

Jeff  
WALL

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Depiction,  
Object,  
Event

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HERMESLEZING  
HERMES LECTURE  
2006

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# Introduction

Hans Brens

Camiel van Winkel

On Sunday 29 October 2006, the first Hermes Lecture was held in the late-modernist setting of the Provinciehuis in 's-Hertogenbosch. Here, to a capacity crowd, Jeff Wall delivered his paper entitled *Depiction, Object, Event*, describing the state of contemporary art. The publication before you contains the unabridged text of the lecture, Vivian Rehberg's response to it, as well as a condensed version of the public discussion that concluded the event.

The Hermes Lecture is a biennial lecture by a distinguished, internationally active artist about the position of the visual artist in the cultural and social field. The idea for organizing it came from a collaboration between Hermes, an entrepreneurs' network in 's-Hertogenbosch—that, among other goals, is committed to establishing contacts between art and the business world—and the Research Group of Fine Arts at the art academy AKV|St. Joost, Avans University, also based in 's-Hertogenbosch. The Research Group, headed by Camiel van Winkel, conducts research into the cultural position and function of the visual artist.

The Hermes Lecture aims to promote the development of the critical and theoretical discourse on art, and also to reaffirm this

discourse, that in the course of the twentieth century has become rather a specialist affair, in its place in the public domain—a place it still held so explicitly in the days of Zola and Baudelaire.

For the Hermes Lecture we will invite artists who have demonstrated their capacity for theoretical reflection at the highest level. Rather than discussing their own work, they will be invited to address more general issues such as the social responsibility of the artist, the relationship between art and mass culture, and the future of the visual arts as a critical discipline with its own intellectual tradition.

We could not have wished for a more distinguished speaker to give the first lecture than Jeff Wall. *Depiction, Object, Event*, written especially for this occasion, is an original and thought-provoking interpretation of developments in the art of the last century that have culminated over the past two decades in an alleged fusion of art and life.

Today, artists are often regarded as the trendsetting members of a 'creative class' that is fully integrated within the tertiary sector of the global economy. They are seen as fully-fledged service providers who meet all the requirements of professional entrepreneurship and contribute to the growing prosperity of the community with their creative expertise. The notion that artists are employable in all sorts of social domains is related to the belief that orthodox-modernist

dogmas—such as the autonomy of the arts and the ban on mixing media—have been permanently left behind on the battlegrounds of history. Jeff Wall's text, however, makes a reasonable case for assuming that such convictions continue to have an effect, if only by the void they left in their wake. Even in its most extrovert moments the innovative power of art is primarily directed *inwards*, at (the transformation of) its own object.

One of Wall's theses is that the fusion of art and non-art is in a sense an illusion, a mimetic operation that leaves the institutional art context fully intact. Non-artistic phenomena, including various forms of economic and social activity, make their 'second appearance' in, or rather as, art. Artists and curators appropriate these activities without actually having to leave the institutional domain of art. The heteronomy of contemporary art is, in Wall's term, a 'pseudo-heteronomy'.

There are no criteria available to judge the quality of these creative expressions, because, as Wall states, aesthetic criteria are only valid within the classic disciplines—painting, drawing, sculpture, the graphic arts, and photography. These 'canonical forms' are still thriving, by the way, in spite of all efforts by artists to subvert them from within; but they thrive as a separate sector within contemporary art, as a genre with its own laws and standards. By contrast, the success of the alternative, pseudo-heteronomous art forms lies in the very fact that they have managed to neutralize these aesthetic

criteria for themselves. The criteria are no longer tested, challenged or stretched, but simply set aside.

Jeff Wall pointedly does not pass any judgment on this fact; he sketches the current 'bifurcation' of two different versions of contemporary art as a temporary situation, without venturing into speculations about the future. It is everyone's prerogative to ponder the implications of his argument. What risks, for instance, are entailed in the social trend of 'the artist as a service provider', if we neglect the ambivalent history preceding this development? And how should art schools deal with the legacy of the avant-garde and the indeterminate state of the aesthetic judgement?

On behalf of the Hermes Lecture Foundation we would like to thank all those individuals and institutions who helped to make this lecture possible or contributed to its success: the members and the board of Hermes; the members of the Recommending Committee of the Hermes Lecture; the management, staff and students at AKV|St. Joost; the Mondriaan Foundation; and the Province of Noord Brabant.

# Depiction, Object, Event

Jeff Wall

Modern and modernist art is grounded in the dialectic of depiction and anti-depiction, depiction and its negation within the regime of depiction. The self-criticism of art, that phenomenon we call both 'modernist' and 'avant-garde', originated in terms of the arts of depiction and, for the hundred years beginning in 1855, remained within their framework.

The forms of the depictive arts are drawing, painting, sculpture, the graphic arts, and photography. These of course are what were called the 'fine arts' to distinguish them from the 'applied arts'. I will call these the 'canonical forms'.

The depictive arts do not admit movement. Movement in them has always been suggested, not presented directly. The quality and nature of that suggestion has been one of the main criteria of judgment of quality in those arts. We judge the depictive arts on how they suggest movement while actually excluding it.

Movement is the province of other arts—theatre, dance, music, and cinema. Each of these arts also has its own avant-garde, its own modernism, its own demands for the fusion of art and life, and its own high and low forms. But in the 1950s, those who took up and radicalized the pre-war avant-garde convic-

tion that art could evolve only by breaking out of the canonical forms, turned precisely to the movement arts. I am thinking here of Allan Kaprow, John Cage, or George Maciunas. They sensed that the depictive arts could not be displaced by any more upheavals from within, any more radical versions of depiction or anti-depiction. They came to recognize that there was something about the depictive arts that would not permit another art form or art dimension to evolve out of them. The new challenge to western art would be advanced in terms of movement and the arts of movement. Cage's piano concert, *4'33"*, first presented in 1952, can be seen as the first explicit statement of this challenge.

This was, of course, opposed by proponents of the canon, pre-eminently Clement Greenberg. Greenberg published his essay *Towards a Newer Laocoon* in 1940, twelve years before Cage's concert. In it he wrote, "There has been, is, and will be, such a thing as a confusion of the arts." He argues that, in each era, there can be, and has been, a dominant art, one all the others tend to imitate to their own detriment, perversion, and loss of integrity. From the early 17th century to the last third of the 19th, he says that the dominant art was literature. What he calls modernism is the effort on the part of artists to reject that mimesis and work only with the unique, inimitable characteristics of each individual, singular, art. He says that this emphasis on uniqueness is central to the creation of the best and most significant art of the period between 1875 and 1940—in painting, from Cézanne to the advent of Abstract Expressionism.

