beginning.
Gadamer's "The Beginning of Philosophy", 1996

Preface

This is not a thesis but rather an anti-thesis. Its main objective is to lend itself – as in the process of sublation – to the political imagination. In this sense the current text is to be understood as a tool or starting point for the elaboration of an understanding that the present can be seized as it develops.

In this work I have tried to argue that we have the capacity to anticipate and thus subvert the current state of affairs. And because we are a potential in progress this work's main concern is to begin to reorient the human condition to anticipate. Anticipation is perhaps the main avenue through which the 21st century is shaping itself today. Nowadays the world is put at the task of further perfecting the potential of anticipation. On all levels, from Neoliberalism through its many interstices, the logic of anticipation makes up the very horizon of possibility of our world. Through monetary transactions (whether virtual or material) and ideological state apparatuses, the world is divided and subdivided by entities that claim a power to find and refine our horizons of expectations.

And it is for this reason that I have thought this text as a tool that might serve radically different aims. For in writing this text I am not pledging allegiance to a political faction but rather to the conviction that we have inherited the capability to be consciously autonomous. Although ideological state apparatuses mediate the subject, it is in its action that the subject defines the direction of its development. In this sense perhaps this text argues that if we have anything in common, it is but this condition to be aware of each other.

This thesis is structured in three main sections. First I examine the notion of anticipation in continental philosophy. I chose continental philosophy because of its presence and popularization within discourses on art. That being said, it would be interesting to research other traditions in order to see how the term might be further developed.

The second essay focuses on the work of Marcel Duchamp and argues that the logic of anticipation enters into discourses on art through Duchamp's practice. This essay also tries to highlight that Duchamp's aims must be thought prospectively rather than retrospectively under the logic of anticipation. This logic must be respected to its last consequences if Duchamp's lessons are to be understood to their full extent.

The third and final essay presents a history of largely ignored narratives of conceptual art. By focusing on two Cuban case studies, Flavio Garciandía's artistic practice and Sandra Ceballos' art space, this essay demonstrates how these artists have absorbed and implemented Duchamp's anticipatory practices.

Introduction

History begins in novel and ends in essay.
Macaulay's "History", 1828

Am I a lecture or a novel? God, what a question.
Enrique Vila-Matas "Never Any End to Paris", 2003

The history of the idea of anticipation within Continental philosophy is long if scattered. This history can be seen extending from the work of Edmund Husserl to that of Jean Baudrillard, but is not by any means exhausted there. For example, as Peter Osborne has noted, "For Heidegger, *Dasein* is an entity 'whose kind of Being is anticipation itself'."¹ Indeed for Heidegger, anticipation is its own movement and for us a process that has caught up with itself – turning into its own horizon. In fact anticipation is a practice (both conscious and unconscious) that is basic, instinctual, but also traversed by episteme(s) and teleology(s) such as those of the modern and the postmodern.

The purpose of this thesis is twofold: to begin to set up a genealogy of the idea of anticipation within continental philosophy and to show how such discourses on anticipation have made forays into art histories. In short, anticipation's ontological claims make it the perfect starting point from which to explore some aspects of the work of art as it appears in a few of its multiple histories. Furthermore, our current state of affairs – the aftermath of historical communism – might profit from a rethinking of the idea of anticipation as it informs and recharges the political

¹ Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London and New York: Verso, 1995).

spectrum embodied in the conceptualization of horizons. Since anticipation precedes but is also formed by expectation and horizon, it is an important locus from which to re-think the function of the work of art and how it informs today's political imagination. Today one anticipates rather than expects the return of the communist potential. One cannot expect it for it is historical; part of the past, and thus ready for repetition. In other words one only expects what is envisioned under the projection of a hypothesis, but communism is an event from the past and in this sense is simply open for re-interpretation – hence the space in this thesis for the idea of anticipation.

As Boris Groys explains:

Only once the history of the fulfillment of the communist vision was concluded did it assume a definitive historical reality. Concluded here, naturally does not mean exhausted, obsolete, superseded or proven impossible; what it does mean, among other things and in particular, is that it is released for historical repetition.²

Divided into three essays, this thesis first lays out a chronological history of the idea of anticipation that begins with the work of Husserl and ends in the recent and ongoing efforts of Peter Osborne to theorize the notions of expectations and horizons.³ The second essay highlights Marcel Duchamp's *Moulin à café* (*Coffee Mill*), which is little discussed within his scholarship. This chapter sets up what I would like to call "The archeology of a silence" and its relation with anticipation. The third and final essay, "A complex of occasions", is composed of a series of fragments

² Boris Groys, "The Post Communist Condition" in *Becoming Former West*, 29 November, 2009 <http://becoming-former.tumblr.com/post/262880375/the-post-communist-condition-boris-groys-the>, accessed August 4, 2013.

³ Peter Osborne, "Expecting the Unexpected: Beyond the Horizon of Expectation" in *On Horizons: A Critical Reader On Contemporary Art*, eds. Maria Hlavajova. Simon Sheikh, and Jill Winder (Utrecht: BAK Critical Reader Series, 2011).

connecting Duchamp's practice with that of two Cuban artists (Flavio Garcíandía and Sandra Ceballos), began in the 1970s, in order to highlight how history is composed of multiple and interconnected instances.

The organization of the thesis speaks to the movement of knowledge as it begins in intuition and deepens, thus changing into research. And thus it ends where it begins since at its basis, this thesis is concerned with the problem of anticipation. Indeed as Hans Georg Gadamer argues: "the anticipation of the end is a prerequisite for the concrete meaning of beginning."⁴ While Gadamer's interpretation of anticipation is mediated by Heidegger's *Dasein* or "being towards death," it nonetheless sets up the problematic of temporality as it pertains to history and the work of art. For here anticipation's ontological character organizes our three temporal moments: past, present and future. If indeed, as Gadamer suggests, anticipation sets up beginning and ends, how are such beginnings and ends organized? In short how does the impulse to anticipate organize our three temporal moments? And the opposite as well might be asked: how do received (past) temporalities organize our condition to anticipate? Thus while the essays making up this thesis are porous and aware of the reader "upon whom all the books are open simultaneously,"⁵ its logic wishes to highlight anticipation's immanence and generality.

⁴ Hans Georg Gadamer, "The Meaning of Beginning" in *The Beginning of Philosophy* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 15.

⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), xvii.

Consequently, central to the first essay is the question: what does it mean to push anticipation forward as an object of research? In other words, since anticipation prefigures knowledge, what does it mean to push anticipation forward as knowledge itself? If following Maurice Merleau-Ponty:

As soon as philosophy declares itself to be reflection or coincidence it prejudices what it will find, then once again it must recommence everything, reject the instruments reflection and intuition had provided themselves, and install itself in a locus where they have not yet been distinguished, in experiences that have not yet been “worked over”, that offer us all at once, pell-mell, both “subject” and “object”, both existence and essence, and hence give philosophy resources to redefine them.⁶

To push anticipation forward as an object of knowledge and analysis is to recognize it as a constitutive element of experience. And since what is at stake here is less what Merleau-Ponty calls philosophy’s “reflection” or “coincidence” than prejudgment itself; the first chapter is mainly concerned with making visible something similar to what Merleau-Ponty calls “the repeated index, the insistent reminder of a mystery as familiar as it is unexplained.”⁷ Indeed if as Merleau-Ponty prefigures, the task of philosophy is to unveil that which is, what then does it mean to treat anticipation historically and thus open it up to repetition as a historical category?

The second chapter “The archeology of a silence” is in dialogue mostly with Thierry de Duve’s *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp’s Passage From Painting to the Readymade* (1988). De Duve’s study, while offering the most enduring history of Duchamp’s discovery/invention of the readymade, neglects the role of *Coffee Mill*

⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Intertwining – The Chiasm”, in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: basic writings*, ed. Thomas Baldwin (London: Routledge, 2004), 248.

⁷ Ibid., 249.

in such a history. Thus central to this chapter is the question: what are the repercussions of the silence of *Coffee Mill* within de Duve's history? Equally relevant are theoretical as well as methodological questions regarding such an intrusion. Why should *Coffee Mill* intrude into what is a complex and logical meditation on the role of a pictorial tradition in Duchamp's invention of the ready-made? Why should we try to understand de Duve's study in relationship to its silence towards *Coffee Mill* and not just on its own terms?

Finally, the presence and influence of Duchamp's work and ideas in the context of contemporary Cuban art since the 1970s is only a small part of a long and complex reception that encompasses narratives of the historical and neo avant-gardes as they relate to moments (in the Caribbean and Latin America) of the modern and the postmodern. One of the claims at stake in this final essay is that "the Duchamp effect", as some historians have called it, was/is never bound to a specific moment and teleology. For example, Duchamp's influence in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s on Continental European and North American artistic practices is only one part of a larger story. Thus while historical facticity is of utmost importance I argue that it serves above all to legitimize or deride its relating circumstances. To the contrary I argue that history is expansive and should never be delimited. For history is retroactive and therefore always already dislocated – it involves a series of rifts that makes it the perfect vehicle through which to explore its constituting life-horizon. In other words, history is, at least for me and in the space of this text, a discursive figuration of the possible and as such speaks to the current state of affairs.

The study of Duchamp-as-discourse within the context of Cuban contemporary art is therefore an instance of larger and complex interweaving histories. Since such a history, to the best of my knowledge, has not been pursued, a dive into the reception of Duchamp in the context of contemporary Cuban art aims at mapping or setting up the grounds of a specific tradition within artistic practices: what I would like to call the *logic of anticipation*. The latter is what I claim to be the recognition by contemporary artists of the work of art as a ready-made or historical category - a tradition that might have begun with Marcel Duchamp.

Today the impulse to create has not diminished but rather has become part and parcel of the desire of the artist to historicize. Such desire can be seen first of all in artists' understanding the work of art as inhabiting its own temporality: its own conceptualization of past, present and future. The logic of anticipation (today) is thus nothing more than a rhetorical device through which the work of art merges in what Peter Osborne has called "con-temporaneity":

Con-temporaneity, a coming together not simply 'in' time, but *of* times: we do not just live or exist together 'in time' with our contemporaries – as if time itself is indifferent to this existing together – but rather the present is increasingly characterized by a coming together of *different, but equally 'present'* temporalities or times, a temporal unity in disjunction, or a *disjunctive unity of present times*.⁸

Thus central to the logic of anticipation is how its current actualization(s) think the past and the future – the artist historicizing the work of art, treating it as a historical category. Because the work of art, one could say, has shifted from aesthetic

⁸ Peter Osborne, *Anywhere: or not at all philosophy of contemporary art* (London: Verso, 2013), 17.

reflection, through institutional critique to *temporal figuration*, it has opened a test of possibilities to interpretation and appropriation by the world market of ideas.

One does not have to go too far to see the history of such a shift. As de Duve has noted, the historical avant-garde functioned, at least in France and Germany, through schism and secession respectively. Whereas the temporal figuration of the avant-garde saw itself in France as reacting against the time of the past, Germany on the contrary saw itself as separate yet constitutive of that past. To what extent these artists were aware of their temporalizations is not my concern within the space of this text; instead I would argue through de Duve that at least for Duchamp such historical temporalizing was essential.⁹

In the second essay – an essay devoted to Duchamp’s *Coffee Mill* – I will explore how that painting and its etched version disrupted and played with anticipations and expectations, thereby setting up a model that Duchamp further developed throughout his career and that has survived by way of our interpreting it as our very horizon of possibilities.¹⁰

If, as Roland Barthes has summarized, “the contemporary is the untimely”, then its form is that of the logic of anticipation: always already too early and too late.¹¹ Because the work of art actualizes the logic of anticipation: objectifying time by setting up temporal figurations, the work of art reproduces its present, setting up

⁹ See Thierry de Duve: *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp’s Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

¹⁰ Here one only has to think of very recent artistic practices: time-based art, relational aesthetics, etc. Although the logic of anticipation is not the only constitutive element of such tradition it is essential to it.

¹¹ Quoted in Giorgio Agamben, “What Is the Contemporary?” in *What is an Apparatus? and other Essays* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 40.

what David Harvey has called: “time-space compression”.¹² In this sense anticipation, conflated with expectations, defines the time of the modern. As Boris Groys defines the time of the present:

The present has ceased to be a point of transition from the past to the future, becoming instead a site of the permanent rewriting of both past and future – of constant proliferations of historical narratives beyond any individual grasp or control... Today we are stuck in the present as it reproduces itself without leading to any future... However, one can also think this wasted time more positively, as excessive time – as time that attests to our life as pure being-in-time, beyond its use within the framework of modern economic and political projects.¹³

Osborne, Groys and Harvey all suggest that today we embody contemporariness rather than modernity. As Groys puts it, “Now, one can argue that we are at this historical moment in precisely such a situation, because ours is a time in which we reconsider – not abandon, not reject, but analyze and reconsider – the modern projects.”¹⁴ We could say through Agamben that such “return” or through Groys that such “reconsiderations” to that which is “unlived” and which “is the life of the contemporary” is but anticipation itself: its expression being unfolded in the time of the present.¹⁵

Today, the 21st century gets carried away between car fresheners and screen savers. That is to say, the world is older than ever and one might even say stale: filled

¹² David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1989).

¹³ Boris Groys, “Comrades of Time” in *Efflux Magazine*, Journal # 11, 12/2009 in <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/comrades-of-time/>, accessed August 4, 2013.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Giorgio Agamben, “What Is the Contemporary?” in *What is an Apparatus? and other Essays* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009).

with bad smells and its proliferation of figurations. The idea of anticipation as related to the present, should not be confused with newness or simulacra. When I mentioned midway into this introduction that I would end where I began, I meant to say that I think that in any theorization with ontological claims, for example in a historiography of the idea of anticipation, one ought to respect above all the logic of its subject – and anticipation is above all an heuristic device that gets tripped up by all sorts of contingencies. In this sense what is at stake is not some hard-boiled result, but the hope to have set up the spark of a curiosity (that has fueled me over the last two years) to continue along. Indeed as Hegel rightly stated at the outset of the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “To judge a thing that has substance and solid worth is quite easy, to comprehend it is much harder, and to blend judgment and comprehension in a definitive description is the hardest thing of all.”¹⁶

Today, ideas tend to serve two main functions: that of Capitalism and as such are based in its ready-made use value, and that of Politics – which attempts to obtain a degree of openness devoid of any sort of economical success. I have attempted within the course of this thesis to follow the latter interpretation in the hope that my work might contribute to the ongoing debates of our current crisis of experience. As Agamben has rightly put it at the outset of his book *Infancy and History: An Essay on the Destruction of Experience*:

The question of experience can be approached nowadays only with an acknowledgement that it is no longer accessible to us. For just as modern man has been deprived of his biography, his experience has

¹⁶ Hegel's preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3.

likewise been expropriated. Indeed, his incapacity to have and communicate experience is perhaps one of the few self-certainties to which he can lay claim.¹⁷

Such an incapacity to have and communicate personal experience bring us back to Vila-Matas' statement that opened this introduction. "Am I a lecture or a novel? God what a question." The second epigraph, Macaulay's assertion that "history begins in novel and ends in essay", speaks about a similar slipperiness in the context of historical writing. "Essay", we must remember, is a word that denotes "a trial design yet to be accepted". Martin Jay notes that the title of Michel de Montaigne's "Essays" suggests "exploratory" and/or "tentative experiments."¹⁸ Indeed it seems to me that Macaulay's sentence speaks of the experiential nature of history under the concepts of *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. Whereas the former denotes "lived (whole) experience", the latter denotes "progressive if not always smooth, movement over time."¹⁹ Indeed, where does the first begin and the second end if not in anticipation?

¹⁷ Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, (London, New York: Verso, 1993), 13. For a more comprehensive history of the subject of experience within European philosophical debates, see Martin Jay's *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

¹⁸ Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience*, 23.

¹⁹ Ibid., 11.

1. A history for beginnings and ends

1.1.

The word and idea anticipation²⁰ holds a special place in continental philosophy – particularly within phenomenology and hermeneutics – as a term that describes the time of the present. Anticipation is usually theorized in relationship to the categories of *Dasein*, expectation and horizon among others. Although the last three concepts have been extensively explored (sometimes as historical categories themselves), the presence of anticipation within these discourses remains unmapped. Our task in this essay will be to set up a tentative genealogy of the idea of anticipation within Continental philosophy and to explain how it relates to the other terms in order to form its conceptualization. Secondly we will explore how Peter Osborne has theorized the term (if indirectly) in a few essays, especially in the recent 2nd Former West Research Congress: *On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination* (2010). And lastly an attempt will be made to assess the lessons learned from both this genealogy and Osborne’s usage for our current state of affairs.

To anticipate, we know by common sense is, “to know beforehand” and/or “to be ahead of the game”. In phenomenological terms to anticipate is to develop representations, and in hermeneutical terms to anticipate is to understand. For us, however, anticipation is a new type of poetry – a poetry of practice that aims at stealing the future by way of instaurating itself in the future. This is different from

²⁰ The object of anticipation on the other hand is the subject – always subjected and always subjecting to anticipation.

expectation, which hopes for a future, a future that belongs entirely to the future. Hence we will speak not of a “horizon of expectation” but anticipation as our horizon.²¹

The idea of anticipation plays an important role in the work of Edmund Husserl, which will serve as our starting point. We are not seeking to ground ontologically the history of the term; but it will be our inaugural moment given Husserl’s primacy as a founding figure in continental philosophy. The idea of anticipation is central to Husserl’s theory of intentionality – a theory developed from his teacher Franz Brentano – and more specifically to the structure of time-consciousness:

...Above and beyond what is experienced, we can, starting from every experiential moment, think the experience endlessly carried on partly in line with the unobstructed continuation of experience, partly by considering the given possibilities of experience. And in these continua of possible experiences, the universal unity of the world presents itself as experiential, albeit only in anticipation and as a mixture of actuality and possibility. But of this we are certain: However experience may further run its course, however in each case deceptions may be discovered, the infinities of experience together form a unity of experience, and all particular experiences together form the unity of the world.²²

Two things can be readily learnt from Husserl’s preliminary remarks: first, the centrality of anticipation for experience and second, that anticipation is a “mixture of actuality and possibility”. Since anticipation focuses on that

²¹ For a general understanding of the relation between experience, horizon and expectation, see the now classic essay of intellectual historian Reinhart Koselleck: “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’”: Two Historical Categories”, in *Futures Past: On The Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 255-275. See also Hans Robert Jauss “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory” in *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1980), 3-45.

²² Husserl, “Appendix V”, in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology: from the lectures, winter semester, 1910-1911* (The Netherlands: Springer, 2006), 131.

which is readily available (experiential data) by producing/ reproducing ongoing experiential feedback – it serves consciousness in the forming of experience. In other words, anticipation is instrumental in making conscious the sense *and* idea of temporality. For example, expectation and horizon are time-based categories, in great part because they both respond to the impulse of anticipation. Since horizon is always a receding and never-attainable boundary-line (Kant's concept), we anticipate that it does not end via experience and on the other hand one can only anticipate expectations, whether they are prospective or retrospective, since expectation is in the words of Saint Augustine: "the present time of a future thing."²³

Husserl exemplifies the structure of time-consciousness through the concepts of retention and protention. These two terms, which refer in their most general sense to past and future experience, are bound in a process that both anchors and relays experience. Important for us, however, is to remember that it is anticipation, however inimical in its transparency that stands in between actuality and possibility, or retention and protention, as a hinge-category. As David Woodruff Smith argues:

Thus I have retentions of my immediately past experiences, and also anticipations or "protentions" of my impending experiences, and a concurrent awareness of my current conscious experiences or activities, starting with my sensations in seeing, hearing, touching, and so on. My

²³ Cited in Peter Osborne's "Expecting the Unexpected: Beyond the "Horizon of Expectation", in *On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, 119. The logic of the expectation is based on its scarcity because it is impossible to attain. The present time of a future thing then is but its fantasizing or imagining – that being said in Kant's philosophy the term appears as a moral-theological concept.

awareness of time depends on this formation of retentions, protentions, and inner awareness of my passing experience.²⁴

In Husserl's lexicon the idea of anticipation sets up time-based relations (retentions and protentions) of what he calls the "inner awareness" of "passing experience". More than simply setting up a distinction between the past and the future however, anticipation generates a compound relation that forms the basis of *duration* in which retentions and protentions are intertwined in a complex process of temporalization.

