## "How's My Painting?" (Judge Me, Please, Don't Judge Me)

Manuela Ammer

A head surfaces in the primordial stew of sickly green, shitty brown, excessively sunny yellow, and bloodred paint: the crude brushstrokes can barely shore up the profile of the man within the brew of color. His bull neck, polyplike eye, square chin, and fleshy lips lend him the look of a figure from Pablo Picasso's classical period caught in the abstract matter of a Joan Mitchell painting. The man is shedding a thick brown tear; his nose and ears are also dispensing paint, which is not so much flowing from as oozing out of his facial orifices. Framing his head at top and bottom are two bumper stickers, signal red and yellow, which in simple, hackneyed language peculiar to such stickers repeat the question "How's My Painting?" "Great!" we are about to reply in similarly formulaic style (naturally not without the exclamation). But then uncertainty sets in.

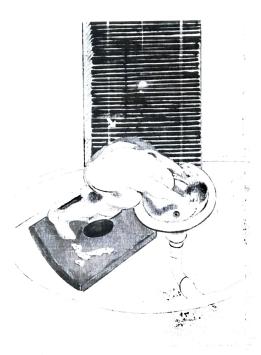
Who is asking this question? Is it Nicole Eisenman, whose painting *Bloody Orifices* (2005) was just described? If so, does the question refer to this particular work or to the artist's work in general? What if it were the weeping man asking the question, the man who is so symbiotically linked to the painterly that it is unclear whether his head is emerging from the colored matter or leaking color itself? And is the question directed at the viewer? Do Eisenman and her painted head really want to hear our opinion on the quality of the painting? Is it not rather the case that the artist is worried about the state of her painting, which, judging by the big tear and runny nose, is not in the best of health and certainly not about to reply, "Great, thanks for asking!"

Alongside the question set *into* the painting (which is the kind of casually phrased inquiry that often initiates small talk), *Bloody Orifices* asks a number of complex questions *as* a painting—questions that, taken seriously, are not easy to answer. What we see is a representation, a rendering of a human face that the artist, applying great skill with minimal means, has modeled out of the abstract matter of paint. At the same time, the painted face behaves like a body by imitating bodily functions: It "weeps," "secretes," and "bleeds" the very same painterly substance out of which it is made; it is virtually dissolving. So are we

dealing here with a painting of a man weeping or with a weeping painting?

Into the play of modes—of abstraction and figuration, of painterly indicators of the "expressive," both representational (the tear) and abstract (the gestural brushstroke)-enters the claim of a painterly body, an arbiter that feels in both senses of the word. The weeping, secreting, and bleeding signify physical pain but can also be read as existential fear of negative reactions to appearance-of the body depicted or of the painting? The question "How's my painting?" conflates two demands: it asks us to determine quality and an emotional state. The tear and the question mark, indicators of loss and doubt, respectively, are integral to the painting's plea. They posit a counterpart of sentient, discriminating bodies and implicate these in the success (or failure) of the painted—painterly—body. Tear and question mark point to an individual who finds himself/ herself a mystery and who seeks assurance in the outside world, a subject whose formation is permanently suspended, just as the weeping face continually dissolves into the pigment that constitutes it.

Gilles Deleuze's book Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation (1981) represents one of the few philosophical attempts to define contemporary painting through its corporeality.<sup>2</sup> Put simply, what Deleuze finds in the paintings of Francis Bacon is a "body without organs"—a painterly body that, liberated from representation, "acts immediately upon the nervous system" and hence on the material reality of the viewer's own body.3 Notwithstanding the fact that Bacon, at least nominally, counts as a figurative painter, Deleuze deems it vital that his painting be set apart from figuration: "Painting has neither a model to represent nor a story to narrate. It thus has two possible ways of escaping the figurative: toward pure form, through abstraction; or toward the purely figural, through extraction or isolation. If the painter keeps to the Figure, if he or she opts for the second path, it will be to oppose the 'figural' to the figurative."4 Deleuze detects the figural in Bacon's isolated figures, whose bodies seem to



Francis Bacon, Figure at a Washbasin, 1976.
Oil on canvas, 78 x 58 inches (198 x 147.5 cm).
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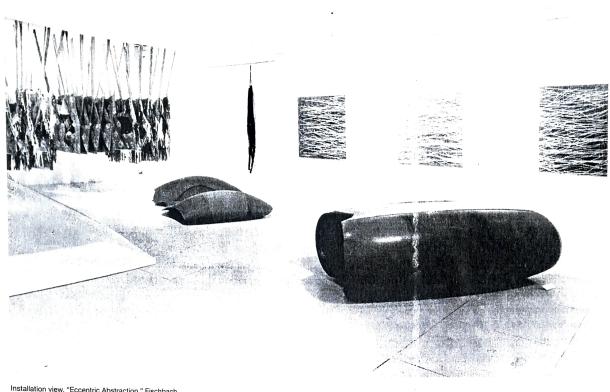
be engaged in athletic efforts "to escape" themselves—through organs, prostheses, and outlines into shadows, mirrors, and screams, attempting to "dissipate into the material structure" of the painting.<sup>5</sup>