For Greenberg and his generation—and at least one further generation—the confusion was confusion within the depictive arts. Even if literature or theatre were the models for painters and sculptors, the imitations were executed as paintings or sculptures. A painter did not put on a play in a gallery and claim it was a 'painting', or a 'work of art'. The painter made a painting that, unfortunately, suppressed its own inherent values as painting in trying to create the effect a staged scene of the



same subject might have had. For Greenberg, this was a severe confusion.

But if that was a severe confusion in 1940, or 1950, or even 1960, it is not a severe confusion after that. After that we have a new order of confusion of the arts, a new dimension of it, because the mimesis, the blending and blurring of distinctions, is not confined to occurrences within depiction, even though they are taking place on the terrain called 'contemporary art', a terrain discovered, settled, and charted by the depictive arts.

The development of this dispute was at the centre of critical discourse between the early 1950s and the later 1960s, at which point the proponents of the new movement-based forms become dominant. In 1967, Michael Fried radicalized Greenberg's arguments and staged the last and best stand in defense of the canonical forms. This was of course his famous essay *Art and Objecthood*, where he introduced the term 'theatricality' to explain the condition brought about by the rise of the new forms. The term made explicit the fact that the radical breach with the canonical forms is not effected by some unheralded new type of art but comes with brutal directness from theatre, music, dance, and film. Fried's argument may have had its greatest effect on his opponents rather than his supporters, for it revealed to them with an unprecedented intensity and sophistication both the stakes in play and the means by which to play for them. The development of the new forms exploded and accelerated just at this moment, amidst the clamour of criticism of *Art and Objecthood*.

Fried's accomplishment is founded on his close reading of the internal structure of painting and sculpture. His contestation with Minimal Art is framed in those terms. Yet implicit within his argument are at least two other aspects, two moments of transition between the criteria of the depictive arts and those of the emergent movement.

The first of these is of course the Readymade. The Readymade is the point of origin in the history of the attempt to displace

the depictive arts. Yet it has an unusual relation to depiction, one not often commented upon.

The Readymade did not and was not able to address itself to depiction; its concern is with the object, and so if we were to classify it within the canonical forms it would be sculpture. But no-one who has thought about it accepts that a Readymade is sculpture. Rather it is an object that transcends the traditional classifications and stands as a model for art as a whole, art as a historical phenomenon, a logic, and an institution. As Thierry de Duve has so well demonstrated, this object designates itself as the abstraction 'art as such', the thing that can bear the weight of the name 'art as such'. Under what de Duve calls the conditions of nominalism, the name 'art' must be applied to any object that can be legitimately nominated as such by an artist. Or, to be more circumspect, it is the object from which the name art cannot logically be withheld. The Readymade therefore proved that an arbitrary object can be designated as art and that there is no argument available to refute that designation.

Depictions are works of art by definition. They may be popular art, amateur art, even entirely unskilled and unappealing art, but they are able to nominate themselves as art nonetheless. They are art because the depictive arts are founded on the making of depictions, and that making necessarily displays artistry. The only distinctions remaining to be made here are between 'fine' art and 'applied' art, or 'popular' art and 'high' art, between 'amateur' art and 'professional' art, and, of course, between good art and less good art. Selecting a very poor, amateurish, depiction (say a businessman's deskpad doodle) and presenting it in a nice frame in a serious exhibition might be interesting, but it would not satisfy the criteria Duchamp established for the Readymade. The doodle is already nominated as art and the operation of the Readymade in regard to it is redundant.

Moreover, a depiction—let's say a painting—cannot simply be identified with an object. It is the result of a process that has taken place upon the support provided by an object, say a

canvas, but that has not thereby created another object. The depiction is an alteration of the surface of an object. In order that the alteration be effected, the object, the support must pre-exist it. Therefore any selection of a Readymade in this case could concern only the object that pre-existed any alteration or working of its surface. The presence of this second element—the depiction—cannot be relevant to the logical criteria for an object's selection as a Readymade, and in fact disqualifies it.

Duchamp never selects any object bearing a depiction as a Readymade. Any time he chose objects bearing depictions (these are usually pieces of paper), he altered them and gave them different names. The three most significant examples are *Pharmacie*, a colour lithographic print of a moody landscape, selected in 1914, and the pair of stereoscopic slides, *Stereoscopie à la main* (Handmade Stereoscopia), from 1918, both of which are designated as 'corrected' Readymades; and the famous *LH00Q* from 1919, which Duchamp called a 'rectified Readymade'. But these terms have little meaning. The works in question are simply not Readymades at all. They are drawings, or paintings, or some hybrid, executed on a support that already has a depiction on it. *Pharmacie*, for example, could stand as a prototype for the paintings of Sigmar Polke.

Since a depiction cannot be selected as a Readymade, depiction is therefore not included in Duchamp's negation. This is not to say that the depictive arts are not affected by the subversion carried out in the form of the Readymade; far from it. But any effect it will have on them is exerted in terms of their exemption from the claims it makes about art, not their inclusion. They are exempt because their legitimacy as art is not affected by the discovery that any object, justly selected, cannot be denied the status of 'instance of art' that was previously reserved exclusively for the canonical forms. This new 'inability to deny status' adds many things to the category art, but subtracts none from it. There is addition, that is, expanded legitimation, but no reduction, no delegitimation.

The Readymade critique is therefore both a profound success and a surprising failure. It seems to transform everything and yet it changes nothing. It can seem ephemeral and even phantom. It obliges nobody to anything. Duchamp himself returns to craftsmanship and the making of works, and there's no problem. Everything is revolutionized but nothing has been made to disappear. Something significant has happened, but the anticipated transformation does not materialize, or it materializes incompletely, in a truncated form. The recognition of this incompleteness was itself one of the shocks created by the avant-garde. That shock was both recognized and not recognized between 1915 and 1940.

The failed overthrow and the resulting reanimation of painting and sculpture around 1940 set the stage for the more radical attempt inaugurated by Cage, Kaprow, and the others and culminating in conceptual art, or what I will call the 'conceptual reduction' of the depictive arts. This is the second element concealed within *Art and Objecthood*.