While in Husserl's work anticipation can be considered a temporal category, in some art historical writing the term has been transformed into a historical one. For example, in Hal Foster's essay "What is neo about the neo avant-garde?" the term serves to map a complex history:

I believe historical and neo-avant-gardes are constituted in a similar way, as a continual process of protention and retention, a complex relay of reconstructed past and anticipated future – in short, in a deferred action that throws over any simple scheme of before and after, cause and effect, origin and repetition.²⁵

We will return to Foster's essay but for the moment it is important to recognize how Foster is using anticipation in relation to the future and as a deferred action. Indeed anticipation appears here as *anticipated retrospection* – setting up a future past – a logic first formalized by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. Whereas we have seen in Husserl's phenomenology anticipation acting as a hinge-category to temporal

²⁴ David Woodruff Smith, *Husserl* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 205.

²⁵ Hal Foster, "What's Neo about the Neo-Avant-Garde?", *October* vol. 70, 5-32, Autumn, 1994: Note how for Foster his object of analysis is not an individual with his experiences but a complex object subjected to the same logic as that of an individual that is to protentions and retentions.

relations, for Heidegger anticipation functions to ground *Dasein* historically – in its facticity of Being-towards-death:

Being-towards-death is the anticipation of a potentiality-for-Being of that entity whose kind of Being is anticipation itself. In the anticipatory revealing of this potentiality-for-Being, *Dasein* discloses itself to itself as regarding its uttermost possibility.²⁶

Peter Osborne clarifies the distinction between Husserl's and Heidegger's approaches to Being and its relation to the future:

The idea of protention, which Husserl spends much less time discussing, extends the analysis in the other temporal direction (the future), with reference to the intentional modification of the present through anticipation, as opposed to memory. It is the assumption of a fundamental symmetry between retention and protention that Heidegger will contest, claiming an existential priority for the future (as Being-towards-death) as the ground of the interpretation of *Dasein* as a whole.²⁷

I have only mentioned Foster's essay given its reconstitution of the temporality of the avant-garde through Husserlian phenomenological time and Heideggerian facticity.

In the passage quoted above, Foster intertwines ideas of the future and history as a future past, and in this shift he is responding to and critiquing "modernity's dual role as a category of historical periodization."²⁸ Foster's analysis is sketched against Peter Burger's study "Theory of the avant-garde". This critique is based on Foster's belief "that the avant-garde is never historically effective or fully significant in its initial

²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 263.

²⁷ Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 50.

²⁸ Peter Osborne, "Modernity is a Qualitative, Not a Chronological, Category," *New Left Review* (March-April, 1992), 68 and 73.

moments.”²⁹ For Foster, the avant-garde is “traumatic: a hole in the symbolic order,” thus always already dislocated to be reconstituted by the time of the historical future.³⁰ Yet in doing so, Foster is repeating Burger’s argument and stripping the avant-garde of an agency to produce events (in the Aristotelian sense of an event that changes the direction of history). Indeed as Osborne has argued, one of the main characteristics of modernity’s temporal compound is “a tendential elimination of the historical present itself as the vanishing point of a perpetual transition between a constantly changing past and an as yet indeterminate future.”³¹ The avant-garde’s presence in Foster’s essay is based on the paradox of its absence.

As we have seen, anticipation remains intact in modernity (though completely transparent). If anything it becomes modernity’s paradigmatic quality. Standing in between past and future – retentions and protentions – anticipation has acquired a historical dimension in Heidegger’s hermeneutics of facticity:

What is revealed in it [Being] is how the anticipatory leap forward and running in advance should be undertaken and can only be undertaken. The anticipatory leap forward: not positing an end, but reckoning with being-on-the-way, giving it free play, disclosing it, holding fast to being-possible.³²

Note that the *anticipatory leap* itself (what Heidegger calls *being-on-the-way*) is given free play in its temporal and spatial factual determinants.

²⁹ Hal Foster, “What’s Neo about the Neo-Avant-Garde?”, *October* vol. 70., 5-32, (Autumn, 1994), 30.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid. The present as a horizon ever receding sets up the obsession of the contemporary as untimely.

³² Martin Heidegger, *Ontology – The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University press, 1999), 13.

Hans Georg Gadamer's study on *phronesis* or dialogic prudence³³ expanded this being-on-the-way with the *other*. In *Truth and Method* (1960), he seeks to ground understanding in its historical, hence linguistic dimension. Thus for Gadamer anticipation is not only delivered by tradition but is actualized – while actualizing tradition itself: “anticipating an answer itself presupposes that the questioner is part of the tradition and regards himself as addressed by it.”³⁴ Gadamer's expansion of the term under exploration is impressive. Here we mention only two of its main characteristics in relation to *understanding*: “working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed “by the things” themselves, is the constant task of understanding”³⁵ and “the anticipation of meaning in which the whole is envisaged becomes actual understanding when the parts that are determined by the whole themselves also determined this whole.”³⁶

Gadamer's central argument has been pushed forward through the interpretation of the hermeneutical circle (appendix. 1)³⁷. This theory argues that in any process of understanding, its object is anticipated as a whole that can only be approached by its parts: “The prejudice of completeness, then implies not only this formal element (for example) that a text should completely express its meaning – but

³³ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Gadamer, A Century of Philosophy* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), 20-21.

³⁴ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), 370. And also “The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition”, 293.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 270.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 291.

³⁷ José Medina, *Language: Key Concepts in Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 80-83.

also that what it says should be the complete truth.”³⁸ As Georgia Warnke has further explained:

Gadamer introduces the idea of anticipating completeness [...] as a counterforce to the potential arbitrariness and idiosyncrasy of textual interpretation [...] Gadamer points out that the presumption here is that the text forms a unity, an internally consistent whole, and that one can use the regulative ideal of unity to assess the adequacy of one’s interpretations of its various parts.³⁹

According to Warnke, for Gadamer the anticipation of wholeness encounters a text (or any information) and forms an understanding based on an already coded anticipated message pushed forward by the text itself. In other words encountering a text (experiencing it through reading it) can only be confronted as a thing of the past with its facticity, that is, its reality and anticipations:

We are all historically conditioned, and our effective-historical consciousness contains a truth claim (which I have also referred to as “the anticipation of completeness”) towards which we all strive, even if we will never reach it.⁴⁰

So far we have encountered the idea of anticipation in three main philosophical traditions, those of Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer. We have seen that for Husserl anticipation acts as a hinge-category central to retentions and protentions. For Heidegger anticipation defines *Dasein* itself as being-towards-death and as such privileges the future. For Gadamer, on the other hand, understanding is delivered by the anticipations of the past and as such it privileges it as effective

³⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 294.

³⁹ Georgia Warnke, “The Anticipation of Completeness” in *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1987), 82-83.

⁴⁰ Hans Georg Gadamer, *A Century in Philosophy: A Conversation with Riccardo Dottori* (New York and London: Continuum, 2006), 49.

history – the latter because Gadamer speaks (through Heidegger) not of past expectations but of past anticipations. As Ferit Güven explains:

Dasein's authentic relation to death is not an expectation of the occurrence of an event but a running ahead (anticipation, *Vorlaufen*) that preserves death as a possibility that cannot be understood from the perspective of the actual, because death undermines being-in-the-world as the ground of any sense of actuality. This anticipation frees *Dasein* for its possibilities. Therefore, Heidegger designates authentic being-towards-death as "freedom-towards-death."⁴¹

Jean Grodrin has also made explicit that the prestructure of understanding (at least in part) consists of, in Heidegger and Gadamer respectively, "an anticipation of existence in fore-sight" and in "prejudices."⁴²

Anticipation plays an important role in German philosophy, as we have seen. It also appears in a variety of forms in the writings of philosophers and French theorists, such as Jacques Lacan, Alexandre Kojève, Jean Hypolite, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean Baudrillard. For example, Jacques Lacan's influential essay "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function" defines the *I* as anticipation itself: "This development is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the individual's formation into history: the mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation..."⁴³ Indeed Lacan's own understanding derives and is anticipated greatly by Heidegger: "The temporality invoked here is that of Heidegger's 'being towards' [*Sein zu*], by definition an

⁴¹ Ferit Güven, *Maddens and Death in Philosophy* (New York: University Press, 2005), 68-69.

⁴² Jean Grondin, "Gadamer's Basic Understanding of Understanding" in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, ed. Robert J. Dostal (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 50.

⁴³ Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function" in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York and London: Norton & Company, 2006), 78.

anticipatory mode of being.”⁴⁴ Lacan we know describes in the mirror stage the defining passage from animal to human desire as a space of constant struggle.

Such reading is also derived from Alexandre Kojève’s lectures on Hegel’s Phenomenology in the 1930s,⁴⁵ in particular from Kojève’s ‘philosophical anthropology’ of the master-slave dialectics.⁴⁶ Kojève’s interpretation of Hegel’s phenomenology highlights the idea of anticipation at the historical level. Not only by invoking Hegel’s end of history – and us a *product* of it⁴⁷ – but by positing the master-slave dialectic to be at the center in “the ‘struggle for recognition’ of universal history”.⁴⁸ As Jean Hyppolite has made explicit:

For Hegel, natural consciousness... is “knowledge in principle,” that is, an anticipation of knowledge; and for being an anticipation of itself and for being at war and astray, it is an experience and an itinerary... In this sense Hegel’s “natural consciousness” is necessarily the form in which whoever thinks to have arrived at the end, presents himself.⁴⁹

I mention this only in passing for although we will not have time here to engage in these problems (we will at the end of the essay), I would like to call attention to the

⁴⁴ David Macey, *Lacan in Context* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 105.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ According to Kojève’s reading of Hegel, the end of history is man understanding itself in the struggle between master and slave, self and another.

⁴⁸ Boris Groys, “Hegel, Solovyov, Kojève”, in *Introduction to Anti-Philosophy* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 149. *Recognition* is for Hegel the sovereignty of all human beings. The master-slave dialectic is a psychological struggle in which the individual sees itself divided into self and another (master and slave) and must reconcile both in order to attain its freedom –hence the master vs. slave dialectic is a kind of madness. At the level of history, problems arise when individuals are unable to reconcile with themselves and others.

⁴⁹ Jean Hyppolite, “Hegel’s Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis”, in *New Studies in Hegel’s Philosophy*, ed. W. E. Steinkraus (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 57-70. Here I would like to remind the reader that Jean Hyppolite first translated for the French intellectual scene of the 1930s Hegel’s Phenomenology. In fact when we think about Hegel in the context of France in the 1930s we must think first about Kojève and Jean Hyppolite.

importance of the role of anticipation in the claims of a post-historical condition as expressed in the work of Kojève.

Another variation on the idea of anticipation can be found in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Following in the German phenomenological tradition of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty notes the value of anticipation in anchoring the past and the future in the present.

This amounts to saying that each present reasserts the presence of the whole past which it supplants, and anticipates that of all that is to come, and that by definition the present is not shut up within itself, but transcends itself towards a future and a past.⁵⁰

For Merleau-Ponty, anticipation not only structures the future and the past, but in doing so, anticipation reconstitutes the time of the present. Thus when writers like Koselleck and Osborne discuss modernity, they emphasize its struggle to reconstitute the time of the present as ever-new and in its newness always-the-same. The crystallization of anticipation as a regulative qualitative structure determines modernity's temporal relations.

While Merleau-Ponty and other modernists claim the importance of temporal relations in modernity, Jean Baudrillard critiques such possibilities. In fact, Baudrillard treats anticipation as a decoy – a simulation or change of direction. Where normally anticipation would lend itself to an exchange process in a course of becoming actual, for Baudrillard anticipation is not superseded by an action but is

⁵⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2005), 489.

retained as the process itself. This is what Baudrillard understands by anticipation when he writes:

It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes. Never again will the real have the chance to produce itself – such is the vital function of the modern in a system of death, or rather of anticipated resurrection, that no longer even gives the event of death a chance.⁵¹

In other words the structure of anticipation does not produce values or results but advances and simulates more anticipations (a system of relays or simulations). We have seen that anticipation is above all a transitional structure – lending itself to temporalizations (Husserl), historical and factual reconstructions of past and future (Gadamer and Heidegger) and as a superseding structure for the reorientation of the subject (Merleau Ponty). For Baudrillard, however, anticipation lends itself to simulation and serves above all to further develop its own structure - a structure Baudrillard borrows from the linguistic turn, in which objects (commodities) are replaced by words (signs) that do not stand for a real referent but are part of a structure at its basis arbitrary and serving above all the law of Capital in which consumption takes precedent over production.⁵² If signs, according to Ferdinand de

⁵¹ Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra" in *Simulacra and Simulation* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 2.

⁵² In Baudrillard's system: human beings become commodities – part of commodity's temporality. Hence consumption takes priority over production. For a general discussion of Baudrillard's critique of Marxism see: Richard J. Lane, "Structural Marxism: 1968-1972" in *Jean Baudrillard: Routledge Critical Thinkers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 66- 77. It might be interesting to see how the claims of consumption in Baudrillard's work are anticipated in the work of Kojève: "The posthistorical condition is the return to original animality – to socially guarantee consumption as a

Saussure, do not possess a real referent but are made up of a signifier and signified that stand for a “sound image” and a “concept”, it follows that in any process of signification – a process mediated by anticipation (see Hermeneutical circle) – all that is further developed is the process itself. Whereas anticipation lends itself as an essential tool through which to make sense of the world, in Baudrillard’s account this essential “tool” is replicated by the law of Capital in a process of *subsumption*. For Baudrillard, in order for the system (Capitalism) to function it must anticipate and feed its subjects’ expectations. This shift from alienation to expectation is mediated by anticipation.

Baudrillard’s grim view of the world has been greatly critiqued.⁵³ We are not seeking here to further those points of view but to show that his voice does serve to strengthen something we already knew. Anticipation, in its being prior to and a condition of interpretation, representation and understanding, has a political vantage point from which the world is measured. To anticipate is to plan and act – to prepare while doing, and in this sense it has become a *logic* perfected equally for capital accumulation and artistic practices.

1.2.

We saw how for Lacan anticipation is constitutive of any process of subjectivization: the self-constitution of the subject or the *I* is composed mainly but not only by the ability of any subject to understand in variations: being, temporality, history, etc.

unique remaining goal of human existence”. In Boris Groys, “Hegel, Solovyov, Kojève”, in *Introduction to Anti-Philosophy* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 151.

⁵³ For example see the introduction of Mark Poster in *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2004).

Anticipation is the passage through which desire is channeled. In other words, it is a continuing process of mediated desire that destroys any illusions of possession.

Modernity and “con-temporaneity” are two of the main concepts through which the subject is constructed today; in this last section we will explore how anticipation cuts through these two conceptual categories by presenting Peter Osborne’s convincing reconstruction of modernity and in-part construction of “con-temporaneity”.

For Osborne modernity must be grasped as both a “category of historical periodization” and “a form or quality of social experience” that in their relation form a “dialectics of a certain temporalization of history.”⁵⁴ As a historical category modernity is defined by the history of the idea *Neuzeit* (new time) a history that Osborne recounts through intellectual historian Reinhart Koselleck. Our task here is not to revisit all the steps in this history, but to note what its main characteristics involve. For example, during the Renaissance: *Neuzeit* helped differentiate itself from other past historical periods; but by the time of the Enlightenment the term signified qualitatively better times than before. In the 18th century the ‘*Neuzeit*’ was transformed into *neueste Zeit* (newest time) in great part thanks to the changes brought forth by the Industrial Revolution through which “time gained a historical quality” or autonomy. *Neueste Zeit* brought together the concepts of *Neuzeit* and modernity into the temporality of modernity itself.⁵⁵ For *Neuzeit*, in its focus towards

⁵⁴ Peter Osborne, “Modernity is a Qualitative, Not a Chronological, Category”, *New Left Review*, March-April, 1992, 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 69-71.

the future, shifted modernity from “now” to “just now” conflating the past with the future into a future past:

It is in the irreducible doubling of a reflexive concept of modernity as something that has happened, yet continues to happen – ever new but always, in its newness, the same – that the identity and difference of the ‘modern’ and the ‘postmodern’ plays itself out at the level of time.⁵⁶

For Osborne modernity is a quality and a category that at least from the vantage point of the post-modern is foremost based on the repetition and obsession of the *newest* and as such it cannot simply be understood as homogenous time, but rather as self-conscious and aporetic time.⁵⁷

On the other hand, contemporaneity is “a concept of simultaneity” that has “as a task and achievement temporal combination.”⁵⁸ Osborne suggests, through the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Gadamer, that contemporary is “not a mode of givenness in consciousness, but a task for consciousness and an achievement that is required of it.”⁵⁹ Although this notion of contemporary remained relevant to religious existentialism, after the Second World War the term acquired historical meaning perhaps in great part as a result of the trauma of the war.⁶⁰ Contemporary –

⁵⁶ Ibid., 72.

⁵⁷ A good theorization of this logic can be found in Gadamer’s *Truth and Method* in which modernity’s biggest problem is what the author calls: the inheritance from the Enlightenment of the prejudice of prejudice: “If we want to do justice to man’s finite, historical mode of being, it is necessary to fundamentally rehabilitate the concept of prejudice and acknowledge the fact that there are legitimate prejudices”. See Hans Georg Gadamer, “Prejudice As Conditions Of Understanding”, in *Truth and Method*, 277-285.

⁵⁸ Peter Osborne, “Temporalization as Transcendental Aesthetics”, in *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 23, No. 44-45 (2013), 10.

⁵⁹ Ibid. In this passage Osborne is referring to Gadamer in *Truth and Method*.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

much like how the term ‘renaissance’ designated the present as a new beginning – is condemning the modern to the past and is itself changing.⁶¹

[C]on-temporaneity [is] a coming together not simply ‘in’ time, but *of* times: we do not just live or exist together ‘in time’ with our contemporaries – as if time itself is indifferent to this existing together – but rather the present is increasingly characterized by a coming together of *different, but equally ‘present’* temporalities or times, a temporal unity in disjunction, or a *disjunctive unity of present times*.⁶²

But how does anticipation cut through both modernity and con-temporaneity? Within modernity anticipations are expressed through the expectation of an open-ended future. Here anticipation loses sight of itself (of the coming future) by lending its structure to expectation. Hence modernity’s utopianism and its failure are but products of anticipation’s inability to anchor itself in the present. In other words, in modernity anticipation conflates past and future as hopeful expectation. Within “con-temporaneity”, however, anticipation heightens experience. It expresses itself factually, affecting the future in its present or prospectively projecting itself as actualized in a *historical* future. In that anticipation will historically transform the present.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid., 11-12.

⁶² Peter Osborne, *Anywhere: or not at all philosophy of contemporary art* (London: Verso, 2013), 17. There is no doubt that concepts such as Charles Taylor’s “multiple modernities” are an outcome of this new self-consciousness of con-temporaneity. See Charles Taylor’s “Modernity and Difference” in http://www.utoronto.ca/ai/markets-modernities/Modernity%20and%20Difference_Charles%20Taylor.pdf, accessed August 13, 2013. See also Peter Osborne, *Anywhere: or not at all philosophy of contemporary art*, (London: Verso, 2013), 25.