Underlying Deleuze's text-and making it symptomatic of the critical reception of painting since the onset of modernism—is the problem of representation, which here is primarily designated as the figurative, although the terms narrative, illustrative, imaginative, felt, clichéd, and sensational are also used. Everything standing in the way of the immediacy of pure affect (the "presences beneath representation, beyond representation")6 must be banished. Deleuze diagnoses one of the problems peculiar to contemporary painting as the multiplication of images of all kinds both around us and in our heads: "We are besieged by photographs that are illustrations, by newspapers that are narrations, by cinema images, by television images. There are psychic clichés just as there are physical clichés-readymade perceptions, memories, phantasms. There is a very important experience here for the painter: a whole category of things that could be termed 'clichés' already fills the canvas before the beginning. It is dramatic." Because the canvas is occupied even before the painter has applied so much as a single brushstroke, any belief in the figurative, in working with the cliché, is doomed to failure. The cliché can be fought only "with much guile, perseverance, and prudence."7

"Bacon's Path," as Deleuze calls one chapter of his book, is "neither optical like abstract painting, nor manual like action painting." His guile lies in the way he fights through all the clichés of the figurative in order to find a true, immediate, and improbable "second figuration," obtained as an "effect of the pictorial act."8 Deleuze describes the pictorial act as the intrusion of one world (random manual mark making) into another (clichéd figuration, virtual or actual); the former confuses the latter, purges it of the narrative and visual mud and establishes a new order of clear sensation. The intricacy of Deleuze's delineation of Bacon's "pictorial act"—his inquiry takes him from "hysteria" to the "diagram" to Egyptian art—is indicative not only of the dubious status of postmodern figuration but also of the particular historical forces at play in the early 1980s. At a time when art theorists were beginning to take an interest in theories of the simulacrum and simulation, Deleuze sought to defend the truth of painting on the grounds of its immediate, and hence unmanipulable, corporeality.9 As Todd Cronan has argued, this places Deleuze in a tradition dating back to the birth of modernism that has been crucial to postmodernist discourse: the overcoming of painting's representational/ figurative legacy through a focus on the affective impact of line and color.10

Can "Deleuze's Path" help us understand how a painting like Eisenman's Bloody Orifices works—a painting whose "figure" likewise seems animated by invisible forces, by a desire to merge with the material structure of the painting?11 No one would deny that Eisenman's painting has affect: the sickly, dirty, and all too garish colors and the streaky, lumpy paint have, in combination, an abject quality that can be physically felt. But can this affective dimension be divorced from the quotational manner of its visualization? And what are we to do with the stickers, which as physical and psychological imprints cohabit the canvas, opening the autonomy of the composition-figure-painter to what is outside and explicitly called on to pass judgment on the success of the pictorial act and/or the state of the painterly body? Is one doing justice to Bacon's oeuvre if one views the figurative as merely seconding the figural? Is it not rather the case that it is the clichéd figurative that enables the *narrative* of the body trying to escape itself?

Eisenman's stickers do not undermine the corporeal immediacy of the painting; rather, they programmatically question the meaningfulness of a (painterly) body conceived in the abstract and situated beyond the realm of cliché. "How's my painting?" is an appeal to painting and to painting's viewers to take a stand and confront the question of which body is being talked about when one talks of "the body." Not that that body must be fixated or standardized (the question is not "What's my painting?"); what is meant instead is that only when affect has been translated into a deniable assertion or attitude can there be talk of a body in the political sense. Cronan explains what



Installation view, "Eccentric Abstraction," Fischbach Gallery, New York, September 1966. Photo by Rudy Burckhardt. Fischbach Gallery records, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

this means for the viewer: "The question at stake is not whether the beholder's experience before the work counts, but *how* it counts." What this means for painting is that it is precisely in the figurative that so complicates affect—according to Deleuze—that the body must be sought: a body that has been manipulated all along, a body that is necessarily implicated in images, clichés, fantasies, technologies, feelings, and narratives, a body that knows no immediacy. This body can also come into the picture as "abstract." But what it has been unable to do since the 1960s is to *be* abstract in the ideological sense.