'Reduction' was a central term at the origins of conceptual art; it emerged from the new discourses on reductivism set off by Minimal art in the late 1950s and early 60s. Painting and sculpture were both to be reduced to a new status, that of what Don Judd called 'specific objects', neither painting nor sculpture but an industrially produced model of a generic object that would have to be accepted as the new essential form of 'art as such'.

Now, 40 years later, we can see that Judd, along with his colleagues Dan Flavin and Carl Andre, are clearly sculptors, despite their rhetoric. Others—Lawrence Weiner, Joseph Kosuth, Terry Atkinson, Mel Ramsden, Michael Baldwin, Sol Lewitt—took up that rhetoric, and were more consistent. They pushed the argument past 'specific objects'—or 'generic objects'—to the 'generic instance of art', a condition beyond objects and works of art, a negation of the 'work of art', the definitive supercession of both object and work. Object and work are superseded by their replacement with a written explication of why the written ex-

plication itself cannot be denied status as a generic instance of art—and furthermore why logically and historically, this text not only cannot be denied such status, but is in fact the only entity that can authentically possess it, since it alone has become, or remained, art while having ceased to be a specific ‘work of art’. This reduction renders everything other than itself a member of a single category, the category of less historically and theoretically self-conscious gestures—mere works of art. From the new judgment seat of strictly linguistic conceptual art, all other modes or forms are equally less valid. All are equivalent in having fallen short of the self-reflexive condition of the reduction.

The substitution of the work by a written text stakes its claim, however, under very specific conditions. The text in question can concern itself with only a single subject: the argument it makes for its own validity. The text can tell us only why and under what conditions it must be accepted as the final, definitive version of the ‘generic instance of art’ and why all other kinds of art are historically redundant. But it cannot say anything else. If it does, it becomes ‘literature’; it becomes ‘post-conceptual’.

I am only going to note in passing here that, of course, this attempt at delegitimation was no more successful than the previous one. But that is not what is significant about it. The conceptual reduction is the most rigorously-argued version of the long critique of the canonical forms. All the radical proposals of the avant-gardes since 1913 are summed up in it.

All those proposals demanded that artists leap out of what has always been called ‘art’ into new, more open, more effectively creative relationships with the ‘lifeworld’, to use Jürgen Habermas’ term for it. This leap necessarily involves repudiating the creation of high art, and inventing or at least modeling new relations between the creative citizen—who is now *not* an artist—and the lifeworld. The neo-avant-garde of the 1950s distinguishes itself from the earlier avant-garde in that

it is more concerned with this social and cultural modelling than it is with artistic innovation as such. Concern with artistic innovation presumes that such innovation is required for a reinvention of the lifeworld, but the conceptual reduction has shown that this is no longer the case, since the era of meaningful artistic innovation has concluded, probably with the death of Jackson Pollock in 1956.

Therefore, the argument continues, those people who would have been artistic innovators in the past now have a new field of action and a new challenge. They are no longer obliged to relate to the lifeworld via the mediation of works of art; they are now liberated from that and placed directly before a vast range of new possibilities for action. This suggests new, more inventive, more sensitive forms of cultural activity carried out in real lifeworld contexts—the media, education, social policy, urbanism, health, and many others. The ‘aesthetic education’ to be undergone by these people will impel them beyond the narrow confines of the institutions of art and release their creativity in the transformation of existing institutions and possibly the invention of new ones. This of course is very close to the ideas of the ‘counterculture’ generated at almost the same moment, and the conceptual reduction is one of the key forms of countercultural thinking.

And yet, despite the rigour of the conceptual reduction and the futuristic glamour of the challenge it posed, few artists crossed that line it drew in the sand, few left the field of art to innovate in the new way in other domains. From the early 70s on, it seems that most artists either ignored the reduction altogether, or acquiesced to it intellectually, but put it aside and continued making works. But the works they made are not the same works as before.

Since there are now no binding technical or formal criteria or even physical characteristics that could exclude this or that object or process from consideration as art, the necessity for art

to exist by means of works of art is reasserted, not *against* the conceptual reduction, but in its wake and through making use of the new openness it has provided, the new 'expanded field'. The new kinds of works come into their own mode of historical self-consciousness through the acceptance of the claim that there is a form of art which is not a work of art and which legislates the way a work of art is now to be made. This is what the term 'post-conceptual' means.

The reduction increased the means by which works can be created and thereby established the framework for the vast proliferation of forms that characterizes the recent period. The depictive arts were based upon certain abilities and skills and those who did not possess either had little chance of acceptance in art. The critique of those abilities, or at least of the canonical status of those abilities, was one of the central aspects of the avant-garde's attack on the depictive arts, and conceptual art took this up with great enthusiasm. The Readymade had already been seen as rendering the handicraft basis of art obsolete, and conceptual art extended the obsolescence to the entire range of depictive skills. The de-skilling and re-skilling of artists became a major feature of art education, which has been transformed by two generations of conceptual and post-conceptual artist-teachers.

The reduction enlarged the effect of the Readymade in validating a vast range of alternative forms that called for different abilities, different skills, and probably a different kind of artist, one that Peter Plagens recently called the 'post-artist'. In keeping with the utopian tenor of avant-garde categories, this new kind of artist would not suffer the limitations and neuroses of his or her predecessors, trapped as they were in the craft guild mentality of the canonical forms.

The closed guild mind values the specifics of its *métier*, its abilities, skills, customs, and recipes. The proponents of the distinction and singularity of the arts always recognize *métier* as an essential condition of that distinction, and they might

argue that it is one that can also have a radical and utopian dimension, as a space of activity that can resist the progressive refinements of the division of labour in constantly-modernizing capitalist and anti-capitalist societies.

The proliferation of new forms in the post-conceptual situation is unregulated by any sense of craft or *métier*. On the contrary, it develops by plunging into the newest zones of the division of labour. Anything and everything is possible, and this is what was and remains so attractive about it.

By the middle of the 1970s the new forms and the notion of the expanded field had become almost as canonical as the older forms had been. Video, performance, site-specific interventions, sound works, music pieces, and variants of all of these evolved with increasing rapidity and were rightly enough considered to be serious innovations. The innovations appeared not as music or theatre properly speaking but as 'an instance of a specificity within the context of art'. They were 'not music', 'not cinema', 'not dance'.