⁶³ Peter Osborne, “Temporalization as Transcendental Aesthetics”, in *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 23, No. 44-45 (2013), 6. I’m avoiding mentioning here the actual possibilities granted for anticipation by Peter Osborne in late capitalism given that later I will use the work of Garcíandía and Espacio Aglutinador as a space that both contests and has not been subsumed under the claims of late Capitalism.

Anticipation shifts into an artistic style when the contemporary artist in his effort to think anticipation's simultaneity sets up, or better still, produces situations bound to yield results contingent upon the viewer, or what could be called, differential results. The important thing to remember however is the artist's capacity to let go – to let his work (or product) undergo as many changes as he wishes for it. For what is of interest to this producer is the production of a work of art that is not fixed in its present meaning, but is forever changing.

In terms of artistic practices, Marcel Duchamp serves as our starting point for applying this conceptualization of anticipation. Duchamp's democratization of the work of art via its construction as an undecidable serves as our indexical mark. Duchamp's work is stranded between art and non-art. What it produces is that which is already given in the social sphere, that is, judgments about what art ought and ought not be. And in doing so it also offers – by way of a challenge – a third possibility (what I'm calling the logic of anticipation), that the meaning of a work of art constantly anchors past and future expectations by lending itself to the structure of the present. For example, Lyotard's concept TRANS/formers shows how Duchamp's two masterpieces: *The Large Glass* and *Given* do not undergo a transformation that ends in its calcification but on the contrary its ability to remain contemporary is given in its very structure which re/forms and trans/forms.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ For an interesting study of the idea of hinges in the work of Duchamp, see Lyotard's *Trans/Formers* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2010). There are an immeasurable amount of studies on the work of Duchamp, much of which is plagued by, what can be called, a surreal empiricism. The argument that I'm developing tries to summarize the very vast literature on the subject. If Duchamp is contemporary to the artist of today it is above all because he speaks to the present. In order to do this I'm advancing the theory that what is at stake in his work is less what it signifies and more *how* it

But how is the individual able to arrive at such a fine use of time? Alexandre Kojève's lectures in the 1930s on Hegel's *Phenomenology* and the post-historical condition might be one approach. Indeed as Boris Groys has suggested: "He [Kojève] remains even today unique and exceptional. He is the only philosophical writer who can be compared to Duchamp."⁶⁵ Now I'm not arguing that Kojève's anti-philosophy influenced Duchamp or vice versa, but rather that both are contemporary to each other and to their times. Both arrived to a clearing in which philosophical systems and artistic representation respectively seemed dated. The post-historical condition is but the realization by Kojève through Hegel that humanity's ultimate struggle is its reconciliation in the time of its present.⁶⁶ And in the case of Duchamp, as Apollinaire suggested in 1913, "it falls to an artist as free of aesthetic considerations and as concerned with energy as Marcel Duchamp to reconcile Art and the People."⁶⁷ In short the contemporary individual *produces* rather than expects time – this is ultimately what the logic of anticipation yields: the production of time. Perhaps this is exactly what Peter Osborne had in mind when near the end of his talk at the Second Former West Congress he states: "Contemporary art is the place we expect to

signifies whatever one sees/reads or feels in it. Or in other words: Duchamp's work of art is a passage between beginnings and ends and one might ad: *ad infinitum*. In fact these ideas are not new – a good starting point to the understanding of these ideas can be found in Jean-François Lyotard, Duchamp's *TRANS/formers*, (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2010), especially Dalia Judovitz's Epilogue: "Pondering on the significance of the connecting of these works (*The Large Glass* and *Given*). Lyotard suggests that Duchamp's corpus as a whole can be inscribed in the great temporal hinge between an event that happens at once "too late" and "too soon"." (Epilogue, 251.)

⁶⁵ Boris Groys, "Hegel, Solovyov, Kojève", in *Introduction to Anti-Philosophy* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 147.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Guillaume Apollinaire, "Duchamp" in *The Cubist Painters* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 75.

find the unexpected: this is the difficulty of contemporary artists; to live up to this expectation of the unexpected.”⁶⁸

1.3.

From Modernity we have inherited a desire for new experiences; what Koselleck theorized as a gap between experience and expectation. If indeed experience and expectation are bound together in a process similar to that of retentions and protentions, Modernity has plugged the gap between experience and expectation with the time of the new (*Neuzeit*). The time of the new and “in its newness always the same” produces and reproduces itself as an alienator par excellence. These are, I think, the main reasons why for Baudrillard the idea of anticipation has acquired the negative connotations of possession and fetishization, that is, the running ahead of oneself through the desire (or anticipation) to possess this or that figuration. However, anticipation can also be understood as a passage having less to do with possession than with being-on-the-way (to use Heidegger’s term).

With Koselleck and Baudrillard we could say that the space of experience today is flooded by oversaturation, beyond what Guy Debord once called spectacle.⁶⁹ Today developed nations consume more than they produce, in part because they are bounded by the condition to search for that which is already given. One can say that the horizon of expectation has been reduced to a horizontal epistemology of searching that shatters all horizons whatsoever. If horizon is to be understood as an

⁶⁸ Former West Congress in: <http://www.citytv.nl/>, accessed: August 13, 2013.

⁶⁹ See for example the work of Chris Anderson, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is selling less of more* (Hyperion ebook, 2008).

always-receding boundary line that holds the promises of the future, today we seemed to have crossed it.⁷⁰ “Con-temporaneity” (temporal abundance) in its post-horizon condition seems to be obstructing a beyond-itself. These are of course fictions as the world is more than ever plagued with injustices. Every war fought today, every religious revival, has as its main task the consolidation of Capital.

It is against this quasi-religious representation of Capital that Peter Osborne speaks when he says “we will not reclaim a future qualitatively different from the present by reclaiming the very idea of horizon, but rather by puncturing it.”⁷¹ This puncturing has been the task of our study: the construction of the concept of anticipation.

In this paper I have tried to reconstitute the place of anticipation in the structure of experience-expectation. I have argued that in Modernity anticipation disappears or acquires negative connotations and is replaced by the ideology of ‘*Neuzeit*’:

Quality-experience, also understood as *Neuzeit*, was often expressed in the idea of shock-value as the new and unforeseen. This new ideology constituted the engine of

⁷⁰ For a discussion on the idea of horizons see: *On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, eds. Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh, and Jill Winder (Utrecht: BAK Critical Reader Series, 2011).

⁷¹ Peter Osborne “Expecting the Unexpected: Beyond the “Horizon of Expectation”, in *On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, 128 and also in <http://www.citytv.nl/>

progress and furthered the gap between experience and expectation with that of the logic of spectacle. Interestingly enough, as we have seen, experience and expectation are bound together in a process of retentions and protentions. In fact the gap is nothing more than a replacement of protentions with spectacle. This expectation of spectacle-as-horizon has infinitely expanded its over-saturation through new technological developments: today entertainment is no longer homogenous (only based on hits) but late-Capitalism is composed of a multitude of niches that cater to almost each and every individual taste. The reconstitution of anticipation as an essential condition of the way in which the individual organizes the real might offer the political imagination a tool through which to reshape the current state of affairs.

If indeed anticipation is a concept of both movement and organization then it is central to historical narratives. Therefore as I have suggested in this chapter, anticipation should be recognized as playing an active role in how historians have constructed temporal frameworks, such as the modern and the postmodern. Future archaeologies and genealogies on the placement of anticipation within past historical narratives might shed light onto past experiences and expectations. In this sense anticipation becomes a key access point from which to explore past spaces of experience and horizons of expectation.

2. Archeology of a silence

Making avant-garde art of true significance means anticipating a verdict that can only be retrospective. It means delivering the unexpected in lieu of the expected in such a way that betrayed and disappointed expectations show themselves, in the end, to have been fulfilled.

Thierry de Duve, *Given the Richard Mutt Case*, 1991

2.1.

In 1947 Marcel Duchamp arranged for his lover, Maria Martins, to acquire *Coffee Mill*, the little painting from 1911 that proved to be a compass for Duchamp's career.⁷²

Duchamp had made the work at the request of his brother Raymond Duchamp-Villon, and it remained in the hands of Raymond's widow after his death in 1918. In 1947 an etched version of *Coffee Mill* (Fig. 1 and 2) was published. Although the exact date of the creation of the plate is unknown, it was completed in 1921 for a project that was never finished. Around 1947, Duchamp's other brother, Jacques Villon, reworked the plate for a print version that was included in the deluxe edition of *Du Cubisme* (Fig. 3) by its authors, Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, two leading figures of the Puteaux circle.⁷³ The book had been first published in 1912 in an early effort to theorize the Cubist movement.

Coffee Mill formed part of a small group of paintings by a few of Raymond's friends connected to the Puteaux Circle. The works were made in order to

⁷² Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996), 365.

⁷³ Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Delano Greenidge editions, 2000), 696. The Puteaux circle was a group of avant-garde artists working in a small town near Rouen.

commemorate Raymond Duchamp and Yvonne Lignières' wedding and were supposed to hang in a sort of frieze above their kitchen sink. Unlike the rest of the works, however, Duchamp's piece was not cubist, at least not in the conventional sense⁷⁴:

I did a coffee grinder which I made to explode; the coffee is tumbling down beside it; the gear wheels are above, and the knob is seem simultaneously at several points in its circuit, with an arrow to indicate movement. Without knowing it, I had opened a window onto something else. That arrow was an innovation that pleased me a lot – the diagrammatic aspect was interesting from an aesthetic point of view.⁷⁵

If *Coffee Mill* is cubist, it is only in anticipation of its delayed explosion.⁷⁶ The work is more a diagram of a coffee grinder than a representation of its spatial fragmentation. And if *Coffee Mill* seems to rattle it is because machine and energy continue endlessly moving in a circular rotation - a profuse and perfect confluence of transformations, allowing the machine to live its difference as indifference. I say indifference because it remains elusive in that it is minimally discussed and only as a marginal work in Duchamp's oeuvre.

If I begin speaking of *Coffee Mill* through a genealogy of provenance it is because it can tell us something of the importance that Duchamp gave to the painting. One only has to remember that Duchamp's last words (the words engraved

⁷⁴ Duchamp: "I wanted to invent or find my own way instead of being the plain interpreter of a theory" (cubism) in Calvin Tomkins' *Duchamp: A Biography*, 1996, 48

⁷⁵ Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp* (London: Da Capo Press, 1967), 31.

⁷⁶ A propos The Large Glass, Duchamp said: "use delay instead of picture" quoted in the expanded chapter of "Given the Richard Mutt Case" in *Kant after Duchamp*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: An October Book, 1997), 134. And also footnote 62 in page 139.

on his tomb) were borrowed from Maria Martins, who in an interview on 9 November 1956, stated:

Tengo alma de gitana y me sería profundamente ingrato tener que asentar los pies en la tierra, en un determinado lugar, hasta la vista de la muerte (por lo demás no morimos, son los otros los que mueren).⁷⁷

I have a gypsy soul and it would be profoundly unpleasant for me to have to rest my feet on the ground, in a determinate place, until death comes (for besides we don't die, the rest are the ones that die).

Duchamp's important connection to Martins, which has been to some extent downplayed in the Duchamp literature, can tell us something important not only about *Coffee Mill*, but also about much of Duchamp's later work.

Thus Duchamp's arrangements for *Coffee Mill* to end up in the hands of Maria Martins in 1947 were not arbitrary or the caprices of chance. More so when one considers that in the same year (1947), the etched version was printed for the first time as the frontispiece to the deluxe edition of *Du Cubisme*.⁷⁸ The painting would

⁷⁷ Raul Antelo, *Maria con Marcel, Duchamp en los Trópicos* (Argentina: Siglo veintiuno editores, 2006), 160.

⁷⁸ Francis Naumann has suggested that the notice of a deluxe edition of *Du Cubisme* came as a surprise to Duchamp: "We can only imagine that he must have been equally pleased to learn that the print made by his brother in 1921 after his painting *Coffee Mill* had been used as the frontispiece of a new deluxe edition of Gleizes and Metzinger's". See Francis M. Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp: The art of making art in the age of mechanical reproduction* (Amsterdam: Ludion Press, 1999), 165. But I think Naumann's analysis takes certain obscure aspects of *Coffee Mill* for granted. For although Duchamp confirmed verbally to Arturo Schwarz the year of the plate the latter concedes that the genesis of the plate is unknown. See Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Delano Greenidge, 2000), 696. Now this paper is trying to show this obscurity for it seems to me that Duchamp and not his brother must have etched the original plate. One only has to remember that Duchamp had acquired an engraver diploma in Rouen in 1905 after failing entrance to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and as a strategy to shorten his military service from two to one year (See Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 107. Now I would agree with Naumann that Jacques Villon did the actual printing but I still remain skeptical first that Duchamp did not know anything about it and second that the reversal of the image in the printed etching was due to

also serve as frontispiece to his first monograph (1959) (a book that he designed).⁷⁹

As Ecke Bonk points out:

Here too, Duchamp made a decisive contribution. It was he who chose and arranged the illustrations and chose the frontispiece, the little painting *Moulin à café* which since 1948 had been in the collection of Maria Martins in Rio de Janeiro.⁸⁰

The painting appeared again in *The Box in the valise* (1935-41) (Fig. 4) almost in its original size and at the heart of the suitcase. As Bonk continues: "*Moulin à café* is assigned a prominent position on the floor of the *Boîte* in the same axis as *the Grand Verre*".⁸¹ And furthermore Bonk cites Pierre Cabanne asking Duchamp:

PC: How do you explain your evolution towards the system of measurements in 'The Bride' and the 'Large Glass'?

MD: I explain it with 'The Coffee Grinder'. It was there I began to think I could avoid all contact with traditional pictorial painting... I was able to get rid of tradition by this linear method, or this technical method, which finally detached me from elementary parallelism. That was finished."⁸²

chance. I'm skeptical because the etched version of *Coffee Mill* exemplifies Duchamp's concept of "mirrorial return." See the discussion at the end of this chapter.

⁷⁹ Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, (Paragraphic Books: New York, 1959).

⁸⁰ Ecke Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp: The Portable Museum: The Making of the Boîte-en-valise de ou par Marcel Duchamp our Rrose Selavy* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1989), 181-82.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ecke Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp: The Portable Museum*, 224. See also Francis M. Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp: The art of making art in the age of mechanical reproduction* (Ghent, Amsterdam: Ludion Press, 1999), 189. For an understanding of "elementary parallelism" see Duchamp's "A L'Infinif" in *The writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York Da Capo Press, 1973), 74-101 "by mold is meant: from the point of view of form and color, the negative (photographic); from the point of view of mass, a plane (generating the object's form by means of elementary parallelism) composed of elements of light, (this light of equal intensity manifesting itself in color-source differences (and not colors subjected to a source of light exterior to the object))." p. 85

And all this is made the more interesting by the peculiar fact that “whenever Duchamp signed a *Boîte*, he did so to the left of *Moulin à café*.”⁸³ Thus in conversation with Calvin Tomkins:

Tomkins: You’ve said that the Coffee Grinder is the key to all the rest of your work. I wonder if you’d elaborate on that.

Duchamp: Yes, but I did not intend it to be that way. You never prepare things like that...so you see there’s already an idea of movement in that, plus the idea of composing the machine in two parts, which is the source of things that came later, in the Large Glass. I always liked that painting.⁸⁴

It seems to me that *Coffee Mill*’s importance as a work of art is given (if in retrospect) in the idea of an explosion in a mapped diagram that brings forth a confluence of Duchamp’s major themes of chance, body and machine, language games, the rational and the irrational, eroticism, irony, and the logic of anticipation. Indeed the painting seems to have both an intellectual and an emotional charge that links it not only to some of Duchamp’s best artistic innovations but also to the love of his life. And in doing so it might have also served Duchamp as an indexical referent to *Faulty Landscape* (1946) (Fig 5), the little private work he sent to Maria Martins enclosed in her deluxe *Boîte*.

But if in *Coffee Mill* the sexual explosion is anticipated but remains awaiting to be fulfilled (each time) as an afterimage in the mind of the recipient (Maria Martins), in *Faulty Landscape* (1946) the sexual release is satisfied but in the *informe* (Bataille) of a cherished memory. When I refer to the painting’s emotional charge I also mean the original intention of *Coffee Mill* spoke to the metaphoric celebration through

⁸³ Ecke Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp: The Portable Museum*, 224.

⁸⁴ Calvin Tomkins, *The Afternoon Interviews* (New York: Badlands Unlimited, 2013), 47-48.

sexual consummation of the newlyweds for whom it was originally intended (Duchamp's brother and his future wife).

At the same time the painting holds an intellectual charge because it acted as a self-destructive device to the orthodox attempts of the Puteaux Circle at self-legitimizing themselves as the most advanced section of the Cubist movement. Duchamp, it is worth remembering, already acted at this time on the fringes of movements.⁸⁵ Which brings forth the question: why did Gleizes and Metzinger illustrate the little painting in *Du Cubisme*? Was the so-called explosion an afterthought of the artist or part of its conceptual creation? Surely one can say with de Duve that the *Nude's* rejection from the Independents exhibits in 1912 had a traumatic impact on the young 25-year-old Duchamp, still eager to prove himself within one of the most advanced artistic milieus in France. But, and here is the hypothesis that I would like to put forward, what if already in December 1911, Duchamp was playing at (or discovering) through *Coffee Mill* the importance of anticipation for and during the creative process? Why did Duchamp not represent *Coffee Mill* in two stages: before and after the explosion?

Coffee Mill appears only as a footnote in de Duve's study and under the description of a "still life".⁸⁶ *Coffee Mill*, however, is not a "still life." The curved arrow depicting movement at the top of the painting makes this point thoroughly clear.

⁸⁵ See for example the BBC Interview with Marcel Duchamp conducted by Joan Bakewell, June 5, 1968 in Francis M. Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp: The art of making art in the age of mechanical reproduction* (Ghent, Amsterdam: Ludion Press, 1999), 300-306. "BBC: Throughout your life you've really kept very much separate from groups. Did you at that particular time enter into any debate with the Cubists? MD: Hardly any. No I was always in the margin of it." p. 300

⁸⁶ Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 199.

Before reading de Duve's analysis of what he calls Duchamp's passage from painting to the readymade through *Coffee Mill*, I will draw upon a few more facts of provenance.

The painting appeared for the first time reproduced in *Du Cubisme* (October, 1912) the first and only attempt to write a manifesto of the movement. Interestingly enough, "the book was reprinted 7 times before December 1912 and by 1913 the book had been translated into English and Russian."⁸⁷ *Du Cubisme* was influenced by "Nietzschean artistic elitism, theories of space and perception derived from the writing of Henri Poincaré, and notions of temporality culled from the philosophy of Henri Bergson".⁸⁸ The book included at the back reproductions of paintings by Cézanne (the spiritual father of the movement) Picasso, Gleizes, Metzinger, Picabia and Duchamp among others.