Why is this remarkable? Surely painting's representational tendencies have always been closely tied to the social and political issues of the day? To what extent did the situation change in the second half of the twentieth century? According to the truisms of art history, the ideological project of the "West," which took on new shape and meaning during the Cold War and whose shared "values" (alongside freedom of consumption and the flow of information) comprised the rapid technologization, mediatization, and spectacularization of society, went hand in hand with art's withdrawal from mass culture. Art's answer to ever-greater commercialization and popularization, so the standard narrative goes, was to insist on the aesthetic autonomy of the work and to focus exclusively on properties genuinely specific to each discipline.13 For painting, this meant acknowledging the essential,

unavoidable flatness of the medium—the distribution of colors and lines on a two-dimensional support—and purging it of all illusionist, narrative effects. The modernist painting was to be a place for optical experience only; its viewers' sensory perception was to be just as abstract and specialized as the discipline of painting itself.

As reductive and polemical as this account may be, the position it describes nevertheless shaped the critical reception of painting after 1960. The modernist narrative did not envisage the option of a body picture and pictorial body, respectively, located inside a society dominated by clichés. This is all the more astonishing given that painting can historically be characterized as a picture-body praxis that developed in direct dialogue with competing technologies and image productions. In other words, it is just as plausible to claim corporeality as one of painting's core capabilities as it is to claim flatness. Yet in the canonical account, the body comes into play again only in connection with discussions of Minimal art, where it remains an "abstraction." (Aesthetic) judgment, meanwhile, escaped into idiosyncratic formulations, such as Clement Greenberg's "openness" or Michael Fried's "conviction," where it continued to run a strict, if profoundly depoliticized, regime.14 There is another narrative, however, a narrative in which painting actively seeks cliché not to outwit it but to mobilize the prejudices and valuations that cleave to it on behalf of a contemporary concept of the body.

In 1966, critic Lucy Lippard curated a show titled "Eccentric Abstraction" at the Fischbach Gallery in New York. Her aim was to capture a specific variant of the Post-Minimalist sculpture of those years. 15 Taking the works of artists including Alice Adams, Louise Bourgeois, and Eva Hesse as examples, Lippard argued for a language of form intended to trigger what she called visceral identification in the viewer: the experience of a body ego (especially present in the sensations of appeal or repulsion), which—unlike in Surrealism—has nothing to do with the powers of the unconscious or the psychological question of "why" but, on the contrary, confines itself to "sensuous facts," which these days we would refer to as affect. 16 While Lippard explicitly references painting, even naming it the closest ally of this new sculptural praxis, she is careful to qualify what she has to say. She refers to abstract painting only and the problem posed by its exclusive focus on formal issues, which she sees as overcome by "eccentric abstraction." <sup>17</sup> For Lippard, it is crucial to emphasize that the sensuousness of this sculptural praxis rests on the absence of "emotional interference" and "literary pictorial associations."18 Unlike the Surrealists, who wanted viewers to become figuratively—to use Lippard's term—immersed in their works, the artists grouped under the heading "eccentric abstraction" wanted their forms to be felt or sensed and not read or interpreted. 19

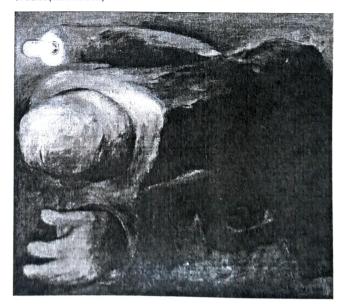
Lippard closes her essay with an unambiguous statement: "There has been much talk about a 'new eroticism' supposedly languishing in the studios because it is too strong for public consumption, but I doubt that more pictures of legs, thighs, genitalia, breasts and new positions, no matter how 'modernistically' portrayed, will be as valid to modern experience as this kind of sensuous abstraction. Abstraction is a far more potent vehicle of the unfamiliar than figuration, and erotic sensation thrives on the unfamiliar."20 Lippard's exhibition, which is rightly considered a pioneering project that restored affect (but not feeling!) to "cool" Minimal art, nevertheless operated with a whole range of exclusions.21 That an exhibition that set out to appeal to the body ego in 1966 could have managed without a single painting (notwithstanding Eva Hesse's formal borrowings from panel painting in her sculptural work Metronomic Irregularity II [1966]) is symptomatic; also symptomatic are that it was abstract painting that was at least referenced as a stimulus and that the figurative was cast as an anachronistic, outdated mode, liable to evoke no longer tenable responses such as feeling (in the sense of an emotion), reading, or interpretation.