The other arts make what I will call a 'second appearance' then, not as what they have been previously, but as 'instances of (contemporary) art'. It appears that in making this second appearance they lose their previous identity and assume or gain a second, more complex, or more universal identity. They gain this more universal identity by becoming 'instances', that is, exemplars of the consequences of the conceptual reduction. For, if any object (or, by obvious extension, any process or situation) can be defined, named, considered, judged, and valued as art by means of being able to designate itself as a sheer instance of art, then any other art form can also be so defined. In making its 'second appearance', or gaining a second identity, the art form in question transcends itself and becomes more significant than it would be if it remained theatre or cinema or dance.

The visual arts was the place where the historical process and dialectic of reduction and negation were taken the furthest,

where the development was most drastic and decisive. The avant-gardes of the movement arts were more subdued. There are many reasons for this; suffice for the moment to say that none of them had any internal need to reach the same point of self-negation as did the depictive arts. The negation-process of the depictive arts established a theoretical plateau that could not be part of the landscape of the other arts. Each of the performing arts was closed off by its own structure from the extension, radicalization, or aggravation, of self-critique. They can be said to remain inherently at the pre-conceptual-art level. This is no criticism of them, simply a description of their own characteristics.

Still, aspects of the dynamic of self-negation made their presence felt in the movement arts from the beginning of the 1950s at least. This process brought the movement arts closer to the avant-garde of what was then still the depictive arts and opened passages through which influence and ideas could move, in both directions. Almost all the new phenomena between 1950 and 1970 are involved in this crossbreeding. As the movement arts are affected by radical reductivism—and Cage's concert displays this clearly—their forms are altered enough that they begin to resemble, at least in some vague, suggestive way, radical works of depictive art. The silence of Cage's concert resembles, in this sense, the blankness of Robert Rauschenberg's *White Paintings* from the same years.

These affinities brought out the notion that an event could have the same kind of artistic status as an object; in this period the notion of the event as the essential new form of post-conceptual art crystallized and became decisive. And the event is, by nature, an ensemble of effects if not a 'confusion' of them. Movement outside the frame of depiction, out from the atelier, gives new possibilities of form to the domain of momentary occurrences, fugitive encounters, spontaneous flashes of insight, and any other striking elements caught up in the flow of the everyday and of no value or effect when abstracted from that

flow as representation. They can only be sensed, or repeated, or made visible as some form of event, in which their contingency and unpredictability are preserved, possibly intensified, possibly codified.

The advent of the movement arts has also been a major factor in the project of blurring the boundaries between high art and mass culture. This is normally identified with Pop Art, as if the depictive arts themselves had the means to carry it out. But the depictive arts do not have those means because they have no distinct mass cultural forms. Mass culture produces millions of depictions of all kinds, but they are just that—depictions functioning in different contexts. They are not a different art form, just a different level or register of the depictive arts. Pop artists were obviously not the first to recognize this; what they did was to emphasize more strongly than anyone had previously that audiences and even patrons of art in a modern, commercial society may very well prefer the popular and vernacular versions of depiction to the more complex, more introverted, forms of 'high art'. Pop Art restaged the threatening possibility of the popular forms of depiction overwhelming the high ones, something Greenberg had warned about in *Avant-Garde and Kitsch* in 1939. But, despite this, Pop Art, as depiction, is irrelevant to the development of new forms of neo-avant-garde art and of a new fusion of high art with mass culture. And this is true of even the most extreme version of Pop, Warhol's.

Anything new in this regard is imported from the movement arts and from the creative or organizational structures of the movement arts and the entertainment and media industries based upon them. Warhol's mimesis of a media conglomerate was more significant here than were his paintings or prints. Warhol did not cross the line drawn by the conceptual reduction, but he moved laterally along it, and did so at the moment the line was being drawn, or even before it was drawn. But he wasn't very interested in extending his practice into the realms advocated by the radical counterculture. Quite the opposite. Warhol moved

into the crowded and popular domains of mass entertainment and celebrity, the engines of conformity. This is why he has been identified as the radical antithesis to artistic radicalism.

The process of blurring the boundaries between the arts, between art and life, and between high and low, takes place as a struggle between two equally valid versions of the neo-avant-garde and countercultural critique—the radical, emancipatory version, and the Warhol version. So it is not surprising that we can see aspects of the challenge set by the conceptual reduction operating in both.

Warhol's mimesis of a media conglomerate is a model not just for lifting the taboo on the enjoyments of conformism in a prosperous, dynamic society. Partly because it was so wildly successful, it was also a model for any sort of mimetic relationship to other institutions, popular or otherwise.

If Warhol could imitate a media firm, others coming after him could imitate a museum department, a research institute, an archive, a community service organization, and so on—that is, one could develop a mimesis, still within the institution of art, of any and every one of the potential new domains of creativity suggested by the conceptual reduction, but without thereby having to renounce the making of works and abandon the art world and its patronage.

Since the early 1970s, a hybrid form, an intermediary structure, has evolved on the basis of the fusion of Warhol's factory concept with post-conceptual mimesis. Artists were able to remain artists and at the same time to take another step toward the line drawn in the sand. Instead of disappearing from art into therapy, communitarianism, anthropology, or radical pedagogy, they realized that these phenomena, too, can make their own second appearance within, and therefore as, art. Within the domain of second appearance, artists are able to try out this or that mimesis of extra-artistic creative experimentation.

In the past 15 or 20 years, they have refined and extended the reflection on the challenge to abandon art. It is as if, in moving

along the boundary, negotiating the patronage provided by the art economy, or the art world, in combination with probing the actual effects of their mimesis in the world nearly outside the art world, they are attempting gently to erase that line, or even to move it slightly on the institutional terrain. This is the art of the global biennales—the art of prototypes of situations, of an institutionalized neo-situationism.

The biennales and the grand exhibitions—now among the most important occasions on the art calendar—are themselves becoming prototypes of this potentiality, events containing events, platforms inducing event-structures—tentative, yet spectacular models of new social forms, rooted in community action, ephemeral forms of labour, critical urbanism, deconstructivist tourism, theatricalized institutional critique, anarchic interactive media games, radical pedagogies, strategies of wellness, hobbies and therapies, rusticated technologies of shelter, theatres of memory, populist historiographies, and a thousand other 'stations', 'sites', and 'plateaus'.

This is a new art form and possibly the final new art form since it is nearly formless. It promises the gentle, enjoyable dissolution of the institution of art, not the militant liquidation threatened by the earlier avant-gardes.