And we ask again without fear of sounding repetitive: Why did Duchamp agree to have his painting reproduced in a publication that was trying to legitimize the Cubist movement? This is even more confounding because Duchamp clearly stated that he remained at the margins of the group. The most logical answer is that for any young artist the possibility of being included in a publication that had such huge expectations must have seemed a great opportunity. But another possible answer (since it is Duchamp whom we are talking about) would be that Duchamp was experimenting through a visual pun (the explosion) with the logic of

⁸⁷In *A Cubist Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906-1914*, eds. Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighton (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 2008), 435.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 436.

anticipation. Did the authors of *Du Cubisme* know about the conceptual backbone of the little painting? Indeed it must have appeared amusing to Duchamp that his painting was included in the same publication as Cézanne's *Woman in Red* (1890) (Fig. 6) as well as Duchamp's own *Sonata* (1911) (Fig. 7). As de Duve has suggested:

Sonata is not without resemblance to Cézanne's *Woman with a Coffee Pot*. We find in both the same aggressiveness and the same misogyny, and we are reminded of the sessions of sadistic posing that Cézanne imposed on his wife, her face trapped between two boards so that she could not move anymore like an apple.⁸⁹

Can it be that Duchamp's "sadistic" desire (whether conscious or unconscious) is also evident in *Coffee Mill*, which can be said to appropriate and dismember Cézanne's *Woman with a Coffee Pot* (1890-94)? (Fig. 8) If so, what are the reasons for such a dismemberment? If we follow de Duve in his argument that Cézanne's *Woman with a Coffee Pot* might have influenced *Sonata*, can we say the same about *Coffee Mill*? This last question must be carefully weighed, for as Robert Level, in the first monograph on Duchamp, notes:

It is thus not unimportant that the *Coffee Mill* should have appeared at a time when we believe we have detected in Duchamp the beginning of a crisis, manifested in a moral break with his environment. Besides that, we recall that the *Coffee Mill* was painted for Raymond Duchamp-Villon's kitchen, and we have mentioned, in passing, other equally disturbing gifts which Marcel gave his close relations. His probably unconscious aggressive attitude thus expressed the difficulties which beset him. André Breton was right when he called this painting an infernal machine.⁹⁰

Indeed as early as 1916 the German artist Olaf Gulbransson depicts a wounded German soldier in a gallery of modern art, who looks at a painting which includes

⁸⁹ Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press: 1991), 51.

⁹⁰ Robert Level, *Marcel Duchamp*, (Paragraphic Books: New York, 1959), 75.

Coffee Mill, and exclaims: "'The War' they call this picture? Well it's not as dreadful as that!"⁹¹ (See fig. 9) In retrospect it seems remarkable to see how the painting has taken on so many different meanings in a variety of contexts. For André Breton and Robert Lebel the painting stands in the overall oeuvre of Duchamp as:

The start of the purely personal development that interests us; compared to the guitars of the Cubists, it takes on the appearance of an infernal machine. The years 1911 and 1912 indeed already reveal the full extent of Duchamp's dissidence, a dissidence that affirms itself brilliantly as much in the subject-matter as in the manner of his paintings.⁹²

Equally so for cartoonist Gulbransson, who compares the coffee mill's self-exploding character to the massacres of the first World War. But as we have seen the painting evokes above all a sexual encounter in that Duchamp first created it as a wedding gift for his brother and in the end willed it to his lover, Maria Martins. And if it is read within the context of the Puteaux Group and their shot at self-legitimization through *Du Cubisme*, the painting shifts meaning again. In the context of this text, *Coffee Mill* serves as a metaphor for the destruction/reconstruction of painting (if in retrospect). I will later carefully weigh this claim through de Duve's analysis.

One of the best and only studies of the painting remains Lawrence D. Steefel Jr.'s "Marcel Duchamp and the Machine". *Coffee Mill* is usually used (overwhelmingly by almost all Duchampian scholars) as a pause before his "better and more famous

⁹¹ The cartoon first appeared in *Simplicissimus*, 16 May 1916: http://www.simplicissimus.info/index.php?id=6&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi1%5Bvolume%5D=19&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi1%5Baction%5D=showVolume&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=YearRegister&cHash=a26d77db03f5b970adcd7e527e053fb4, accessed July 10, 2013. 1916. It is reproduced in *Marcel Duchamp Work and Life: Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy, 1887-1968*. Ed. Pontus Hulten (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1993) (non paginated) 16-17 May.

⁹² André Breton, "Lighthouse of the Bride" in Robert Lebel's, *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Paragraphic Books, 1959), 90.

works". For Steefel the painting achieved "the possibility of short-circuiting the built-in contradictions" of "the body that suffers and the mind that creates."⁹³ And in doing so, for Steefel, Duchamp's painting lets "machines and mechanisms suffer outrageously".⁹⁴ But this claim must be nuanced because metaphorically the painting connotes the perils of a sexual encounter, sexual release, but also perhaps an unhappy ending – like the end of a relationship. And this is worth remembering for in the *Large Glass* (1915-23) (Fig. 10) the encounter between the bachelors and the bride is delayed by a work that is left "definitely unfinished".

If throughout its life *Coffee Mill* has supported different functions (discourses), it is because the painting embodies to perfection Gadamer's "structure of play". For Gadamer the work of art presents itself (*Darstellung*) and in presenting itself the work of art is both contemporaneous and historically bound. It is contemporaneous because the work of art transcends the historical determinants that saw its birth by being spatio/temporally concrete. Indeed because the work of art functions in a "structure of play," each time the work of art "self-presents" itself it participates in the new spatio/temporal formation. Thus Gadamer defines play as "a process that takes place 'in between'":⁹⁵

Thus transformation into structure (play) means that what existed previously exists no longer. But also that what now exists, what represents itself in the play of art, is the lasting and true".⁹⁶ [And] "in

⁹³ Lawrence D. Steefel, Jr., "Marcel Duchamp and the Machine" in *Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Anne D'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine (West Hanover, Massachusetts: The Museum of Modern Art Publications, 1973), 70.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 71.

⁹⁵ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), 109.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 111.

being presented in play, what is emerges. It produces and brings to light what is otherwise constantly hidden and withdrawn.”⁹⁷

Indeed as Gadamer further conceded:

If art is not the variety of changing experiences (Erlebnisse) whose object is filled subjectively with meaning like an empty mold, we must recognize that “presentation” (Darstellung) is the mode of being of the work of art. This was prepared for by deriving the concept of presentation from the concept of play, for self-presentation is the true nature of play – and hence of the work of art also.⁹⁸

In fact *Coffee Mill* can be read within Gadamer’s “structure of play” doubly, since first, like all works of art, it exists “in-between” a past (tradition) that extends into a yet indeterminate and ongoing present and, second, because the piece is conceptually constructed as an in-between or passage. For Gadamer the work of art acts and reacts within a “structure of play” in which both the player (the artist) produces and reproduces the game (the art’s context). In this last sense *Coffee Mill* enters the world already presenting a temporality that can best be evoked through the idea of anticipation. Indeed the painting conjures a series of passages (and I would like to note at least three of them): 1) literally, the grinding process of coffee beans with all its connotations of energy flow; 2) the passage of a couple’s engagement to being married through the idea of sexual consummation; and 3) the passage from painting to readymade, since the painting evokes through “the language of industry” the destruction of painting – a history that put the realm of aesthetics into crisis. As Molly Nesbit has suggested:

⁹⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 115.

Duchamp's line began and ended in common culture. They were first sketched in 1911 in his painting of the coffee grinder, that loophole onto something else he would say later...Duchamp did not refer to the language of industry exactly or self consciously; he simply used it logically enough when he decided it would be important to try to make a work that was not a work of art. It gave him a significant form to express the separation of his work from traditional painting, the separation that produced his precision painting. Duchamp began to play with the language of industry on its own terms. The readymade took objects, some of them from the brevet set, and liberated them from the image, reinstalling the image of the shovel, for example, as a new thing, banal but newly enunciated, and sometimes newly name...⁹⁹

Nesbit's argument is all the more remarkable when one recalls Duchamp's remark that the readymade was born out of a "happy accident" that produced the *Bicycle Wheel* (1913) with which we can make a parallel with *Coffee Mill*.¹⁰⁰ Indeed *Coffee Mill* stands to *Bicycle Wheel* as the most direct passage from painting to the readymade and in antinomy through what Duchamp later called: "reciprocal readymade". To play with one of Duchamp's famous expressions: use a *Coffee Mill* as a *Bicycle Wheel*!¹⁰¹ (Fig. 11)

2.2.

As we have seen, the logic of anticipation makes up the structure of the work of art by setting up the temporal form of a present that acts as a passage between a past and a future. *Coffee Mill* plays and fulfills this role through its conceptual approach as a passage for in-between stages. Indeed if *Coffee Mill* remains contemporary it is

⁹⁹ Molly Nesbit, "The language of industry" in *The Definitely Unfinished Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Thierry de Duve, (Nova Scotia: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1991), 372.

¹⁰⁰ See Duchamp's "Apropos of 'Readymade'", in *The writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 141-42.

¹⁰¹ Ibid: "At another time wanting to expose the basic antinomy between art and readymade I imagined a "reciprocal readymade": use a Rembrandt as an ironing board!", 142.

because it remains within the temporality of anticipation (the present) – a present that can and must be thought historically as affecting a beyond itself. *Coffee Mill* must of course be thought historically but as a past that engaged itself with the time of its present. Thus when recuperated it must be within this same temporality (the recuperation's present). For in presenting itself it claims the right to be treated to the full extent of its temporality – *Coffee Mill*, and for that matter Duchamp in general, remains contemporaneous.

But how is Duchamp able to bypass tradition in order to save tradition? De Duve's argument centers on Duchamp's recuperation of Cézanne through a complete abandonment of painting. Indeed the best study of Cézanne and Duchamp still remains de Duve's *Pictorial Nominalism: the passage from painting to the readymade* (1984) – especially the chapter entitled "Revelations". De Duve focuses on "Cézanne's doubt" (Maurice Merleau-Ponty) and Duchamp's unconscious realization of what de Duve's calls the "cubist impasse."¹⁰² According to the author it is in the meetings of the Puteaux Group that Gleizes and Metzinger critique Courbet's "retinal painting."¹⁰³ The critique was centered on the idea that Courbet, in his desire for realism, accepted and failed to evaluate why he saw the way he saw. This lack of "intellectual control" that the Puteaux Group named "retinal panting" was resolved in the sign of Cézanne. They saw in Cézanne a "profound intellectual realism... painting no longer about

¹⁰²Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 75.

¹⁰³ De Duve's argument claims that Duchamp visited assiduously such meetings but when asked publicly, Duchamp rejected joining groups of all sorts. I'm arguing that he did not participate in these meetings but rather I imagine him as aloof, observing from afar and taking only those ideas which pleased him.

imitation with lines and colors but of giving a plastic consciousness to our instincts.”¹⁰⁴

But if they saw in Cézanne a solution against “retinal painting” they were not consistent with their findings, thus remaining in “the Cubist impasse”. It is this impasse that pointed to Cézanne’s doubt that Duchamp – according to de Duve – arrived at “wanting to become a painter” too late. For the laws of the avant-garde are based on: 1) Evolution and historicity and 2) Irreversibility and feedback.

The first concept (evolution) refers to a moral obligation by these artists to an avant-garde tradition based on a dissent that precedes them. Historicity is important because “it is retrospectively that evolution makes history through feedback.”¹⁰⁵ Irreversibility plays a role because the past does not come back. Thus for Duchamp, Cézanne signaled a point of no return. And to him this meant a recognition and not a denial: a contract to break (with painting) in order to innovate. Thus de Duve argues that “the avant-garde paradoxically preserves tradition by destroying it.”¹⁰⁶

According to de Duve’s analysis of the law of the avant-garde, in order to innovate, the artist has to break with the pact that he holds with his past. He has to do so because he recognizes himself as part of that tradition, a tradition of dissent.¹⁰⁷ However, de Duve’s argument focuses on a series of paintings made during

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 72.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 89-90.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, chapter one of *Kant after Duchamp*: “The negativity of the avant-garde, for which tradition has to mean betrayal, is explained by the anticipated retrospection of the verdict thanks to which avant-garde art would, in the end, be incorporated into tradition precisely for having first betrayed it.” Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: An October Book, 1997), 77.

Duchamp's stay in Munich, and his silence towards *Coffee Mill* creates a gap that could have both further clarified Duchamp's desire to abandon painting, and revealed this shift at an earlier point in his career. As I have argued, *Coffee Mill* seems to encircle a group of claims at play in de Duve's analysis – namely the abandonment of painting, the logic of anticipation, and the actual passage from painting to the readymade.

In its anticipated destruction of space (mediated by the machine), Duchamp is likely noting the rapid shifts that were taking place in France and Europe at this time. As Henri Lefebvre notes:

Around 1910 a certain space was shattered. It was the space of common sense, of knowledge, of social practice, of political practice, of political power, a pace hitherto enshrined in everyday discourse, just as in abstract thought, as the environment of and channel for communication.... Euclidean and perspectivist space have disappeared as systems of reference, along with other former 'common places' such as town, history, paternity, the tonal system in music, traditional morality, and so forth. This was a truly crucial moment¹⁰⁸.

Thus one can read *Coffee Mill* as generating the possibility of a specific temporality that politicizes time and notes how space is being disintegrated through technological developments. *Coffee Mill* is a painting that highlights the destabilization of private and public spaces, but what is especially remarkable is that it organizes a specific type of anticipation as a blueprint against any sort of

¹⁰⁸ Henri Lefebvre quoted in David Harvey *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 266.

encapsulation of time-space compressions.¹⁰⁹ In the painting time appears not as relative but intentional (the coffee mill *will* explode), thus anticipatory in nature. What it does mark as relative, however, is the viewer's engagement in its reading (ambivalence, lack of curiosity, dissent etc.). In this last sense, the painting is self-representational (in Gadamer's sense of *Darstellung*) in that it refracts the audience's expectations. No wonder that most writers have not paid much attention to the painting, for anticipation short-circuits stasis or the time of the modern. With *Coffee Mill* it is never about choice but necessity. Thus *Coffee Mill's* main quality is its spatiality rather than its temporality. For, as I have been arguing, anticipation anchors rather than relays time-space relations.

The etched version of the painting further highlights this last claim. The etching of *Coffee Mill* is a negative of the painting in that it is stripped of all colour and inverted. The etched version is not only an inversion of the painting, but also a reversion in that it moves in the opposite direction. It thus attests to the impasse of the modern "as new and in its newness always the same". As such, it can be said to anchor the logic of the modern at the same time as it critiques it.

The etching is an affordable version of the original painting, but it is also an original print in its own right. As Duchamp remarks in an undated note in "The Green Box" concerning the drops on *The Large Glass*: "The mirrorical drops, not the drops themselves but their image, pass between these two states of the same

¹⁰⁹ See for example Peter Osborne, "Temporalization as Transcendental Aesthetics", in *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 23, no. 44-45 (2013), 4. "...This latter thesis is not that of negation of time by space, as some advocates of the 'spatial turn' have imagined (this is an incoherent notion: there is only time-space), but the negation of a specific temporality – a specific – futurity – by a specific spatiality."

figure.”¹¹⁰ This same logic can be applied to the *Coffee Mill* project: the print is “sent back mirrorically” as a passage that upsets the relationship between original and copy. This passage or “mirrorical return” is created in order “to obtain the desired effect.”¹¹¹ In the case of *Coffee Mill* the desired effect is the anticipated explosion.

As we have seen *Coffee Mill* holds a special place in Duchamp’s oeuvre. The painting’s explosion presented, perhaps for the first time, the possibility of the destruction of painting as a self-destruction. In so doing, it also signaled to the figuration of a new possibility – in this case the readymade – incarnated for the first time as *The Bicycle Wheel*. When Duchamp decided to publish the etched version of *Coffee Mill*, he was in the middle of his love affair with Maria Martins. In this sense, Duchamp’s desire for Martins to own the painted version of *Coffee Mill*, as well as *Faulty Landscape*, serves above all as an insightful comment on their love affair, perhaps even as love letters.¹¹² That the publication of the etched version also occurs at this time (1946-47) might further highlight how these works attest to Duchamp’s infatuation with Martins.

This autobiographical aspect of the works must be further expanded to Duchamp’s own intellectual experiments within the institution of art. If de Duve argues that Duchamp’s travels to Munich presented what Duchamp called “the place of his complete liberation”, it was only because Duchamp already knew, within the context of the creation of *Coffee Mill*, what he had to do next. In this sense, Duchamp’s

¹¹⁰ Marcel Duchamp, *Notes and Projects for the Large Glass*, selected, ordered, and with an introduction by Arturo Schwarz (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 176.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Francis M. Naumann, “Marcel & Maria” in *Art in America* (April, 2001), 105.

later engagements with the institutions of art must be reconsidered. For example, issues of trauma and disappointment (such as his reaction to the rejection of *Nude Descending a Staircase*) in Duchamp's career and life must be nuanced and considered in relation to the lessons of *Coffee Mill*.

3. A complex of occasions

I used to see the night as if something had fallen upon the earth, a descent. Its slowness kept me from comparing it with something descending a stair, for example. A tide upon another tide and so on, ceaselessly, until it came within reach of my feet. I would blend the falling of night with the sole expanse of the sea.

José Lezama Lima, *Confluences*, 1968

Introduction

JOSÉ Lezama Lima's *Confluences* has been interpreted as the metaphor par excellence of the body of the poet.¹¹³ The essay is usually thought of as a cosmogony of the author's oeuvre and as such a key to the understanding of his immense and excessive symbolic baroque. The essay, written the year of Marcel Duchamp's death, begins by paying homage to the artist's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912)¹¹⁴ by announcing in retrospect: "I used to see the night as if something had fallen upon the earth" and in complete opposition to "something [the nude] descending a stair". Later in the text Lezama recovers Duchamp's experiments with cubist fracture in the form of a night that appears in the next few lines as "subdivided, fragmented, riddled by the shouts of the light."¹¹⁵ Perhaps *Confluences* expounds, by way of metaphor, a vision of the night as history in which the disappearance of its author is a prerequisite for the flash of history's image: "blessed are we the ephemeral who can contemplate

¹¹³ Armando Valdez-Zamaro, "Confluencias o la experiencia de escribirse a si mismo", in *Letral*, no. 4 (2010). In: <http://www.proyectoletreal.es/>, accessed: August 13, 2013.

¹¹⁴ It is worth remembering that Duchamp's *Nude* became an icon of modern art. See for example the first chapter of the unpublished thesis of Michelle Anne Lee: "The Puppeteer of Your Own Posterity": Marcel Duchamp and the Manipulation of Posterity", 2010 in: <http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/5631>, accessed: August 13, 2013.

¹¹⁵ José Lezama Lima, "Confluences", in *José Lezama Lima: Selections*, ed. Ernesto Livon-Grossman (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 99.

movement as an image of eternity and follow intently the parabola of the arrow until it is buried beneath the line of the horizon.”¹¹⁶

I begin by referring to Lezama’s text for, on the one hand, it is contemporary to Barthes’ “Death of the Author” (1968) and Foucault’s “What is an Author?” (1969), and, on the other, it evokes Duchamp’s *Nude* as well as *The Sieves* (1914) (Fig. 12), which conjures not only the passage of history as a confluence of fragments coexisting as a unity of experience in and as a body (our body), but also the existence and persistence of the search.

By evoking the Lezama-Barthes-Foucault triad, I am attempting to reveal both a recuperation and a disappearance: namely that ideas have always coexisted and that their disappearance is an historiographical issue of inclusion and exclusion. Lezama’s work may have disappeared from a specific literary tradition, but it also remains untouched by these absences in that it is part of a larger network of ideas.

Similarly, this chapter maps a territory well known by artists but mostly unresearched by critics and art historians: the idea of Duchamp-as-discourse within contemporary Cuban art since the early 1970s. By “Duchamp-as-discourse,” I mean the confluence of ideas around Duchamp and his reception, rather than the influence of his art and his persona. The chapter recognizes the importance of Duchamp to the production of contemporary art on the island. The essay places the idea of Duchamp-as-discourse within the larger episteme of the logic of anticipation. It also questions,

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 121.

through Danné Ojeda's essay,¹¹⁷ the role of the avant-garde in the reception of Duchamp on the island. Using Duchamp-as-discourse, I explore the reception of Duchamp's work in Cuba. Because the space that I am attempting to map is scattered, I will divide the essay into five discrete, yet interconnected parts. In organizing the material this way, I am attempting to make explicit a textuality that speaks to the Cuban experience.