I am not here to make predictions. But, through the gentle process of mimesis and modeling, the prototypes may become more and more mature, more complex, and more stable. They will still be called 'art', since there is no means to deny them that name if they elect to be known by it. But they may begin to function as autonomous nomads, moving from festival to festival. Whatever purpose they might have may become institutionalized. The resulting institution could have an 'art look': if a gallery can resemble a wellness centre, then a wellness centre may come to look like an installation piece, and even be experienced as one. Then it would not be as if anyone renounced art, but that art itself became diffuse, and lost track of its own boundaries, and lost interest in them.

The critique of the depictive arts has always concentrated on the question of the autonomy of art, and the corollary of autonomy—artistic quality. Autonomous art has been mocked as something ‘outside of life’ and indifferent to it. The avant-gardes’ critique cannot be reduced to this mockery—but in demanding the breaching of the boundedness of the canonical forms, the avant-gardes have failed—or refused—to recognize that autonomy is a relation to that same world outside of art. It is a social relationship, one mediated, it is true, by our experience of a thing, a work of art, but no less social therefore than a get-together at a community hall. Defenders of autonomous art—‘high art’—claim that when works of art attain a certain level of quality, their practical human utility expands exponentially and becomes incalculable, unpredictable, and undefinable. They argue that it is not that autonomous art has no purpose, something that is commonly said about it, but that it has no purpose that can be known for certain in advance. Not even the greatest scholar of art can know what the next individual is going to discover in his or her experience of even the best-known work of art. He could not have predicted that Duchamp would want to deface the *Mona Lisa* as he did. The autonomy of art is grounded on the quality it has of serving unanticipated, undeclared, and unadmitted purposes, and of serving them differently at different times.

This is frustrating for those who have purposes, no matter how significant those purposes may be. Often, the more compelling the purpose, the greater the frustration and the more intense the objection. But for there to be works that can be depended on to serve a known purpose, the quality that makes the works autonomous must disappear and be replaced with other qualities. And there are thousands of other qualities. Just as there are now thousands of works displaying those qualities.

For 100 years, the programmes of critique have targeted the ‘problem of autonomous art’ in the name of those wider domains of creativity, whether called the proletarian revolution, the de-

mocratized public sphere, the post-colonial polis, the ‘other’, or the ‘multitude’. But as long as the dispute took place within the boundaries of the depictive arts, it was impossible to dispose of the principle of artistic quality. Subversions of technique and skill are permanent routines by now, and they are just as permanently bound by the criteria they challenge and with which they must all eventually come to terms. And the most irritating thing about these subversions is that the most significant of them are accomplished by artists who cannot but bring forward new versions of autonomous art, and therefore new instances of artistic quality. The canonical forms of the depictive arts are too strong for the critiques that have been brought to bear on them. As long as the attempts to subvert them are made from within, they cannot be disturbed. As soon as the artist in question makes the slightest concession to the criteria of quality, the criteria as such are reasserted in a new, possibly even radical way.

This was the dilemma faced 50 years ago by those who, for all their by now famous reasons, were determined to break what they saw as the vicious circle of autonomy, subversion, achievement, and reconciliation. They recognized that their aims could never be achieved within the *métiers* and the canon. Once again they attempted the complete reinvention of art. They cannot be said to have failed, since they discovered the potential of the second appearance of the movement arts, the movement arts recontextualized within contemporary art as if they were Readymades.

In this recontextualization, the aesthetic criteria of all the *métiers* and forms could be suspended—those of both the movement arts and the depictive arts. The criteria of the movement arts are suspended because those arts are present as second appearance; those of the depictive arts, because they could never be applied to the movement arts in any case.

So ‘performance art’ did not have to be ‘good theatre’; video or film projections did not have to be ‘good filmmaking’, and

could even be better if they were not, like Warhol's or Nauman's around 1967. There was, and is, something exhilarating about that. The proliferation of new forms is limitless since it is stimulated by the neutralization of criteria. The new event-forms might be the definitive confusion—or fusion—of the arts. An event is inherently a synthesis, a hybrid. So the term 'confusion of the arts' seems inadequate, even obsolete. Now art develops by leaving behind the established criteria. The previous avant-gardes challenged those criteria, but now they do not need to be challenged; they are simply suspended, set aside. This development may be welcomed, or lamented, or opposed, but it is happening, is going to continue to happen; it is the form of the New. This is what artistic innovation is going to continue to be, this is what artists want, or need, it to be.

This shows us that the canonical forms are no longer the site of innovation. Moreover, in comparison to the new forms, it now appears that they might never really have been, at least not to the extent claimed by the familiar histories of the avant-garde.

Burdened by their own notions of quality, the depictive arts have been able to question their own validity only in order to affirm it. To practice these arts is to affirm them or fail at them, even though that affirmation may be more dialectical than most negations. The emergence in the past 30 to 50 years, of a contemporary art that is not a depictive art has revealed the depictive arts as restricted to this negative dialectic of affirmation. This is the price paid for autonomy.

Contemporary art, then, has bifurcated into two distinct versions. One is based in principle on the suspension of aesthetic criteria, the other is absolutely subject to them. One is likewise utterly subject to the principle of the autonomy of art, the other is possible only in a condition of pseudo-heteronomy. We can't know yet whether there is to be an end to this interim condition, whether a new authentic heteronomous or post-autonomous art will actually emerge. Judging from the historical

record of the past century, it is not likely. It is more likely that artists will continue to respond to the demand to transcend autonomous art with more of their famous hedging actions, inventing even more sophisticated interim solutions. We are probably already in a mannerist phase of that. This suggests that 'interim mimetic heteronomy'—as awkward a phrase as I could manage to produce—has some way to go as the form of the New. It may be the form in which we discover what the sacrifice of aesthetic criteria is really like, not as speculation, but as experience, and as our specific—one could say peculiar—contribution to art.

Jeff Wall was born in 1946 in Vancouver, Canada, where he currently lives and works. He studied art history at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver (1964–70) and undertook postgraduate studies at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London (1970–3). Since the mid seventies, he has acquired international recognition with his transparent colour photographs mounted in lightboxes. In these works he deconstructs the pictorial traditions of Western painting, cinema and documentary photography, while acknowledging the heritage of conceptual art and other critical movements. Parallel to his studio practice, Jeff Wall has become known as the author of many influential essays on art, such as *Dan Graham's Kammerspiel* (1984), *'Marks of Indifference': Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art* (1995), and *Monochrome and Photojournalism in On Kawara's Today Paintings* (1996).