In the first section "An unfolding discourse" I discuss how some Cuban intellectuals (mostly art historians) posit the impermanence of the island as a space of productive subjectivity in order to examine the notion of the island's insularity. The second section, called "Openings", performs a short archeology of the unconscious but present position of the island in the life and work of Duchamp. I then consider Ojeda's parallelism between the French historic avant-garde and Cuban art after the revolution of 1959. In the fourth and fifth sections, I trace the reception of Duchamp through two case studies: the work of Flavio Garciandía and *Espacio Aglutinador* (Sandra Ceballos' art-space).

The methodology or rather the "working hypothesis" used in the construction of this study is derived from Thierry de Duve's *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (1984). De Duve's "heuristic parallelism" considers the possible gains that a reading of Duchamp and psychoanalysis can offer to each other. De Duve stresses the value of the unconscious

¹¹⁷ Danné Ojeda, "Símbolo y síntoma de la vanguardia cubana en el periodo revolucionario. (Versiones)" – " trans. "Symbol and symptom of the Cuban avat-garde in the revolutionary period (versions).", in *Nosotros, Los más infieles: Narraciones críticas sobre el arte cubano (1993-2005)*, ed. Andrés Isaac Santana (Murcia: CENDEAC, 2007).

in both the corpus of Duchamp and in the work of psychoanalysis. His narrative around Duchamp's discovery of the readymade is less an account of events that changed forever the field of artistic practices than the localization of a series of "resonances" that point to "that which every artist and art lover knows is the most precious quality of art: its indeterminacy."¹¹⁸ He argues that this gave Duchamp the right to replace "this is beautiful" – an aesthetic reflection – with "this is art" – a naming practice. All avant-garde art after Duchamp is thus nominal in character. In *Anywhere or not at all: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, Peter Osborne similarly values the importance of the theory of pictorial nominalism but under the concept of post-conceptual art.

I find that a "heuristic parallelism" between Duchamp-as-discourse and contemporary art from Cuba can be productive given that they both share a series of subjective and historical characteristics. For example, Duchamp's interest in humor, irony, eroticism, etc. can be found both generally in the Cuban culture and particularly in the Cuban art scene since the 1970s. Historically, but within different temporalities, both Duchamp and Cuban art have been bounded by the avant-garde's logic of dissent and consent. The Cuban avant-garde shares with Duchamp a political and philosophical approach to art that has indeterminacy at its core. On the island the avant-garde was not conditioned by art institutions, but rather by the State.¹¹⁹

Thus the members of the Cuban avant-garde after the revolution were not influenced

¹¹⁸ Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 64.

¹¹⁹ See Gerardo Mosquera's "The New Cuban Art" in *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, ed. Aleš Erjavec (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 210.

by any programmatic series of artistic styles or schools, but were the participants of a larger social phenomenon. Thus it is impossible to think contemporary Cuban art outside the influx of the 1959 revolution.

3.1 An unfolding discourse

One can sense the features of an island that “repeats” itself, unfolding and bifurcating until it reaches all the seas and lands of the earth, while at the same time it inspires multidisciplinary maps of unexpected design.

Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 1996

For Antonio Benítez-Rojo (through Deleuze and Guattari), the Caribbean islands function as a meta-archipelago connecting Europe, Africa, Asia and America by extending themselves continually beyond their boundaries. Not only is the Antilles the point of entrance of Cristobal Colón’s colonizing machinery, but as Gerardo Mosquera has suggested, the poetic birth of the island dates back to its “discovery”:

*Cuenta un oscuro historiador del siglo XIX, cura de la villa cubana de Los Palacios, que cuando Colón preguntó a los nativos de Cuba si aquel lugar era isla o continente, ellos le respondieron que era tierra infinita de la que nadie había visto el cabo, aunque era isla.*¹²⁰

So tells an old and obscure nineteenth-century historian, priest of the Cuban town Los Palacios, that when Colón asked the natives if Cuba was an island or a continent, they responded that it was an infinite land of which no one had seen the end, although it was an island.

Thus Mosquera suggests that Cuba is born for the Western World as: “*despiste, como aporía, como bluff*” (vague, as aporia, as bluff).

¹²⁰ Gerardo Mosquera, “La Isla Infinita: Introduccion al nuevo arte cubano”, in *Nosotros, los más infieles: Narraciones críticas sobre el arte cubano (1993-2005)*. ed. Andrés Isaac Santana (Murcia: CENDEAC, 2007).

La paradoja de una isla infinita queda como imagen del hiperbolizado destino de Cuba, siempre desproporcionado con sus bases materiales. Quizás, sirve también para subrayar esa peculiar y fluida articulación entre un insularismo que siempre mira hacia adentro ("la maldita circunstancia del agua por todas partes," que diría otro escritor) y una apertura hacia lo global propia del arte y la cultura cubanos.¹²¹

The paradox of an infinite island is marked as an image of the hyperbolic destiny of Cuba, always disproportionate to its material bases. This, perhaps, helps to highlight that peculiar and fluid articulation between an insularism that always looks inside ("the damned circumstance of being surrounded by water," as another writer would say) and an aperture to the global, elements of both Cuban art and culture.

Not only are the mytho-poetic births of the island grouped under the signs of the multiple, infinite and replicable, but they also form a core part of Cuban culture. As

Dannys Montes de Oca has suggested:

Una isla es siempre motivo de grandes profecías. Antiguas y modernas creencias han visto en la existencia solitaria (a-isla-da) de la isla, el origen o la justificación de grandes mitos en torno a la liberación de las contingencias. Si su nombre es Cuba y su devenir ha quedado signado por historias de viajeros sorprendidos ante lo desconocido, entonces el mito se engrandece.¹²²

An island is always the cause for great prophecies. Ancient and modern tales have seen in the solitary (isola-ted) existence of the island, the origin or the justification of great myths around the liberation of contingencies. If its name is Cuba and its becoming has been signaled by histories of surprised travelers facing the unknown, then the myth becomes even greater.

Hence Cubans have been characterized as:

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Dannys Montes de Oca, "La isla: ficciones históricas he historias desde la ficción", in *Nosotros, los más infieles: Narraciones críticas sobre el arte cubano (1993-2005)*. ed. Andrés Isaac Santana (Murcia: CENDEAC, 2007), 470.

*Eternos transgresores de la norma y la convención, ya en la vida cotidiana, ya en la historia y la política, ya en la esfera artística. La Isla no puede con su propio peso... Los cubanos vivimos con el donaire de los franceses liberales del XVIII, cuando pedían *laissez faire, laissez passer*. Pero si la exigencia de los galos venía desde lo económico, la connotación que adquiere el lema en manos de nosotros – cubanos – es diferente: supone una libertad no exigida, ni demandada públicamente, supone la libertad de actuar en las arenas mismas de lo prohibido.*¹²³

Eternal transgressors of the norm and the convention, whether in daily life, in history and politics, or in the artistic sphere. The Island cannot bear its own weight. We Cubans live with the poise of the liberal French of the eighteenth century, when they asked *laissez faire, laissez passer*. But if the exigencies of the French came from the economic, the connotation that the slogan acquires in our hands - the hands of Cubans - is different: it is meant as a freedom that has not been publically demanded, the freedom to act in the very sands of the prohibited.

The tendency of Cubans to dismiss authority through humor, parody, and eroticism can, perhaps, be traced back to a lack of ontological origins and can be understood, for example, through the term *choteo*, which in its most abstract form refers to: “ ‘no tomar nada en serio’... que el choteo consiste en ‘tirarlo todo a relajo’ ”¹²⁴ (not taking anything too seriously. *Choteo* consists in letting everything exist in its disorder).

Perhaps then one could say that Cubans (and their artists in particular) perceive of themselves as wearing the suit of tradition lightly and heartily – the anxious quests for ontological origins produced by some discursive practices from the West are usually not found in the cultural production of the island. Cubans, generally speaking, share the understanding that history’s porosity and complexity

¹²³ Elvia Rosa Castro, “Parole, Parole, Parole”, in *Déjame que te cuente: Antología de la crítica en los 80*, eds. Margarita Gonzalez, Tania Parson and José Veigas (Cuba: Arte Cubano ediciones, 2002), 8.

¹²⁴ Jorge Mañach, *Indagacion del Choteo*, Edición Digital de la Indagación del Choteo de Jorge Mañach, tomado de la tercera edición revisada (La Habana: Editorial Libro Cubano), 1955.

filter all the interstices of reality. As a popular Cuban refrain says: *aquí el que no tiene de congo tiene de carabalí*/ “here who does not have any congo in him, has carabalí”. Thus, in Cuba fiction, histories, imagination and reality coexist perfectly. Cubans, if I might say so, omit identity because they live identity. By this I do not mean to excuse Cuba – or rather I do not mean to say that the island is exempt from problems of racism, sexism, etc., but rather that the Cuban identity, as Mosquera has put it “*es una identidad desinteresada de ‘la identidad’*. *Una identidad por la acción, no por la representación*” (is an identity disinterested in ‘identity’. It is an identity focused on action, not on representation).¹²⁵ By the seventeenth century, Spain had annihilated most of the aboriginal peoples on the island, thereby creating a void in the origins of what became the “identity” of Cuba. In Cuba the postnational tends to live within the national, or better still, the formation of the idea of the nation in Cuba was equally sprung from the hybridization of the cultures brought in either by force or free will and their *coexistence*. Perhaps this is what artist Flavio Garciandía (1954-) meant when asked by Benjamin Buchloh in 1986 about the nature of his artistic production under a socialist society:

The Cuban tradition is marked by a mixture of extremely diverse elements, and if we are living in a socialist country and under the conditions implied by it, I do believe that eventually the result will have some consistency with these conditions. But it is not something that worries me too much. I try to take from here and from there, with the hopes of making art that functions in my environment and my time.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Gerardo Mosquera, “Globalización, Language, Dinámica Cultural, in *Caminar con el diablo: Textos sobre arte, internacionalización y culturas* (Madrid: EXIT Publicaciones, 2010), 56.

¹²⁶ Flavio Garciandía in interview with Benjamin Buchloh, in, *New Art from Cuba: José Bedia, Flavio Garciandía and Ricardo Rodríguez Brey*, (exh. cat.), Amelie A. Wallace Gallery, State University of New York, 1986, 7

To make things even clearer: for those Cubans born or living outside the island its cultural relation is intact because Cuba's lack of ontological origins is thoroughly inclusive; a great example of which is the reception of the conceptual artist Ana Mendieta in 1980.¹²⁷ The desire of the Cuban diaspora to exit the island is political and economical rather than cultural, as it is the product of the dichotomies brought about by the 1959 revolution.

And this is what makes it all the more paradoxical: the production of infinitude, difference and repetition makes the island a living paradox of processes of modernization and contemporaneity. As Ortiz reminds us:

*Toda la escala cultural que Europa experimentó en más de cuatro milenios, en Cuba se pasó en menos de cuatro siglos. Lo que allí fue subida por rampa y escalones, aquí ha sido progreso a saltos y sobresaltos.*¹²⁸

All of the cultural transformations that Europe experienced over more than four millennia happened in Cuba in less than four centuries. What was accomplished there in gradual stages, happened here in leaps and bounds.

3.2 Openings

As we have seen, Cuban culture, as Castro suggests, can be considered exceptional in that it is without a unique, *referente, digamos, físico, que reclame de manera constante*

¹²⁷ Ana Mendieta was a Cuban artist that migrated as a child to the United States as part of the US military operation "Peter Pan". This operation involved a series of subversive messages that encouraged Cuban families to send their children to the US in order to incite chaos within the Cuban society. Ana Mendieta's reception, somewhat overshadowed by her marriage to and history with Carl Andre, is one of the first examples of feminist art and has served as inspiration to many artists.

¹²⁸ Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el Azúcar* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1963), 131.

nuestra atencion, (physical referent that asked for our constant attention).¹²⁹ The cultural and political situation has created a series of dislocations that resulted in the scattering of the 1980s generation but also in setting the conditions for the production of highly specific and differential artistic practices. Given this context, we can now attempt an archeology of the space of the island in relation to the work and life of Duchamp.

The tentative beginnings of Duchamp's relationship with the Island can be found within Duchamp's own hand, "holding the inevitable, oft-lighted Havana [cigar]."¹³⁰ Or when he encountered the work of the Cuban painter Wifredo Lam at the Pierre Matisse Gallery and advised his friend and collector Walter Arensberg to buy one of his watercolors: "he [Lam] is very much appreciated by Breton who has a few of his large watercolors."¹³¹ Or when Duchamp poured over chess magazines where he cut out about 40 of Cuban world champion Raúl Capablanca's games that he was determined to re-play.¹³² He did not know then that he was indeed going to

¹²⁹ Elvia Rosa Castro, "Parole, Parole, Parole", in *Déjame que te cuente: Antología de la crítica en los 80*, eds. Margarita Gonzalez, Tania Parson and José Veigas (Cuba: Arte Cubano ediciones, 2002), 8.

¹³⁰ Pierre Cabanne, *The Brothers Duchamp: Jacques Villon, Raymond Duchamp-Villon and Marcel Duchamp* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 91.

¹³¹ Marcel Duchamp, letter to Walter Arensberg, 5 March 1943, New York City, in "Marcel Duchamp Work and Life: Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy, 1887-1968", ed. Pontus Hultén (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1993) (non paginated) 4-5 March.

¹³² Marcel Duchamp, letter to Louise Arensberg, 7 January 1919: From Marcel Duchamp 1507 Sarmiento Buenos Aires to Louise Aresberg Buenos Aires: "I play chess alone for the time being: I came across some magazines and cut out about 40 of Capablanca's games that I'm going to play over. I will probably also join the Chess Club here, to try my hand again." *Affectionately Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Francis Naumann and Hector Obalk, (Ghent, Amsterdam: Ludion Press, 2000), 73.

play against Capablanca at the Marshall Chess Club in 1922.¹³³ Or perhaps his relationship with the Caribbean came through his friendship with Francis Picabia (of Cuban descent), whom he met in Paris.¹³⁴

And finally, Duchamp's term "infra-slim", which might have been inspired by his smoking habit, can be linked perhaps to Pierre Cabanne's nod to Duchamp's Havana cigars. Infra-slim evokes the gap/passage between different entities and acts as a temporal hinge connecting imperceptible forms: as for example Duchamp's poster for the "Éditions et Sur Marcel Duchamp" exhibition (Fig. 13), in which Duchamp's hand is connected imperceptibly to his mouth by the smoke:¹³⁵

When
The Tobacco Smoke
Also Smells
Of The Mouth
Which Exhales It
The Two Odors
Are Married By
Infra-Slim¹³⁶

This note is all the more telling when read in parallel to Fernando Ortiz's assertion that:

Los poetas fumadores han cantado el éxtasis contemplativo que experimentan siguiendo con la vista y la fantasía el humo azulado que sube, como si el tabaco, al morir por el fuego como un endemoniado, su espíritu, ya purificado y libre, ascendiera al cielo escribiendo con hieráticos signos de

¹³³ See Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 210, 245 and 289. "The Visiting Cuban grand master played simultaneous games against twenty-four of the club's members and won twenty of them, including his match with Duchamp".

¹³⁴ Picabia's father was half-Cuban and worked for the Cuban embassy in Paris in 1911.

¹³⁵ See: Thomas Deane Tucker, *Derridada: Duchamp as Readymade Deconstruction*, (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2009).

¹³⁶ Marcel Duchamp, note in "View", 5 no. 1 (March 1945). in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 194.

*nube inefables promesas de rendición...El tabaco no sólo se saborea con agrado; también se huele, se palpa y se mira. Salvo para el oído, el tabaco provoca estímulos y placeres por todas las vías sensoriales.*¹³⁷

Smoking poets have sang the contemplative ecstasies that they experience when they follow, with their eyes and fantasy, the bluish smoke that rises, as if the tobacco, as it dies by fire like a demon, its spirit, already purified and free, would ascend to the sky writing with hieratic signs of ineffable clouds, promises of redemption.... The tobacco not only tastes good; but can be smelled, it can be felt and it can be seen. Except for the ear, tobacco provokes pleasures for all the senses.

Perhaps in this sense infra-slim connects, if imperceptibly, Duchamp with the island.

But these are mere suppositions, perhaps even premonitions.

3.3 The Cuban avant-garde

In her essay "*Símbolo y síntoma de la vanguardia cubana en el periodo revolucionario. (Versiones)*," Ojeda argues that the signs defining the Cuban avant-garde since the revolution are consensus and dissent. Similarly, de Duve claims that the historical French avant-garde worked within the logic of dissent in order to consent. The historical French avant-garde critiqued canonical art (museum art) in order to transcend art. Paradoxically though such developed art had as its final horizon the museum walls. Duchamp's genius was to intuit this logic – subverting it by realizing that art's best characteristic is its indeterminacy – thus undermining/transcending the logic of the avant-garde through what de Duve has called generic art and that I have positioned within the larger episteme of the logic of anticipation. In this sense the work of art becomes trans-historical and self-analytical by pointing both to and

¹³⁷ Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el Azucar*, (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1973), 25.

beyond itself. Thus the work of art remains a great access point from which to think history while transcending those histories. To paraphrase Marx, if desire is historical – the work of art remains.

Ojeda's application of this logic to contemporary Cuban art after the revolution is quite poignant in its clarity. In Cuba and under the banner of "within the revolution everything, outside the revolution nothing", artists of that period had to negotiate both their art's criticality and the desire to construct a better Nation-state for the sake of all. Through humor, irony, the development of eschatological languages, a heightened eroticism and a clear political vision not bound by the State, these artists recorded the most contradictory years of the revolution. It was a contradictory time, because the period consisted of a short series of conjunctural processes in which through speech after speech and law after law the government half-defined the mandates of the State. I say half-defined because one only has to remember that it was only in 1976 and within the First Congress of the Communist Party (a congress that would not define its mandate until its 3rd meeting in 1986, almost already too late), that changes to the constitution of the Republic, which dated from 1940, took place. Thus within the 1980s this logic was played out under the guise of Utopia. As Ojeda explains:

"Revolución" - palabra clave para la vanguardia – definió el context ideopolítico cubano y con ello, la idea de vanguardia misma. Bajo el syndrome de la "utopia" – otro de los conceptos claves para el movimiento vanguardista – este proceso revolucionario ofreció la posibilidad de la edificación total de una nueva sociedad, dentro de la cual el arte actuaría

*como subsistema integrado y soporte ineludible. Este fue el basamento de la idea de la vanguardia para el contexto cubano a partir del año 1959.*¹³⁸

“Revolution” – a key word for the avant-garde – defined the ideo-political context in Cuba and with it, the very idea of the avant-garde. Under the syndrome of “utopia” – another of the key concepts for the avant-garde movement – this revolutionary process offered the possibility of the total edification of a new society, in which art would act as an integrated subsystem and unavoidable support. This was the base of the idea of the avant-garde for the Cuban context beginning in the year 1959.

And it was within this context that the artists of the 1980s came of age, because they were the first generation of artists born and schooled within the revolution.

Interestingly enough, the ambivalence of the government in terms of its lack of strict policies on how the artists had to make art, made it possible for these artists not only to be critical of the regime but also allowed them (under the banner of the revolution’s internationalism) to travel abroad and be part of the most contemporary art practices and discourses at the time.¹³⁹ Whereas at this point consensus was signaled under the sign of utopia, dissent appeared not only in the self-transcendence of the work of art but of those aspects in the government that slowly but surely revealed it as a dictatorship. Perhaps the best example of this logic was put forward by Grupo Arte-Calle’s banner: “*Reviva la Revolu*” (Revive the Revolu) in which the passerby had to finish the sentence. Here the logic of anticipation worked towards the supercharging of utopia and its completion, if only ironically.

¹³⁸ Danné Ojeda, “Símbolo y síntoma de la vanguardia cubana en el periodo revolucionario. (Versiones)” – “ trans. “Symbol and symptom of the Cuban avant-garde in the revolutionary period (versions).”, in *Nosotros, Los más infieles: Narraciones críticas sobre el arte cubano (1993-2005)*, ed. Andrés Isaac Santana (Murcia: CENDEAC, 2007), 93.