# Response

Vivian Rehberg

Summarizing and responding to Jeff Wall's formidable essay, *Depiction, Object, Event*, is a daunting task and I am honored to have been asked here today. My comments will be brief and I hope that my schematic rendering of his complex argument, and the questions it raises, will not do it a disservice, but will provide a foundation for our forthcoming discussion.

Wall's genealogy of modern, modernist and contemporary art provides an original framework for understanding the ways in which current experimental forms or practices relate to and diverge from issues that have been central to artists, critics, and historians since the onset of modernism in the mid-nineteenth century. His account identifies and traces one of the most striking paradoxes in the history of art: the modernist attempt to arrive at the 'essence' of a medium (which we now associate almost exclusively with art critic Clement Greenberg's quasi-militant advocacy of 'flatness' as the essence of painting), so drastically reduced its parameters that it led not to a more intense focus on medium-specificity (say, to painting that is only about the forms of painting) and greater artistic autonomy, as one might have expected, but to the development of new, inherently non-specific mediums, a collapse of distinctions between mediums, and, eventually, to the intermediality characteristic of so much artistic production today.

This move from specific to general instances of art, this effacement of differentiation he describes, entailed a disavowal

of all claims to artistic autonomy—the notion that artworks are detached from everything outside themselves—and a repudiation of the separation of art from the 'real lifeworld', issues that had been key to the avant-garde project since the early twentieth century. For Wall, the resulting discursiveness has been instrumental in forming our present condition (of 'interim mimetic heteronomy'), in which nothing can be denied status as art, and in which aesthetic criteria are no longer challenged but instead have been suspended.

From the outset, Wall's paper acknowledges its debt to an Anglo-American appraisal of Clement Greenberg's legacy, especially to Michael Fried's important 1967 critique of the irredeemable theatricality of Minimal Art, *Art and Objecthood*. However, he makes an important distinction: the term 'medium', while ubiquitous in most other accounts of that legacy, is so conspicuously absent from Wall's assessment that one can only think his omission deliberate. Rather than focusing on medium, Wall shifts the discussion to another level by foregrounding a dialectic of depiction and anti-depiction within the 'canonical forms' of painting, sculpture, the graphic arts, and photography. That he has managed to convincingly historicize critical debates around the so-called confusion of the arts from the 1940s to the present—while avoiding the term Rosalind Krauss recently grappled with as 'critical toxic waste' in her short study of 'art in the age of the post-medium condition'—is a major achievement.

Wall asserts, after Fried, that the final assault on the authority of the canonical forms did not result from innovation within those forms, but came from outside their frame—from theater, music, dance, and film, which were not organized in the same way around the dialectic of depiction and anti-depiction. Yet, he takes the argument a crucial step further by uncovering two 'moments of transition' in which a withdrawal from the depictive arts is staged. The first occurs in the early decades of the twentieth century with Duchamp's Readymade, which comes to stand for a wholesale questioning of art as

such. The second occurs later, when conceptual artists reduce art to texts that declare their status as art as such, while negating the work of art. According to the conceptual reduction, the work of art is nothing but a “proposition presented within the context of art as a comment on art”, as Joseph Kosuth held. Importantly, as Wall reminds us, the Readymade and the conceptual reduction not only force us to reconsider the formal components and qualities of artworks, they simultaneously undermine the pervasive and historically grounded notion that exceptional skill, artistic competence, and even process, figure as criteria for aesthetic evaluation. In this way, these moments of transition deeply impact our relationship to the canonical forms.

Wall’s discussion of the Readymade centers on its relationship to depiction. In a complex passage, which I hope we can return to in the discussion, Wall maintains that the Readymade did not and could not address itself to depiction. This is because a depiction, unlike a Readymade, cannot simply be identified with an object, but rather results from a process that has taken place upon the support provided by an object (film, a canvas, a block of stone, a medium?). Wall asserts that Readymades are not depictions, and depictions cannot be selected as Readymades. However, Duchamp’s signature, as R. Mutt, on his legendary white porcelain urinal (titled *Fountain*) from 1917, or his inscriptions on other mundane objects like a snow shovel, were for him non-negligible aspects of the identification and identity of the object as a Readymade. I wonder then, if the domain of the Readymade is the object, and if a depiction is an alteration on the surface of an object, how does one, must one, differentiate marks on the surface of Readymades from depictions? If these alterations on the surface of objects do count as depictions, does that strengthen or blunt the subversive charge of the Readymade?

I do not want to linger on this question now. In any event, the answer will not radically challenge the thrust of Wall’s important contention that the Readymade does not reduce

the field of art, but expands it. The point he makes is crucial: the negative logic of an ‘inability to deny status’ to any given object—either through the Readymade or through the advent of conceptual art—does not, contrary to popular wisdom, overthrow the canonical forms, it does not render them obsolete. The canonical forms are still part of an increasingly vast visual vocabulary, there are still people who explore those forms and call themselves artists, and a variety of institutions and thriving markets continue to support them and ensure their visibility. The Readymade, he says, is a revolution that seems to transform everything, but fundamentally changes nothing.

The Readymade and the conceptual reduction do, however, neutralize innovation, which was once at the core of an avant-garde project that held that artworks had the power to mediate relationships between subjects and the world. If anyone can be an artist and nothing can be denied status as art, then it makes sense, as Wall indicates, that some artists would pursue projects that would lead them into new realms of action and even, as the original avant-garde artists predicted, to leave the realm of art. Wall points to another paradox and I think it is important to quote him here: “The new kinds of works [in the wake of the conceptual reduction] come into their own mode of historical self-consciousness through the acceptance of the claim that there is a form of art which is not a work of art and which legislates the way a work of art is now to be made.” Wall is referring to any number of practices from the 1970s including video, performance, installation, and sound works. It was the art context described above that enabled these then non-canonical forms to distinguish themselves from what they would have been in a movie theater, on a stage, on the radio.

And at this point, Wall reveals another crucial moment of transition that is key for understanding where we find ourselves today: it is the moment when the other arts make a second appearance in the cultural field as ‘instances of (con-

temporary) art'. Wall does not read this second appearance in qualitative terms as pastiche or farce, but as a productive instance of crossbreeding that conferred artistic status on the movement arts and influenced the depictive arts. However, since after the Readymade and the conceptual reduction there can be no meaningful artistic innovation and no new art form produced from within the depictive arts, all new artistic developments would henceforth *have* to come from the outside.

It is for this reason that Andy Warhol's Pop art cannot be considered innovative on pictorial grounds. On the other hand, his canny imitation of a media conglomerate, his 'factory', opened the floodgates, encouraging artists to toe the line between art and non-art by establishing mimetic relationships with any number of institutions or structures without ever relinquishing the production of art. The fusion of the factory concept with post-conceptual mimesis, Wall claims, leads to a culture of the second appearance, a situation in which anything that elects to call itself art may be known as art, and which is constituted by what he, I think generously, refers to as a proliferation of 'new' forms.

Ultimately, this form of New non-depictive contemporary art is accompanied by what he calls the 'gentle dissolution of the institution of art'. Anything is possible within the domain of the second appearance—artists can imitate cooks, tour guides, teachers, but they still need some sort of institutional frame to display and legitimize their mimesis of extra-artistic experimentation. While there is no time to consider the question in depth here, Wall's text indicates that it would be worth tracing a genealogy of structures for display in order to explore how a similar mimetic drive has impacted their conventions. For as the museum has shifted from a repository for autonomous art to a multi-faceted, economy-driven corporation, exhibition organizers, like artists, have sought alternatives by adopting similarly mimetic relationships to structures like schools, archives, libraries, and nightclubs.

Early in his text, Wall states that prior to the confusion of the arts, which Clement Greenberg deplored, "[a] painter did not put on a play in a gallery and claim it was a 'painting', or a 'work of art'." These boundaries are no longer so clear and institutions (which are flexible enough to cope with the demands of depictive and non-depictive art alike), have duly embraced the mimetic principle, offering up the possibility that they are not institutions but some other form of intermediary structure.

Wall points out that this current exaggeration of postmodern interdisciplinarity and intermediality is characterized by a wholly contradictory relationship to aesthetic criteria—with the depictive arts still dependent on aesthetic criteria, and the new forms (events, hybrids) capable of suspending criteria altogether. In Wall's account, the aesthetic criteria associated with the movement arts or those specific to the depictive arts cannot apply to these new forms. As a result, recent debates over the crisis in art criticism could be interpreted as registering dissatisfaction with precisely this state of affairs. Since the nature of these new pseudo-heteronomous art forms, which are frequently promoted by curatorial projects that imitate those forms, suspends questions of artistic quality, a radical revision of the critical art discourse could follow. While there is undoubtedly a proliferation of new formats for writing on art, especially on the internet, the lack of entirely new aesthetic criteria for evaluating the new art forms seems to pose a special problem for the art critic, whose only recourse is to revert to old criteria or criteria which, according to Wall, do not apply to art. This, naturally, is criticized by proponents of the new forms as old-fashioned, irrelevant, or even reactionary. Needless to say, paralysis can result.

All of this would seem rather gloomy, but Wall concludes that the stalemate between autonomous art subject to aesthetic criteria and pseudo-heteronomous art dependent on their suspension is a temporary one. It may, at the very least,

acquire historical value by providing us with insight into what happens when a properly aesthetic sphere disappears. Some would say, in any case, that the present situation is simply an unavoidable side effect of the logic of globalized late capitalism, the image-saturation of the public sphere, the ubiquity of mass media, and the loss of artistic mediation, which has been replaced by more 'immediate' experiences. Wall is careful not to make judgments or predictions. However, one might read them as implicit in his own commitment to exploring problems of depiction within photography, and its stylistic or technical relationship to painting and cinema.

In the face of these givens, it is worth asking the following questions:

- 1 How can we critically and productively interact with this opposition between autonomous and pseudo-heteronomous art? Must one choose sides or is it possible to envisage a third way, perhaps from within those forms?
- 2 How might we construct meaningful relationships to both of these realms of visual culture, as artists, historians, viewers, critics... as subjects?

Vivian Rehberg is a Paris based art historian and critic who writes regularly for *Frieze* and *Artforum.com*, as well as a founding editor of the *Journal of Visual Culture*. She was curator of contemporary art at ARC/Musée d'Art moderne de la ville de Paris from 2001 to 2004. Her current research focuses on the misadventures of Realism after the Second World War. She is also preparing a special issue of the *Journal of Visual Culture* on exhibitions and curatorial practice.

## Discussion

Camiel van Winkel Several questions were raised by Vivian and the first thing we need to solve, I think, is the issue of Duchamp's signature. Jeff, do you consider Duchamp's signature a depiction on the surface of the Readymade, and if so, what does that do to your analysis?

Jeff Wall No, I'm sorry, I don't. Writing is not depiction. The term depiction is a very old term for a very well known practice. It means 'picturing things'. Writing is not picturing things. Writing is writing. So you can write on anything you like, but it does not become a depiction. Duchamp's signature on the Readymade is no different than a signature or an inscription on a painting. A signature is not a depiction of a name, it is writing.

Vivian Rehberg The notion that writing is not a depiction could be debated, for example, with regard to the relationship between depiction and description. For Duchamp, anyway, the relationship between writing and depiction is more complex, since the signature or writing functions as a crucial component of the Readymade; the act of writing on the surface designates the object a Readymade. You defined a depiction as an alteration of the surface of an object, that does not create another object. Isn't the Readymade, which bears a signature or inscription that alters the surface of the object, the same thing?

JW I'm sorry, but that doesn't hold up. Description and depiction are different things. The history of the Readymade bears this out.

CvW A more general point that was raised concerned the lack of criteria for aesthetic judgment in the current situation. Without proper criteria, is it still possible to maintain a critical attitude towards the diversity of artistic practices that confront us today?

JW It may be possible to develop criteria of judgement for the new pseudo-heteronomous forms. I am not here to project what they might be. I have just tried to suggest that the starting point for considering them is the suspension of the criteria that have existed inside the depictive arts. For example, what is called performance comes with the unspoken claim that it is not-theatre. What is implied is: “do not judge this by the criteria one would bring to theatrical art”. Theatre makes a sort of phantom appearance, in or as contemporary art. The aesthetic criteria proper to theatre are suspended, but at the same time the criteria proper to the depictive arts are similarly suspended. This double suspension is the starting point.

CvW Vivian, do you see any new sets of criteria arising?