¹³⁹ See, for example, Gerardo Mosquera’s “La plástica cubana en un nuevo siglo” in *Antología de textos críticos: El Nuevo Arte Cubano*, eds. Magaly Espinosa and Kevin Power (Madrid: Perceval Press, 2006), 59-61.

If these artists were critical of the project under which they worked and lived they also paralleled the logic of the historical and neo-avant-garde. Within the Cuban context, the 1980s generation paralleled the historical avant-garde of the 1920s, and the 1990s generation paralleled the neo-avant-garde of the 1960s. After the en masse migration of the generation of the now mythical exhibition “Volumen 1”,¹⁴⁰ the 1990s generation negated and transcended the art of the 1980s. If the art of the 1980s can be characterized as utopic and critical, indeed quite critical, the 1990s generation – marked by the exile of their teachers, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginnings of the Special Period – were thoroughly dystopic. As one of Lázaro Saavedra’s *Excerpts* puts it:

De lo colectivo a lo individual
De la utopía al escepticismo
De la candidez al simulacro
Del valor estético de la obra de arte al valor económico
*De los 80 a los 90.*¹⁴¹

From the collective to the individual
 From utopia to skepticism
 From naiveté to simulacra
 From the aesthetic value of art to the economic value
 From the 80s to the 90s.

Indeed as Ojeda has poignantly observed:

¹⁴⁰ “Volumen 1” is usually perceived and described as the exhibition that launched the 1980s generation. I say mythical, for the exhibition, of which there is almost no record left, was not the first or the most important of this generation of artists. That being said, most writers cite it as a transitional point within Cuban art history.

¹⁴¹ In Danné Ojeda, “Símbolo y síntoma de la vanguardia cubana en el periodo revolucionario. (Versiones)” – “ trans. “Symbol and symptom of the Cuban avant-garde in the revolutionary period (versions).”, in *Nosotros, Los más infieles: Narraciones críticas sobre el arte cubano (1993-2005)*, ed. Andrés Isaac Santana (Murcia: CENDEAC, 2007), 100.

*La política vanguardista revolucionaria devino estereotipo cuando el período “romántico” de la pluralidad y apertura de posibilidades en todos los órdenes dada en la década de los sesenta, comenzó a ser limitada oficial e institucionalmente. El primer Congreso Nacional de Educación y Cultura, celebrado en 1971, sentó las pautas artísticas del decenio en el que se proyectaba: “El arte es un arma de la revolución.(...) Un instrumento contra la penetración del enemigo, lo cual dividió drásticamente un quórum al que se la suponía activo en la construcción – que también implica desmantelamiento – de un sistema social “del todo y para todos.”*¹⁴²

The politics of the revolutionary avant-garde became stereotyped when the “romantic” period of the plurality and aperture of possibilities in all the spheres since the 60s began to be limited officially and institutionally. The first National Congress of Education and Culture, celebrated in 1971, outlined the pattern to be followed: “the arts: an arm of the revolution (...). An instrument against the penetration of the enemy, which drastically divided the quorum that was active in the construction – and the dismantling – of a social system “of everyone and for everyone”.

Now we can see, discerning through the distance just crossed, two epistemes forming themselves. As we have seen the sign of the Cuban revolution changed quite drastically the experiences and expectations of its citizens. The practices of conceptualism, and the lessons of the historical and neo-avant-garde under the signs of dissent and consensus further cut like a razor blade through the mind of the young Cuban artists as they developed their artistic practices. These parallelisms produced the resonance of the sign of Duchamp.

3.4. A propos Flavio Garciandía

Although Flavio Garciandía’s long and prolific artistic career has developed intensely over the past 40 years, it seems to me that one of his constant interests (beginning as early as 1973) has been a conversation – if at times imperceptible – with the work of

¹⁴² Ibid., 97.

Marcel Duchamp. And even though art critics and historians have subjected his work to close and intense readings, Garciandía's interest in Duchamp's oeuvre has been largely ignored. This overlooked connection can be traced back to a mistake in an exhibition that took place in the National Museum of Art of Havana in 1976. The exhibitors of *Salon Permanente de Jovenes* changed (by mistake) the title of Garciandía's work *Sonata* (1973) (Fig. 14), which likely refers to an early painting by Duchamp (1911). The organizers changed the title to *Zaida*; the painting was based on a black and white photography of Garciandía's colleague Zaida del Rio. Another painting *Todo lo que usted necesita es amor* (*All you need is love*) (1975) from the same series, which is in dialogue with photorealism, (Fig. 15), also critically engaged with the tradition of painting after Duchamp. While most critics, beginning with Gerardo Mosquera, have interpreted the series as an "*ejercicio ortodoxo*" / orthodox exercise,¹⁴³ I argue that the works are extremely critical of painting practices of the time.

Although the artist has indeed granted that the two works and the series in general elaborate problems of representation, he argues that they do not do so technically:

*Claro, es Zaida la que esta ahí, con todas sus implicaciones, pero yo no le veo el carácter de retrato, lo específico de una persona; sino mas bien algo general...desde el punto de vista del contenido, si, está dentro de la misma línea que los otros, es representativo, pero técnicamente no creo...*¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Gerardo Mosquera, "Todo lo que usted necesita es amor", in *I insulted Flavio Garciandía in Havana*, eds. Cristina Vives and Flavio Garciandía (Italy EBS: Turner, n.d. [2009]), 291.

¹⁴⁴ In *Bohemia*, La Habana, vol. 73, no. 45, Noviembre, 6, 1981, Interview with Alejandro G. Alonso.

Of course, it's Zaida in the painting, with all its implications, but I don't see in it the character of a portrait, the specifics of a person, but rather something general... from the point of view of content, yes, it is in the same line as the other works, it deals with representation, but technically I don't think so...

Garciandía's process at this time was based on black and white photographs taken by his friends. But what was interesting was the prerequisite that the photographs had to have an unfinished (documentary) as opposed to aesthetic character. And it is from this basis that he *rectified* those photographs in his paintings, that is, he used choice and thus followed the specifications for the readymade. As he explained in an interview with José Veigas:

J. V.: Que valores les exiges a las fotografías que seleccionas?

F. G.: No tiene que ser una buena foto pues me identifico mas con la imagen que con su cualidad formal, o sea, puedo hacer una pintura o un dibujo a partir de una mala fotografia.¹⁴⁵

J. V.: What values do you demand from the photographs you select?

F. G.: It does not have to be a good photo, since I identify myself more with the image than with its formal quality, I mean, I can make a painting or a drawing from a bad photograph.

Garciandía's *Sonata* and *All you need is love* must be understood in the particular context of Cuba, in which the perfect conditions existed to reflect upon the reception of the medium of painting in the work of Duchamp. As Garciandía recalls commenting to Joseph Kosuth:

Joseph Kosuth was here [Havana] in the Art Institute. I was pleased to get to know him. Years before I had introduced his texts and work to my students so for me it was really a splendid occasion. He looked around and said: "Why are

¹⁴⁵ See for example the interview with José Veigas, "Regreso a la pintura", in *Revolucion y Cultura*, (April, 1980), 49.

all of you making paintings, not photographs, or video?" I explained that it was the only medium which was available. We couldn't use photographs, we couldn't use film. We produce a kind of conceptual work in painting. In New York, London, everywhere, if you want to work with photography it is easy, painting is more difficult. At that time it was practically impossible to get photographs printed and film developed. The artists knew how to paint. For Kosuth it was a very paradoxical way of behaving, to be close to painting (and also to conceptual art).¹⁴⁶

Sonata, as mentioned above, recalls Duchamp's investigations with painting.

At that time, Duchamp was engaged with the work of Cézanne, which de Duve reads through Merleau-Ponty's examination of Cézanne's doubt.¹⁴⁷

If Duchamp's move past painting was out of necessity, equally so, Garciandía's engagement with the medium of painting was due to a scarcity of photographic and film materials. Thus in Garciandía's *Sonata*, the artist seems to be reflecting upon these problems and the subject appears to be repressing a laugh or even biting her tongue as if unable to – tongue in cheek – speak up about the folly of its rhetoric. It seems almost as if at this time the artist was trying to reconcile the practice of painting in particular (of which he is a virtuoso unlike Duchamp) with the status quo of art in general after Duchamp.

As compared to most readings of this painting which emphasize issues of beauty, we can read this painting more theoretically as a reflection on Duchamp's work. As Garciandía said in the interview quoted above, the work is not about Zaida but rather about something more general (above). What is this something more

¹⁴⁶ "A guy who is cut in two parts": Flavio Garciandía in conversation with Catherine Lampert in *I insulted Flavio Garciandía in Havana*, 348.

¹⁴⁷ See Thierry de Duve, "The readymade and the tube of paint" in *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press (An October Book), 1996), 147-196. More on de Duve's chapter below.

general? Can we say that whether consciously or unconsciously Garciandía was indeed engaging in a dialogue with Duchamp's own *Sonata*?¹⁴⁸ Similarly, *All you need is love* points to a typical misunderstanding of art history's interpretation of Duchamp's relationship with the tradition of painting. As Garciandía further explains in the same interview:

*Yo estoy haciendo un tipo de trabajo que bien es verdad que está muy pegado a todo lo que se hace en vanguardia afuera y que parte de las ideas de Marcel Duchamp, el del "ready made."*¹⁴⁹

I'm making a work that is very close to what is being made by the avant-garde outside [Cuba] and that part from the ideas of Marcel Duchamp's readymade.

For Garciandía the readymade becomes a passage and a sort of producer of/connector with reality. As he further explains in relationship to the readymade:

*...entonces yo pienso, el problema es despertar un mecanismo estetico que haga funcionar la realidad por si misma, que solicite mas participation del espectador. Yo le doy un objeto que despierte, pero en lo minimo, cierta identificación para que lo vea con otro sentido, en otra dimension. Dentro de esa corriente, yo creo que lo mas inteligente es hacer algo que se parezca lo mas posible a la pintura, o que sea pintura, pero que funcione dentro de estos mecanismos...*¹⁵⁰

...and so I think, the problem is to awaken an aesthetic mechanism that makes reality function on its own, that solicits more participation from the spectator. I give [the spectator] an object that awakens, but as minimally as possible, a sort of identification so that it awakens a different sense, in a different dimension. Inside this current, I think that the most intelligent thing is to make something that closely resembles painting, or that it is painting, but painting which functions within these mechanisms.

¹⁴⁸ The title of which also evokes Garciandía's early and fail attempt at learning violin

¹⁴⁹ Interview with José Veigas "Regreso a la pintura" in (*Revolucion y Cultura*, abril 1980), 49.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

All you need is love seems to mark Garciandía's reconciliation with the craft of painting-as-readymade after Duchamp. This painting, which immediately became part of the permanent collection of National Museum of Fine Arts in Havana, represents Garciandía's liberation from misunderstandings between painting and the readymade. Garciandía claims that in relationship to Duchamp's readymade, "I think that the most intelligent thing that can be made is *something that looks like painting* [my emphasis]". No wonder that more recently when Cristina Vives asked him if he considered himself a painter, he responded: "No, just an artist."¹⁵¹

Following these paintings, Garciandía painted *Marcel Duchamp está vivo* ("Marcel Duchamp is alive") (1974-75) (Fig. 16), which clearly acknowledges publicly in a pictorial language, Duchamp's lessons. As Pedro de Oraá has suggested, "the painting ["Marcel Duchamp is alive"] was the first clear-cut token of identification with artistic culture."¹⁵² It should be noted that the painting has not been featured in critical assessments of Garciandía's work due to its brief presence in Cuba. It was immediately included in exhibitions across Hungary, the Soviet Union and Poland. *Marcel Duchamp is alive* never made its way back to Havana, as The Museum of Modern Art of Lodz, Poland purchased it.¹⁵³

Garciandía arrived at the understanding that painting was the most intelligent medium through which to carry on the conceptual revolution brought about by Duchamp. As de Duve has noted, "To answer that Duchamp liberated subsequent

¹⁵¹ *I insulted Flavio Garciandía in Havana*, 10.

¹⁵² Pedro de Oraá, *Wanderings in Work Progress*, in *Arte por Excelencias*, año II, No. 7, 2010. P. 31.

¹⁵³ *I insulted Flavio Garciandía in Havana*, 361.

artists from the constraints of a particular art – or skill – is either begging the question or failing to take responsibility for endorsing this liberation.”¹⁵⁴ Already at the age of nineteen, Garciandía commanded a clear knowledge of the history of the avant-garde. For Garciandía the readymade is an important part of the tradition of painting, a perspective that can be traced back to Duchamp’s own concerns:

*Since the tubes of paint used by the artist are manufactured and ready made products we must conclude that all the paintings in the world are “readymade aided” and also works of assemblage.*¹⁵⁵

It thus follows that in his engagement with photorealism and the readymade (which began in 1971), Garciandía wanted to make “*una pintura lo más impersonal posible*” (paintings that were as indifferent as possible).¹⁵⁶ As he makes clear:

*Me parece ver en el hiperrealismo, al igual que en otras tantas corrientes de la pintura occidental actual, un apéndice más de la estética de Marcel Duchamp, quien más que un teórico o gran pintor fue o representó una nueva actitud creadora, actitud del artista frente a las motivaciones de la realidad.*¹⁵⁷

It seems to me that in hyperrealism, as well as in so many other currents of Western painting, one sees one more appendix of Duchamp’s aesthetics, who more than a theorist or great painter was or represented a new creative attitude of the artist facing the motivations of reality.

Duchamp’s understanding of the *readymade* is linked irrefutably to the practice of painting. In *Kant after Duchamp*, de Duve links Duchamp’s abandonment of painting with an intuition or understanding he had of a current crisis in

¹⁵⁴ Thierry de Duve, “The readymade and the tube of paint” in *Kant after Duchamp*, 147-196.

¹⁵⁵ See Duchamp’s “Apropos of ‘Readymade’”, in *The writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 141-42.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with José Veigas “Regreso a la pintura” in (*Revolucion y Cultura*, abril 1980), 49.

¹⁵⁷ Unpublished and undated interview with Ele Nussa for revista Bohemia: accessed at José Veigas’ archive. July 2011.

representation epitomized in the work of Cézanne. As importantly, Duchamp arrived at the artistic field through painting, as we have seen with *Coffee Mill*, at a moment in which labourers (and we can say artists and craftsmen as well) were being replaced more and more with mechanized production. In this context, de Duve argues, the continuation of the tradition of painting appeared to Duchamp impossible and an evasion of the events unfolding before his eyes. Thus Duchamp's abandonment of painting "belonged to the history of painting."¹⁵⁸

De Duve further argues that Duchamp's passage from painting to the readymade was the passage from the specific (painting) to the general (art). He quotes Duchamp as saying:

The word "art" etymologically speaking, means to make, simply to make. Now what is making? Making something is choosing a tube of blue, a tube of red, putting some of it in the palette, and always choosing the quality of the red, and always choosing the place to put it on the canvas, it's always choosing. So in order to choose, you can use tubes of paint, you can use brushes, but you can also use a ready-made thing, made either mechanically by the hand of another man, even, if you want, and appropriate it, since it's you who chose it. Choice is the main thing, even in normal painting.¹⁵⁹

The implication of Duchamp's words for de Duve is the continuation of the tradition of "art in general" at a moment of the exhaustion of "painting in particular". Since the artist cannot grind his own colors anymore and since the advent of photography challenged this practice, Duchamp saw the abandonment of painting as the only viable way for the sake of art in general. De Duve continues:

¹⁵⁸ Thierry de Duve, "The readymade and the tube of paint" in *Kant after Duchamp*, 147-196.

¹⁵⁹ Marcel Duchamp interview by Georges Charbonnier, radio interviews, RFT, 1961 quote in *Kant after Duchamp*, 162.

Here is the reason why the whole tradition of painting now amounts to one large readymade. Just as the prerequisite of the painter's work is a manufactured product, so "all paintings in the world" now partake of an industrial culture.¹⁶⁰

Or in the words of Duchamp:

... A tube of paint that an artist uses is not made by the artist; it is made by the manufacturer that makes paints. So the painter really is making a readymade when he paints. So that is the explanation.¹⁶¹

Now we can see that Garciandía's paintings thus partake in Duchamp's project. Although his work has been a point of interest to established art historians and critics, Garciandía's meditations upon the tradition of Marcel Duchamp have gone undetected. From his incursions with photorealism to his later series, "*Apuntes para un estudio de la conquista*", "*Museo Tropical I and II*", "*Catálogo de las formas malas*" to his most recent engagement with histories of Modern (Western) Art, Garciandía has retained Duchamp's notion of choosing as the paradigm through which he approaches art. That being said, it would be naïve to forget that it is his virtuoso understanding of the medium of painting as a process, in tandem with his vast knowledge of the follies of narratives about Western Art, that have permitted him to create some of the most interesting artistic productions of these times. With titles such as "I insulted Clement Greenberg in Havana" or "Yves Klein leaps into the void on Havana's seawall (Restany leaped in later and hit himself hard)" (Figs. 17, 18), Garciandía has over the last decade undertaken an ironic and quite poignant revision of the histories of western historical and neo-avant-gardes.

¹⁶⁰ Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, 163.

¹⁶¹ Marcel Duchamp quoted in Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, 163.

3.5 Auge o Decadencia del arte Cubano – exhibition-as-readymade

Specifications for “Readymades”.

by planning for a moment to come (on such a day, such a date such a minute), “to inscribe a readymade” – The readymade can later be looked for. – (with all kinds of delays)

The important thing then is just this matter of timing, this snapshot effect, like a speech delivered on no matter what occasion but at such and such an hour. It is a kind of rendezvous.

- Naturally inscribe that date, hour, minute, on the readymade as *information*.
also the serial characteristics of the readymade.

Reciprocal Readymade = Use a Rembrandt as an ironing-board-¹⁶²

La Habana, febrero 28, 2006

From Flavio Garciandía:

I am inviting you to participate in my exhibition Auge o decadencia del arte cubano (Pinnacle or Decline of Cuban Art) to be held in the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. We will have to paint, from “my colour chart”, a flat colour band on a canvas 1,50 x 20 meters, in a process that will last two weeks, starting Saturday March 18, which will be recorded and photographed in order to produce a DVD to commemorate the event. I call on all artists, resident in Cuba or abroad, from all generations, whether they enjoy some recognition, or recognition is yet to come in the world of contemporary art.

If the present moment is one of pinnacle or decline it is not for me to judge because admittedly both situations may coexist. I only try to utilize the such ability to convene as I may have with practicing artists in order to induce or prompt a critical reflection on this topic.

It would be my privilege to have you as a guest and would be grateful if you could confirm participation in order to plan for the bandwidth and make a schedule, according to the possibilities of the participants.

Since I am very interested in your participation in the project, should you agree to cooperate but for any reason you cannot participate personally, we have the possibility of online or any other communication, and you could have virtual presence and choose your colour and with pleasure I will paint a band on your behalf.

Best regards,

Flavio Garciandía ¹⁶³

Although Yoko Ono’s “Instructions for paintings” (1961-62), among many other exhibitions, have played out Duchamp’s notion of the readymade, no exhibition has followed Duchamp’s specifications like Garciandía’s. In close dialogue with

¹⁶² Marcel Duchamp, “Specification for ‘Readymades’”, in *The writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, (Oxford: Da Capo Press, 1973), 32.

¹⁶³ “Letter sent by Flavio Garciandía to 158 Cuban artists, residing in the island or elsewhere, inviting them to participate in his project Auge o decadencia del arte cubano (Pinnacle or Decline of Cuban Art), during the Novena Bienal de la Habana, in March, 2006.” In *I insulted Flavio Garciandía in Havana*, 13.

Duchamp, Garciandía's exhibit "Pinnacle or Decline of Cuban Art" (Fig. 19) is inscribed in the logic of discursive formations on the avant-garde. And one can call it an exhibition-as-readymade, for as Cristina Vives mentions:

*Si me preguntas por "la exposición de Flavio" te respondo: no, nunca hubo una exposición de Flavio. Lo que hubo fue "UNA OBRA DE FLAVIO, A LO FLAVIO". Sólo eso, lo que me parece suficiente.*¹⁶⁴

If you ask me about "Flavio's exhibition", I'll answer you: no, there was never an exhibition of Flavio. What there was was A WORK BY FLAVIO, FLAVIO'S WAY. Just that, which seems sufficient to me.

Garciandía's "letter of invitation" parallels Duchamp's "specification for 'Readymades'." Blurring the territories formed by the idea of exhibitions as a space that organizes works of art, Garciandía's "Auge o decadencia" created a kind of rendezvous in which work and exhibition became one. The event generated the conditions for the meeting of 158 Cuban artists living in Cuba or abroad –permitting the reunion of different generations of artists (and the reflection on the history of their different exiles). Furthermore, the event acted as a meditation on the multi-layered condition of tradition in the construction of discursive formations around artistic practices.

Faithful to the specifications of the readymade, the project was recorded and inscribed according to Duchamp's specifications and stored in a box that recalls Duchamp's *Three Standard Stoppages* (1913-14) (Fig. 20). Canned chance, I think,

¹⁶⁴ Cited in Manuel Fernández Figueroa's "AUGE O DECADENCIA. UN ICONO ILUSTRADO, May 2006" Access at <http://listas.cult.cu/pipermail/galeriascubanas/2006-May.txt> Accessed August 4, 2013.

was Garciandía's challenge to the theme of the project: "Pinnacle or Decline". And it became the passage through which these artists suddenly found themselves present all at once. Furthermore, the work bypassed the bureaucratic machinery of the National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana that disallows the participation of independent curators in the museum's exhibition programming. As Vives mentions:

Es un proyecto generado fuera de todo programa curatorial del Museo, pero aceptado por este último dada la contundencia de la evidencia: ¿Cómo decir NO a la presencia de Flavio en el Museo luego de 12 años (recuerda que su última exposición en el museo fue "Una visita al Museo de Arte Tropical" (en 1994)... Por último, el Museo tiene dispuesto, según reglamento por escrito que tuve ocasión de leer, que toda exposición en sus salas, por fuerza, debe aparecer como curada por el artista en cuestión y por el curador al que "por plantilla" le corresponde la década, en la que el artista se clasifica. No son aceptadas co-curadurías con profesionales, fuera de la Institución.¹⁶⁵

It was a project generated outside of all the curatorial programs at the Museum, but accepted by the latter given the force of the evidence: How to say NO to the presence of Flavio in the Museum after 12 years (remember that his last exhibition in the Museum was "A visit to the Tropical Museum" (in 1994)... Lastly, the Museum has in place a policy, which I had time to read, that all exhibitions in its rooms, by force, must appear as curated by the artist and the curator "who by law" is assigned to the decade in which the artist is classified. They do not accept co-curatorial works with professionals from outside the institution.

The project is enveloped by a mystery that recalls Duchamp's arrangements for *Fountain* at the Independents in 1917. Likewise the exhibition produced a few scandals. For example, the exhibition awoke sentiments of exile in Cuban journalists and artists around the world.¹⁶⁶ It should be noted that its reception greatly missed

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Manuel Fernández Figueroa's "AUGE O DECADENCIA UN ICONO ILUSTRADO, May 2006" Access at <http://listas.cult.cu/pipermail/galeriascubanas/2006-May.txt> accessed August 4, 2013.

¹⁶⁶ See for example the review of Luís Cino, "Sólo una franja de color", April 20, 2006 in Cubanet, Prensa Independiente accessed: <http://www.cubanet.org/CNews/y06/apr06/20a8.htm>, and also: Wilfredo Cancio Isla, "Desenmascaran tretas de la maquinaria mediática del régimen en Bienal de la Habana" In <http://www.lanuevacuba.com/nuevacuba/notic-06-04-699.htm> accessed August 5, 2013.

the project's ambitions. Vives has mentioned that the project was conceived by Garciandía (influenced by Garciandía's conversations with René Francisco) and put to work by a group of close friends including herself and José Gomez de Artaiz.¹⁶⁷

When I asked Vives about the project she described it as "the most intelligent, serious and ironic analysis from an artistic perspective – and from a position of dialogue – that Cuban art is a myth. This was Garciandía's theoretical conclusion."¹⁶⁸ Understanding of course that by myth Garciandía is referring to discursive formations around Cuban art rather than the actual production of Cuban art per se. The event unveiled the mythological inventions surrounding conceptualizations of the avant-garde as that which is radically new and ahead of its time.

More recently, in his exhibition *Iba a decir algo importante...pero ya se me olvidó* (2011) (Fig. 21) "I was going to say something very important... but I forget" Garciandía has further revealed a Duchampian indifference to the lack of critical reception surrounding his work.¹⁶⁹ Alluding to, but forgetting and dismissing the critics' misunderstanding of "Pinnacle or Decline", the exhibition presented a series of abstract paintings with titles such as *La suite del diversionista* / "The suite of the diversionist" (2011) and *Obras en busca de un autor* / "Works in search of an author" (2011) which perhaps point respectively to Garciandía's own games and to the lack of critical reception in his work.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ In conversation with Cristina Vives July 2011.

¹⁶⁹ Flavio Garciandía, *Iba a decir algo muy importante (...pero ya se me olvidó)*, Diciembre-Enero 2011, Galeria Villa Manuela.

The exhibition was accompanied by a series of “Rights of the artist” (Fig. 22) which further aimed at making Garciandía’s intentions more explicit. *Declaraciones* proclaimed, similarly to Sol Lewitt’s “Paragraphs on conceptual art” (1967):

“The right to make it all banal (or to give much importance to anything)” ... “The right to believe that form is content (and that content is form)” ... “The right to be very apropos and circumstantial. To have an acute sense of timing (or to pass up on everything, except on art and oneself)” ... “The right to ignore Duchamp (those who can).”¹⁷⁰

This last sentence has a dual role, first it points to Joseph Beuys (an artist that ironically influenced much art in Cuba in the 1980s), who famously stated “the silence of Duchamp is overrated” (Fig. 23).¹⁷¹ Secondly, the sentence can be understood doubly as a “tongue in cheek” reference to the presence of Duchamp in Garciandía’s work and to the right the critics have to ignore Duchamp. Garciandía’s *Declarations* openly tried to redirect the critics’ old habits. The work can be seen as a direct and open joke. Painfully funny and self-deprecating, *Declarations* went as far as to offer key statements for the interpretation of his earlier “exhibition” “Pinnacle or Decline”: for example “The right to be very apropos and circumstantial, To have an acute sense of timing (or to pass up on everything, except on art and oneself).

The absence of critical discourse about Duchamp in contemporary Cuban art, whether at the epistemological level of a series of parallelisms between the logic of the historical French avant-garde and the Cuban avant-garde or at the most tangible

¹⁷⁰ Flavio Garciandía, *Declarations* (poster format), at the exhibition “Iba a decir algo muy importante....pero ya se me olvidó”, Galería Villa Manuela, Diciembre-Enero, 2011. Curated by Flavio Garciandía.

¹⁷¹ See, for example, *Kuba. O.k.: Aktuelle Kunst aus Kuba* (exh. cat.), eds. Jüngen Harten and Antonio Eligio (Tonel), (Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf: Düsseldorf, 1990), 32-39. I say ironically insofar as Beuys’ seriousness is usually thought as the antithesis of Duchamp’s humor and irony (see Tonel’s *No se ha dado cuenta* (2011)– He hasn’t realized yet).

level of Flavio Garciandía engaging with Duchamp-as-discourse, tells us something about our times: if the 20th century was formed by the sign of expectation, its most critical part was also mediated by and acted under the sign of anticipation

We can see the continuation of Duchamp-as-discourse through Garciandía's influence upon generations of Cuban artists such as, René Francisco, Eduardo Ponjuan, Luis Gomez, Tania Bruguera, who have exhibited at *Espacio Aglutinador* (Agglutinative or Cohesive Space), which is the oldest ongoing independent art space in Cuba since 1994. A direct dialogue between *Espacio Aglutinador* and Garciandía's practice can be seen in the exhibition titled "~~Curadores~~ [Curators] Go Home!!" (2008) (Fig. 24), which perhaps can be read in tandem with Garciandía's "Pinnacle or Decline" (2006).

Espacio Aglutinador's credo reads:

Aglutinador se propone mostrar y difundir la obra de artistas cubanos de todas las sectas – estén vivos o muertos, residiendo dentro o fuera de Cuba, sean jóvenes o viejos, conocidos o desconocidos, promovidos o casi olvidados, modestos o pedants – siempre y cuando tengan una calidad incontrastable, y sobre todo, esa necesaria dosis de honestidad y desasosiego ante la creación propios del arte verdadero.

Aglutinador no es un espacio cultural, no es una boutique ni una fundación. No pretende ser elitista, ni vanguardista, ni populista, ni pasadista: quiere ser (o llegar a ser) justo. Su único compromiso es con el arte.

No es un proyecto. No es una hermosa idea puesta en el paper por una mente altamente organizada. Aglutinador es un hecho; está suciendo: rápida, naturalmente... Las posibilidades de equivocarse son infinitas.

Si hay algo a lo que Aglutinador le huye como a la sarna es a la coherencia, esa aburrida y nauseabunda bondad de la consciencia.

Charles Baudelaire dijo: El arte es largo.

*Aglutinador dice: ¡Qué hombre más lúcido!*¹⁷²

¹⁷² Sandra Ceballos, *Espacio Aglutinador*, (exh cat.), ed. Sandra Ceballos, (Sevilla: Escandon, 2004), 2.

Aglutinador wants to show and disseminate the works of Cuban artist of all sects – whether they are alive or dead, living in or outside Cuba, whether they are young or old, known or unknown, whether they are promoted or almost forgotten, modest or pedantic – as long as they have a insuperable quality, and above all, that necessary doses of truthfulness and restlessness in the creation of true art.

Aglutinador is not a cultural space; it is not a boutique or a foundation. Is not trying to be elitist, avant-garde, or populist, or démodé, it wants to be (or become): just. Its only compromise is with art.

It is not a project. It is not a beautiful idea put on a piece of paper from a highly organized mind. Aglutinador is a fact; it is happening: rapidly, naturally... its possibilities of mistake are infinite.

If there is something from which Aglutinador runs away it is coherence, that boring and sickening kindness of the conscience.

Charles Baudelaire said: art is long.

Aglutinador says: what a lucid man!

The project was born out of the necessity by artists of the 1990s to have a space not bound by the repressive practices of the state art institutions.¹⁷³ Its first exhibition “*El Frente Bauhaus: Pinturas de Ezequiel Suárez*” (Fig. 25) had been censured in Galeria 23 y 12 because of its overt critique of institutions, which is made evident in the titles of Suárez’s paintings:

The Desarrollo Center of Artes Visuales es una mierda
The National Consejo of Artes Plásticas is una mierda
The Lam center is una mierda
The Supremo Instituto of Arte is una mierda
The ministerio de cultura club is una mierda
The National Unión de artistas de Cuba es una mierda
*The Cuban fondo de bienes...is una mierda*¹⁷⁴

“The Developing Center for the Visual Arts is shit”

“The National Board of Visual Arts is shit”

“The Lam center is shit”

“The Supreme Institute of Art is shit”

¹⁷³ See for example Espacio Aglutinador website: <http://www.espacioaglutinador.com/>, accessed August 13, 2013.

¹⁷⁴ Ezequiel Suárez, *El Frente Bauhaus*, exh cat., Espacio Aglutinador, (Havana: Espacio Aglutinador, 1994).

“The Ministry of Culture club is shit”
“The National Union of artists of Cuba is shit”
“The Cuban Bank of Cultural Goods is shit”

By using a fierce eschatological nihilism, Suárez criticized the ongoing attempts by the government to institutionalize the arts in the 1990s. In exhibiting this work, *Aglutinador* became a contemporary space that exhibited some of the best art that the island was producing. It continues to do so and the catalogues it produces form an archive of avant-garde Cuban art.

Espacio Aglutinador is “contemporary” (I am using Peter Osborne’s sense of the term)¹⁷⁵ in that it has *grouped* under its precarious roof (it is located in the artist Sandra Ceballo’s small home) artists from different generations and from all over the world. By contemporary I am referring not to a periodizing term that signals an instance of the modern, but a condition that has gained currency after 1989. *Aglutinador* is contemporary because it was and still is interested in the creation and preservation of a place in which art could survive in its present. The Cuban state, with its ideology of “building a better future for all”, claimed the authority to critique and censure those activities that went against the grain. *Aglutinador’s* contemporaneity rested and still rests on its active production and reproduction of the contradictions of the State.

When I stated above that contemporary is a term that has gained currency after 1989, I acknowledge (through Osborne’s study) the fact that 1989 signaled the consolidation of Capitalism in its Neoliberal/Transnational forms as the sole

¹⁷⁵ Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or not at all: philosophy of contemporary art* (London: Verso, 2013).

regulative system in the world. For Cuba this meant the worsening of its economic system and the slow opening of its market to the world. As Osborne explains in a quotation cited in the previous chapter “con-temporaneity” is:

A coming together not simply ‘in’ time, but of times: we do not just live or exist together ‘in time’ with our contemporaries – as if time itself is indifferent to this existing together – but rather the present is increasingly characterized by a coming together of different but equally ‘present’ temporalities or ‘times’, a temporal unity in disjunction, or a disjunctive unity of present times.¹⁷⁶

But if Osborne uses the study of an individual artist (*The Atlas Group*)¹⁷⁷ as a fictional bearer of contemporaneity insofar as contemporaneity evokes “the total conjunction of present times” that we know “is beyond possible experience,”¹⁷⁸ *Aglutinador’s* contemporaneity – its “temporal unity in disjunction” – is historically measurable in the form of exhibitions. *Aglutinador* is a paradigmatic example of the successful attaining of artistic freedom (if fiercely fought for). “*Curadores Go Home!!*” (2008) is an excellent example of an exhibition that functioned as a wink of the eye to Garcíandía’s “Pinnacle or Decline”. “*Curadores Go Home!!*” produced a highly ironical and critical discourse of curatorial practices by producing an exhibition in which the exercise was put together by “*cada una y casi todos, pero en general ninguno*” (each one and almost all, but no one in general):¹⁷⁹

¡¡ Compañeros CURADORES, Selectores irresponsables, DISCRIMINEN
CON MÁS FUERZA AÚN. SIGAN EMBADURNANDO ESOS SALONES

¹⁷⁶ Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or not at all: philosophy of contemporary art* (London: Verso, 2013), 17.

¹⁷⁷ The Atlas Group is the work of New York based artist Walid Raad.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 23-25.

¹⁷⁹ Sandra Ceballos, *Curadores Go Home!!*, exh cat., Espacio Aglutinador, (Havana: Espacio Aglutinador, 2008).

MORTUORIOS QUE SON: LAS GALERÍAS Y CENTROS DE ARTE, LOS
MUSEOS Y DESPUÉS VUELVAN A CASA EXPOSADOS POR EL ÉXITO!!¹⁸⁰

Comrades Curators, irresponsible selectors, discriminate with more force.
Keep on smearing those dying art galleries and centers of art, those
museums and later go home to enjoy your success!!

3.6 In-conclusions

As we have seen, the sign of Duchamp appears in a series of heuristic parallelisms between the French historical avant-garde and the Cuban revolutionary ideological State apparatus. But whereas Duchamp reacted against the dichotomy at play between the logic of consent and dissent in the French context by creating a practice (the readymade) that acted and acts as a hinge-category revealing the precarious relations between art and non-art, Cuban post-conceptual art (to use Osborne's term) reacted first against the State-ideology's avant-garde consensus through the practice of dissent and later against its institutionalization (for example, *Espacio Aglutinador*). It did so using humor, irony and eroticism, all traits of the mytho-poetic constructions of the island and paralleled at the individual level in the work of Duchamp. As Antonio Eligio Fernández (Tonel) stated in 1992: "*En La Habana, Duchamp fue removido de su altar*" (In Havana Duchamp was removed from his altar).¹⁸¹ Indeed, as we have seen, he was always already everywhere, all along, at play.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Antonio Eligio Fernández (Tonel), "Acotaciones al relevo" in *Nosotros, los más infieles: Narraciones críticas sobre el arte cubano (1993-2005)*. eds. Andrés Isaac Santana (Murcia: CENDEAC, 2007), 105.

Epilogue

This study has tried to rehabilitate the idea of anticipation for the current state of affairs. The logic of anticipation as we have seen has served and serves the political imagination both in its conservative/reactionary and liberal aims. More so, as this paper argues, it is a basic condition through which humans today can create dissent. For what is at stake in the body of this thesis is a general desire to make the human aware of himself, of his environment, and his productive placement in the reproduction of the status quo. In this sense anticipation – I hope to have made clear – should be thought of as a poetry of practice that infiltrates every interstice of experience.

The rehabilitation of Duchamp's *Coffee Mill* within his scholarship has served as a case study that demonstrates how an artist from very early on knew the power of anticipation for artistic creation. Duchamp's lessons are not alien and forever lost gestures of the first half of the 20th century, but are actually present in the best production of artistic practices around the world today, as we saw in Garciandía's implementation of Duchamp's artistic practice. Garciandía's artistic and pedagogical work has served as inspiration to many generations of Cuban artists, for example those engaged with *Espacio Aglutinador*. The aim of this project has been to outline some of these connections, which, perhaps, can be the starting point for further research.

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Figures

Fig. 1: Marcel Duchamp, *Coffee Mill* (etching), 1921-47

Fig. 2: Marcel Duchamp, *Coffee Mill*, November- December 1911

Fig. 3: Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, *Du Cubisme* (deluxe edition), 1947

Fig. 4: From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy, *The box in the valise*, 1941

Fig. 5: Marcel Duchamp, *Faulty Landscape*, 1947

Fig. 6: Cézanne's *Woman in Red*, as appears in *Du Cubisme*, 1912

Fig. 7: Marcel Duchamp, *Sonata*, January-October, 1911

Fig. 8: Paul Cézanne's *Woman with Coffee Pot*, c. 1895

Bei den Futuristen

(Zeichnung von O. Gulbransson)

„Den ‚Krieg‘ haast er dds Bild? Nan, gar also schlimm is er do net!“

Die unsichtbare Batterie

Als der eiserne Krieg flürend aufsprang und den letzten Sommer unseres Friedens bezwang, neigten sich unter dem Druck seines geschwungenen Hand, alle Kamine und Öfen im Land.

Die sonst aufrecht standen und unbewegt, zielen nach Westen hinüber, nehmen den Ofen ins rauchen alle Haß, wölken alle Zorn.

Jeder Schlot ein brüllender Mörderfischlund, jede Öffe ein flammender Todesmund; über allem Heer, Trupp, Reiter und Infanterie eine unsichtbare, gewaltige Batterie.

Berge und Ströme, ihr sind sie ein leichtes Spiel. Raum nicht noch Weite legen ihr Maß und Ziel. Schuß um Schuß aus Millionen Schlünden heult. Häuser und Bäume, Menschen und Tiere sind niedergeknallt.

Jeder Schlot ein brüllender Mörderfischlund, jede Öffe ein flammender Todesmund, bis sie wieder steil und lotrecht stehn und die grauen Flaggen der Arbeit auf ihnen wehn!