VR That’s a problem I am confronted with a lot as an art historian and critic. No, I do not know yet what new criteria there might be. I do think however that the situation is slightly more complex than it has been described, as many of these new hybrid forms are exhibitions rather than simply art works. These exhibitions involve depiction and movement all at once, so whatever the criteria would be, they would also have to be hybrids in order to come to terms with that complexity. Take a project like *Utopia Station* at the Venice Biennial of 2003: it existed in a temporal frame and in a spatial frame, it involved performance and film, but also photography and painting, it involved all sorts of depictions and even texts. So whatever the critic wanted to do with those forms individually, the only access one had to them was through the vector of the exhibition, through the representation that the exhibition made of those forms. So we end up writing exhibition criticism rather than art criticism.

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JW It may be depressing to think that the depictive arts are circumscribed the way I have described them. I do not find it depress-

ing, but I can imagine it could be taken that way by someone wanting to innovate the arts in ways that seem to be precluded now. It may be frustrating that what we call Western art turns out to be so limited, that it does not have the capacity to inform life across the horizon of our experience, to replace the mundanity of the world with something more beautiful and satisfying. Art can only do that by suggestion—through representation. Pseudo-heteronomy as I call it is partly an expression of that frustration. It is an expression of discontent, it is the hope that one could somehow by artistic means escape the circle of the arts. It may be the necessary form in which traditional or canonical forms can survive and even reflect upon themselves, as a phantom form of aesthetic education. Pseudo-heteronomy may be simply the way in which we cope with the disappointment about what the arts are, especially after centuries of extremely elevated, even utopian expectations raised by the avant-garde.

CvW So that explains your use of the word ‘interim’: the situation we’re in is not an endpoint; at some point it may change and evolve into something else.

JW I tried to suggest slightly seriously—not totally seriously—how art might vanish or at least transform itself, unnoticed, by simply—gently—forgetting some of its boundaries. I seriously doubt that would happen, as I said. That interim is a period of uncertainty in which predictions are difficult to make. The historical length of that period is unknown.

CvW So what about the notion of innovation? You describe pseudo-heteronomy as the definitive ‘form of the New’. Does that mean that innovation has remained a valid criterion?

JW Yes, innovation is always going to be valid because there will always be new people coming along who will interpret things differently. It is a spontaneous response of new people to any cultural and artistic situation. Whether the depictive arts are capable of the kind of innovation that was projected upon them by the avant-garde is another matter. In hindsight we might recognize the limitations of the depictive arts on that score. Any real innovation in

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the relationship between art and culture may very well come from other practices. The depictive arts may simply concentrate on their own problem of quality and become less concerned with 'culture'. Of course, that leaves open the possibility that instances of high quality in the depictive arts themselves feel 'new'.

CvW In your lecture you mentioned the importance of aesthetic education, even for artists venturing outside the artistic domain. Neo-avant-garde artists were trained as artists in the canonical forms, which later allowed them to develop more interactive and evasive forms of activity outside the formal realm of art. If that still applies today, what are the implications for art education? What position should art schools take regarding the issues of de-skilling and re-skilling?

JW The figures we now identify as the innovators of the past forty or fifty years—Joseph Beuys, or Robert Smithson, for example—made their break with the canonical forms after having been educated in them. The intensity of their innovations and the striking quality of their work, with its emotional resonance, result from their struggle with the dialectic of affirmation that I talked about. You need to be a certain kind of person to succeed in breaking out of that circle; you have to have dredged up a lot of feelings, attitudes, learning, and skill, and that will somehow show in the art. As the innovations they created became canonical and normative, and formed the basis for art education, the nature of the struggle obviously changed. There no longer exists a tension with the canonical forms of the depictive arts, as these have fundamentally evaporated from the educational horizon. The real focus in an intense conflict can only be the validity of criteria. You need to have a settled sense of criteria for a rebellion to occur. So it may not be possible for young artists to come into conflict on that same level of intensity. I am not saying it is impossible, because new situations emerge and people will always find ways to make trouble for themselves regardless of the situation they're in. But I suggest that the suspension of criteria creates a kind of cool, open field for everybody in which you can do your own thing and move in your own direction and have an increased sense of artistic freedom—which is very good, but which

may also involve a weakening or disintegration of the conflict that for centuries has formed artists in the West.

CvW Are you saying that what is happening at art schools today is no longer relevant?

JW I do not really know what is happening at art schools in any great detail. I am just forcing myself to generalise here, saying that if a conflict over valid criteria is foreclosed or suspended, the educational process changes. The so-called authority figure will no longer be able to impose criteria, not even experimentally.

CvW And then the only remaining option would be to explain students how there used to be an authority-figure, a father-figure to rebel against...?

JW In a 'once upon a time' version...

VR I just want to make the point that, at least in France, even if art schools are still divided into departments of painting, sculpture, installation art, multimedia etcetera, the aesthetic criteria of those canonical forms are being debated and contested on a daily basis. People who teach art students know the extent to which the nomadic impulse structures their aesthetic attempts.

CvW Vivian, the last question you phrased in your talk was how we might be able to construct meaningful relationships with the 'split' scene of artistic production, as viewers and as subjects.

VR My question concerned the possible response to that hopeful condition set out by the suspension of criteria that Jeff described. Up till now, we haven't really addressed the position of the audience, the spectator or the participant in relation to this bifurcation of contemporary art.

JW The experience for the spectator is still new. It is being formulated and taking place today, because the phenomena we are talking about are pretty recent, and 'the shock of the new' is probably still

a factor. That is, we do not necessarily know yet how we feel about having aesthetic experiences that apparently cannot be formulated in the way the depictive arts traditionally demanded. We have experiences that resemble aesthetic experiences yet that cannot be judged aesthetically by the means we know and have developed as a culture. People are having this experience and are attempting to articulate a language for it that is slowly and rather tortuously coming into being.

I want to make it clear that in presenting this lecture I was not trying to draw a distinction of significance between the depictive arts and the others, even if I am clearly a depictive artist myself. I may have my criticism of this or that, but that is not the point. I do not want to create a polarity between the depictive arts and the zone of traditional certainty on the one hand and the new forms as a zone of innovative uncertainty on the other, and take sides. It would be unproductive and uninteresting to take sides. A suspension of judgement on this point is probably more productive. If on the one hand we are obliged to work in terms of autonomy and aesthetic criteria and on the other we have to respond to pseudo-heteronomous examples or 'instances' of art, we will have to find some way of doing both. This is partly stimulated by something Camiel said in his book *The Regime of Visibility*: that in the post-conceptual situation we're in today, it is necessary to turn one's criteria around—and to continue turning them around. There is a relationship between those things. The bifurcation creates a zone that cannot be settled upon. At least not yet.

# Colophon

## Colofon

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