Rast Diegler

Der Tod und der Dichter

An das Lager eines berühmten Dichters trat am 30. April, etliche Minuten vor elf Uhr nachts, der Tod und forderte ihn auf, sich bereit zu halten zur großen Reise ins Jenseits. „Eine Stunde Zeit gewähre mir noch.“ bat ihn der Berühmte, „eine einzige Stunde nur!“ „Gut.“ sagte der Tod, „deine Bitte sei dir erfüllt; aber bedachte: in fünf Minuten ist es nicht elf Uhr, sondern schon Mitternacht; und laßte ich dich noch eine Stunde am Leben, so ist es schon ein Uhr; die Nachricht von deinem Ableben gelangt in die Zeitungsredaktionen zu spät für das Morgenblatt, und du wirst die Nekrologe über dich erst in der Abendausgabe im Jenseits lesen können.“ Da streckte der berühmte Dichter sehnfüchtig seine Arme nach dem Knochenmann aus, rief: „Wohlan, ich bin bereit!“ und verschied.

Dr. Scherer

Vom Tage

„Nun, Käte,“ sagte ich beim Mittagessen zu meinem neuen Mädchen, „betet ihr daheim nicht bei Tische um das liebe tägliche Brot, wo das Fleisch und

alles jetzt so rar ist?“ „Wie schlachten selber!“ entgegnete die Dorfschöne.

Gestern bereitet eine biedere Bauersfrau meine Buchhandlung und verlangt „so a Buch“, um ihre französischen Kriegsgefangenen, die die Feldarbeiten verrichten, verstehen zu können. Ich zeige ihr einen praktischen kleinen Sprachführer, den sie aber sofort abweist mit den Worten: „Dees ischt net, dees muess a dickes Buch sei; die schwödet gar so viel.“

Der Tote

Von Siegfried Reinke

Das Lager der Feldkassengerüstung mit seinen erdfarbenen Zelten und grauen Autos lag tief in den gelben, graugrünen Boden geduckt, hob sich kaum von diesem ab. Der Boden war hier fest und flach wie ein Nadelbett, nur von zwei oder drei sanften Mulden gewellt. Kurzes, völlig niedergedrückt Wintergras deckte stellenweise die Erde, vor den Zelten war sie nackt wie die Gassände auf Fußballwiesen. Leutnant Böhm schlenderte, die Hände in die Westentaschen vergraben, etwas mähmutig im Lager herum. Dieses ewige Herumfliegen war schon schrecklich!

Fig. 9: Olaf Gulbransson, *Simplicissimus*, 16.5.1916

Fig. 10: Marcel Duchamp, *The Large Glass*, 1915-23

Fig. 11: Marcel Duchamp, *Bicycle Wheel*, 1913

Fig. 12: Marcel Duchamp, *The Sieves*, 1914.

Fig. 13: Marcel Duchamp, *Éditions et Sur Marcel Duchamp* exhibition, 1967.

Fig. 14: Flavio Garcíandía, *Sonata (Zaida)*, 1973

Fig. 15: Flavio Garcíandía, *Todo lo que usted necesita es amor*, 1975

Fig. 16: Flavio Garcíandía, *Marcel Duchamp está vivo*, 1975

Fig. 17: Flávio Garcíandía, *Yves Klein se lanza en el Malecón de la Habana (Restany se tiró después y se dio durísimo)*, 2001

Fig. 18: Flavio Garcíandía, *Yo insulté a Clement Greenberg en la Habana*, 2004

Fig. 20: Marcel Duchamp, *Three standard stoppages*, 1913

Fig. 21: Flavio Garciandía, *Iba a decir algo muy importante...pero ya se me olvidó*, (catalogue), 2011

EL DERECHO A BANALIZARLO TODO (o darle importancia desmedida a cualquier cosa) • EL DERECHO A CANTAR CANTOS DE CISNE • EL DERECHO A COPIAR O SER ORIGINAL (para el que pueda) • EL DERECHO A CREER QUE LA FORMA ES CONTENIDO (y que el contenido es forma) • EL DERECHO A DEJARSE INFLUIR (o ejercer influencia; para el que pueda) • EL DERECHO A GUSTAR DE BOTERO (o de quien quiera que sea que a uno le guste) • EL DERECHO A NO CONVERTIR LAS ACTITUDES EN FORMA • EL DERECHO A RESPETAR LA TRADICIÓN (si la hubiera) • EL DERECHO A TRABAJAR PENSANDO EN NADIE (o dirigirse a las masas, al mercado o a cualquier cosa a la que uno se quiere dirigir) • EL DERECHO AL LOCALISMO, AL COSMOPOLITISMO, A LO PARTICULAR Y LO CERRADO, A LO UNIVERSAL Y COSMICO • EL DERECHO A LANZAR LINEAS POR TODOS LOS RINCONES • EL DERECHO A CREER QUE MENOS ES MÁS (o que más es mucho más) • EL DERECHO A DEJAR EL PLANO VACÍO (o muy lleno) • EL DERECHO HACER ARTE POR EL ARTE (o realismo; para el que quiera aún) • EL DERECHO A HACER OBRA ABURRIDA (o muy divertida; para el que pueda) • EL DERECHO A INSISTIR SOBRE LO MISMO • EL DERECHO A LA INOCENCIA, A LA SOFISTICACIÓN, A LA FANTASÍA PUERIL, A LO PERVERSO • EL DERECHO DE TODO ARTISTA A ABANDONAR CUALQUIER ESTILO, INCLUSO EL PROPIO Y REGRESAR A SU ESTILO • EL DERECHO DE TODO ARTISTA A NO SER OBJETO DE INFERENCIAS ARBITRARIAS EN SU OBRA, SU CARRERA, O SU MERCADO, NI DE ATAQUES A SU PRESTIGIO Y REPUTACIÓN (SI LOS HUBIERE) • EL DERECHO A SER MUY OPORTUNO Y CIRCUNSTANCIAL A TENER UN AGUDO SENTIDO DEL TIMING (o pasar de todo, excepto del arte y de uno mismo) • EL DERECHO A NO SER HEROICO NI SUBLIME (o a serlo sin vergüenza) • EL DERECHO A NO USAR DE FOTOGRAFÍA (ni de video, ni de instalaciones) • EL DERECHO A PINTAR DE AZUL TODAS LAS COSAS (o de rojo o amarillo) • EL DERECHO A IGNORAR A DUCHAMP (para quien pueda) • EL DERECHO A NO SER ARTICULADO, NI BRILLANTE, NI PROPOSITIVO (o a serlo sin descanso) • EL DERECHO A NO TOMARSE EN SERIO (o tomarse muy en serio) • EL DERECHO AL LIRISMO, A LA EPOPEYA, AL DITIRAMBO (o a todo lo contrario) • EL DERECHO A HACER UNA OBRA FRÍA, DISTANCIADA (o muy comprometida y cálida) • EL DERECHO A PERPETUAR, EL BUEN GUSTO (o otro; muy malo) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE IMPONER LA IDEA DE QUE EL ARTE ES LO QUE EL DISEÑE COMO TAL • CADA ARTISTA DEBE ENTENDER QUE LAS EMOCIONES NO SIRVEN PARA HACER ARTE (o puede que sí) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE SABER QUE LA MUSA LLEGA MIENTRAS ESTÁ TRABAJANDO (o que ya estaba allí antes de empezar) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE DISTRAERSE Y GOZAR DE VEZ EN CUANDO (o muy a menudo) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE PRACTICAR EL SEXO EN CUALQUIERA DE SUS FORMAS, LO MÁS FRECUENTEMENTE QUE SEA POSIBLE • LOS ARTISTAS DEBEN SER GENEROSOS CON SU OBRA Y SUS CONOCIMIENTOS (o mezzquinos, muy mezzquinos) • UN ARTISTA NO DEBE DEPENDER DEL CONSUMO DE SUSTANCIAS TÓXICAS Y/O ADITIVAS PARA REALIZAR SU TRABAJO (o sí, porqué no) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE SABER QUE SU LABOR ES IGUAL A CUALQUIER OTRA (o por el contrario, algo místico, inspirado, superior) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE ASUMIR QUE LA POLÍTICA, EL MERCADO Y LAS BUENAS MANERAS, EN GENERAL, DAN ASCO, Y QUE, POR PRINCIPIO, NO DEBE INVOLUCRARSE • TODO ARTISTA DEBE ASUMIR QUE EL COMPROMISO SOCIAL ES UNA FALACIA (y paga muy mal) • LOS ARTISTAS DEBEN ENTENDER QUE EL DINERO ES MUY IMPORTANTE (hacer la obra cuesta, y además, hay que vivir; y muy bien, si es posible) • LOS ARTISTAS DEBEN ACEPTAR QUE EL SUFRIMIENTO, EL SACRIFICIO Y ESAS COSAS NEGATIVAS NO SON BUENA MATERIA PARA HACER SU ARTE (eso era antes) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE ENTENDER QUE NI LA PINTURA, NI LA ESCULTURA, NI LA FOTOGRAFÍA, NI EL VIDEO SON ARTE POR SÍ MISMOS; EL ARTE ES OTRA COSA (no sé qué será) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE SABER QUE LA TÉCNICA ES LA TÉCNICA, Y SIN TÉCNICA NO HAY TÉCNICA* (Tedflio Stevenson dixit) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE AMAR SU ARTE POR ENCIMA DE TODAS LAS COSAS (sin por ello llegar a convertirse en un perfecto hijo de puta) • EL ARTISTA DEBE SABER QUE MIRARSE EL OMBLIGO, HACER DIETA O MASTURBARSE FRECUENTEMENTE, PUEDEN SER ACTIVIDADES PERNICIOSAS PARA LA REALIZACIÓN DE SU ARTE (o puede que no) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE COMPRENDER QUE EL ARTE ES, AL FIN Y AL CABO, ALGO INSIGNIFICANTE (o muy significativo) • TODO ARTISTA QUE SE RESPETE DEBE ENTENDER QUE LA AUTOCOMPASIÓN ES NEFASTA • UN ARTISTA DEBE ASUMIR QUE LA NOSTALGIA Y EL SENTIMENTALISMO NO SON UN BUEN PUNTO DE PARTIDA (o quizá sí) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE ENTENDERSE A SÍ MISMO COMO UN GRANO DE ARENA EN EL DESIERTO O COMO UNA GOTTA DE AGUA SALADA EN EL OCEANO (o quizá algo más) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE GUSTAR DE TODAS LAS COSAS, A LO WARHOL (o despreciarlas todas) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE CREER QUE VELAZQUEZ, GOYA, VAN GOGH, MONDRIAN, BACON, BEUYS Y TODA LA TROPA FUERON DIOSES; Y ADORARLOS • UN ARTISTA NO DEBE CONSIDERAR A OTRO ARTISTA COMO SU ENEMIGO (o sí) • UN ARTISTA DEBE ESTAR ABSOLUTAMENTE CONVENCIDO DE QUE SOLO EL EN TODO EL UNIVERSO, PUEDE HACER SU ARTE (o de que lo puede hacer cualquiera) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE INTUIR QUE CUALQUIER FORMA DE ROMANTICISMO, IDEALISMO O UTOPIA ES, POR LO GENERAL, PURA MIERDA • LOS ARTISTAS DEBEN SABER QUE LAS ESCUELAS DE ARTE SON, POR PRINCIPIO, UNA IMPOSTURA • LOS ARTISTAS NO DEBEN UNIRSE EN GREMIOS SINO SEPARARSE ENTRE SÍ COMO PERROS RABIOSOS (o, quien sabe) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE ODIAR LA NATURALEZA, AMAR EL ARTIFICIO, ADORAR LA SOFISTICACIÓN (o todo lo contrario) • TODO ARTISTA DEBE COMPROMETERSE A SER, ADÉMÁS DE UN BUEN ARTISTA, UNA BUENA PERSONA (o una rata) • THE RIGHT TO MAKE IT ALL BANAL (or to give much importance to anything) • THE RIGHT TO SING SWAN SONGS • THE RIGHT TO COPY OR TO BE ORIGINAL (those who can) • THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE THAT FORM IS CONTENT (and that content is form) • THE RIGHT TO BE INFLUENCED (or to exert influence, for those who can) • THE RIGHT TO LIKE BOTERO (or to like whomever one likes) • THE RIGHT NOT TO TURN ATTITUDES INTO FORM • THE RIGHT TO RESPECT TRADITION (should there be one) • THE RIGHT TO WORK WITHOUT THINKING OF ANYBODY (or to address the masses, the market, or any other one wishes to address oneself) • THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE THAT LESS IS MORE (or that more is much more) • THE RIGHT TO LEAVE THE SPACE EMPTY (or to fill it up) • THE RIGHT TO MAKE ART FOR ART'S SAKE (or realism; for those that still want to) • THE RIGHT TO MAKE A BORING WORK OF ART (or a very fun one, for those who can) • THE RIGHT TO INSIST ON THE SAME THING • THE RIGHT TO INNOCENCE, SOPHISTICATION, CHILDISH FANTASY, WICKEDNESS • THE RIGHT OF EVERY ARTIST TO ABANDON ANY STYLE, EVEN HIS/HER OWN ONE, AND TO RETURN TO HIS/HER STYLE • THE RIGHT OF EVERY ARTIST NOT TO BE THE OBJECT OF ARBITRARY INTERFERENCE IN HIS/HER WORK, CAREER, OR HIS/HER MARKET OR TO SUFFER ATTACKS TO HIS/HER PRESTIGE OR REPUTATION (if any) • THE RIGHT TO BE VERY APROPOS AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL, TO HAVE AN ACUTE SENSE OF TIMING (or to pass up on everything, except on art and oneself) • THE RIGHT NOT TO BE HEROIC OR SUBLIME (or to be heroic and sublime without shame) • THE RIGHT TO NOT USE PHOTOGRAPHY (or video, or installations) • THE RIGHT TO PAINT EVERYTHING BLUE (or red, or yellow) • THE RIGHT TO IGNORE DUCHAMP (those who can) • THE RIGHT NOT TO BE LOCAL, OR BRILLIANT, OR PROPOSITIVE (or to be so tirelessly) • THE RIGHT NOT TO TAKE ONESELF SERIOUSLY (or to take oneself very seriously) • THE RIGHT TO LYRICISM, TO EPIC, TO DITHYRAMBS (or quite the contrary) • THE RIGHT TO MAKE A GOLD, ALOOF (or very warm and committed), WORK OF ART • THE RIGHT TO PERPETRATE GOOD TASTE (or another, very poor taste) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD IMPOSE THE IDEA THAT ART IS WHAT HE/SHE REGARDS AS SUCH • EACH ARTIST SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT EMOTIONS ARE UNSUITABLE TO CREATE ART (or that perhaps they are) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD KNOW THAT THE MUSE ARRIVES WHILE HE/SHE IS WORKING (or that it was already there before starting) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD BE AMUSED AND HAVE FUN FROM TIME TO TIME (or very often) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD PRACTICE SEX IN ANY OF ITS VARIANTS, AS FREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE • ARTISTS SHOULD BE GENEROUS WITH THEIR WORK AND KNOWLEDGE (or selfish, very selfish) • ARTISTS SHOULD NOT DEPEND ON TOXIC AND/OR ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES TO CARRY OUT THEIR WORK (or they should, why not) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD KNOW THAT HIS/HER WORK IS SIMILAR TO ANY OTHER (or on the contrary, something mystic, inspired, superior) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD ASSUME THAT POLITICS, THE MARKET AND GOOD MANNERS, IN GENERAL, ARE REVOLTING, AND THAT, ON PRINCIPLE, HE/SHE SHOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD ASSUME THAT SOCIAL COMMITMENT IS A FALLACY (and the pay is poor) • ARTISTS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT MONEY IS VERY IMPORTANT (the making of a work of art is expensive and, in addition, one has to live. And well-off, if possible) • ARTISTS SHOULD ACCEPT THAT SUFFERING, SACRIFICE AND THOSE NEGATIVE THINGS ARE NOT GOOD MATERIALS TO MAKE THEIR ART (that was before) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT NEITHER PAINTING, SCULPTURE, PHOTOGRAPHY, OR VIDEO ARE ART BY THEMSELVES, ART IS SOMETHING ELSE (I don't know what it could be) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD KNOW THAT THE TECHNIQUE IS THE TECHNIQUE, AND WITHOUT TECHNIQUE THERE IS NO TECHNIQUE* (Tedflio Stevenson dixit) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD LOVE HIS/HER ART ABOVE ALL THINGS (without turning into a consummate mother-fucker for that reason) • AN ARTIST SHOULD KNOW THAT LOOKING AT HIS/HER NAVEL, DIETING, OR MASTURBATING FREQUENTLY, COULD BE PERNICIOSAS ACTIVITIES FOR THE REALIZATION OF HIS/HER ART (or perhaps not) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT ART IS, AFTER ALL, INSIGNIFICANT (or very significant) • EVERY SELF-RESPECTING ARTIST SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT SELF-PITY IS LOATHSOME • AN ARTIST SHOULD ASSUME THAT NOSTALGIA AND THE SENTIMENTALISM ARE NOT A GOOD STARTING POINT (or that perhaps they are) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD UNDERSTAND HIM/HERSELF AS A GRAIN OF SAND IN THE DESERT OR AS A DROP OF SALTWATER IN THE OCEAN (or perhaps more than that) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD LIKE ALL THINGS WARHOL-STYLE (or spurn them all) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD BELIEVE THAT VELAZQUEZ, GOYA, VAN GOGH, MONDRIAN, BACON, BEUYS AND THE WHOLE TROOP WERE GODS; AND ADORE THEM • AN ARTIST SHOULD NOT CONSIDER ANOTHER ARTIST AS AN ENEMY (or perhaps he/she should) • AN ARTIST SHOULD BE ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT ONLY HIM/HER IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE, CAN MAKE HIS/HER ART (or that anyone can do it) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD SENSE THAT ANY FORM OF ROMANTICISM, IDEALISM, OR UTOPIA IS, IN GENERAL, PURE SHIT • ARTISTS SHOULD KNOW THAT THE ART SCHOOLS ARE, IN PRINCIPLE, AN IMPOSTURE • ARTISTS SHOULD NOT GATHER IN GUILDS BUT KEEP APART FROM EACH OTHER AS RABID DOGS (or, who knows) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD HATE NATURE, LOVE THE ARTIFICE, ADORE SOPHISTICATION (or just the opposite) • EVERY ARTIST SHOULD COMMIT HIM/HERSELF TO BE, BESIDES A GOOD ARTIST, A GOOD PERSON (or a rat)

Flavio Garcíandía • Advertencia: Estas declaraciones no constituyen una obra de arte • Warning: These declarations do not constitute a work of art.

Fig. 22: Flavio Garcíandía, “Declaraciones” in exhibition *Iba a decir algo muy importante...pero ya se me olvidó*, 2011

"no se ha dado cuenta"

Antonio Eligio (Tonel)

Fig. 23: Antonio Eligio (Tonel), *No se ha dado cuenta*, 2011

Fig. 24: Sandra Ceballos, *Curadores go Home* (catalogue), 2008

Fig. 25: Ezequiel Suárez, *EL frente Bauhaus*, (catalogue), 1991

Appendix 1

Hermeneutic circle:

Appendix 2

Postconceptual art:

1. Art's necessary conceptuality. (Art is constituted by concepts, their relations and their instantiations in practices of discrimination: art/non-art.)
2. Art's ineliminable – but radically insufficient – aesthetic dimension. (All art requires some form of materialization; that is to say, aesthetic – felt, spatio-temporal – presentation.)
3. The critical necessity of an anti-aestheticist use of aesthetic materials. (This is a critical consequence of art's necessary conceptuality.)
4. An expansion to infinity of the possible material forms of art.
5. A radically distributive – that is, irreducibly relational – unity of the individual artwork across the totality of its multiple material instantiations, at any particular time.
6. A historically malleability of the borders of this unity.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or not at all: philosophy of contemporary art*, Verso: London and New York, 2013. p. 48