It is precisely because Lippard was at pains to position herself in cautious opposition to a paradigm of formalist abstraction that we can see now just how much this same paradigm had come to define critical discourse by the mid-1960s and just how narrow the understanding of painting had become. This explains the rhetorical maneuver of legitimizing an exhibition consisting entirely of sculpture

through painting, of rooting the idea of eccentric abstraction in the tradition of painting and at the same time declaring painting in its figurative variant (all those breasts and thighs languishing in studios) incapable of generating a legitimately sensuous, bodily experience. The contradiction inherent in this argument exposes the blind alley into which formalist critique had managed to maneuver itself—and painting with it. The flag of abstraction under which painting—allegedly autonomous, flat, and free of external references—had sailed into the 1960s turned out to be a straitjacket that had to be laced up tightly and artfully if it was to support a body (concept) in a world of multiplying images, clichés, and technologies.

A tampon gun rams into a wide-open bodily orifice, presumably a mouth if the ear positioned next to it is to be believed. The head itself no more than an orangebeige-pinkish ball, resting on a crooked arm, projecting horizontally into the frame. The little finger of the upward-pointing hand hovers in front of said ear as a bright-green, phosphorescent penis, ready for penetration (No title, c. 1962; p. 134). A black-gloved hand, cut off sharply at the bottom, is moving toward a rectangular slit between splayed legs. The hand—possibly that of the viewer—is holding a silver coin with the word liberty embossed on it: L'Origine du monde (The Origin of the World) as slot machine and the scene of a prosaic business deal (No title, 1962; p. 132). Also, breasts, penises, and fists, as well as burning matches and glowing lightbulbs shoot out of gun barrels; on grimacing faces in close-up, eyebrows are plucked, nasal hair is trimmed, and inflamed zits are pinched. Lee Lozano's painterly bodies of the early

Lee Lozano, No title, c. 1962. Oil on canvas, 48 x 51 inches (122 x 129.5 cm)





Lee Lozano, No title, c. 1961. Charcoal and crayon on paper, 18 x 12 inches (45.8 x 30.5 cm). The Estate of Lee Lozano. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth

1960s are submitted to cosmetic procedures or involved in utterly unsentimental, at times masturbatory, cycles of excretion and absorption. The bodies are electrified (the lightbulbs) and loaded (the guns); their orifices are the scenes of all kinds of transactions, and their members prove versatile tools for drilling, ramming, and sliding. Sexuality is energy is exchange value is capital.

In painterly terms, these pictures are exquisite in much the same way as those of the old masters. Lozano's breasts and thighs, in wonderfully creamy flesh tones, seduce; mouths, zits, and glans glow in enticing shades of red; metallic surfaces of tweezers and guns are modeled in skillful chiaroscuro. Parallel to her oil paintings, Lozano produced drawings, in which naughty puns comment on the libidinous goings-on: "Eat cunt for mental health," one reads (No title, c. 1961), for example, or "I got fucked in the (g)ass by ConEdison" (No title, 1962). Lozano's bodies are libidinous in a polymorphously perverse way. The painterly surfaces pulsate, the libido operates orifices and members without regard for their customary function, and, even at the descriptive level, meanings slide-from "gas" to "ass" and from "Canal Street" to "Anal Street" (No title, undated).22 Lozano's bodies are excessively sexualized and inextricably implicated in economic, technological, and linguistic processes; at the same time, they are neither gendered nor defined

with any degree of stability. They are literally and metaphorically slippery and hence liable to hijack and compromise the cycles in which they circulate, eluding any attempt at external control or fixation.<sup>23</sup>

William N. Copley's work from the same period pictures sexuality in a completely different way. His bodies, surfaces, and transactions are formulaic and overdetermined:24 women are long-haired sirens, for the most part faceless but with ample bosoms and behinds, and are posed lasciviously, like pinups, in corsets, garters, and lace or-most often-nude. The men are likewise faceless but wear tweed and bowler hats and carry umbrellas; they ogle (which, Copley proves, can be done without eyes) and grope their objects of desire as if helpless against the allures of the "fairer sex." Intimate tête-à-têtes are usually situated in opulent interiors, whose ornate surfaces and gold-framed paintings are erotic players in their own right. "I'll show you my Matisse if you'll take off your Braque," Copley aptly puts it.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, the lusty pairings tend to end badly, with gendarmes or priests—representing the law and public morals, respectively—catching the lovers in flagrante and punishing them accordingly. The injunction to "think," which repeatedly crops up as a picture within a picture and reminds us that the bodies must be brought to reason, continues to fail.

Despite their acute differences, Copley's and Lozano's painterly takes on the body constitute two sides of the same coin. While Lozano fuses body and cliché—the external determinants of all surfaces and substances—to such an extent that what emerges is an unbridled hybrid, which produces without being productive, Copley takes every conceivable stereotype to an extreme. Copley's portrayals of femininity and masculinity are templates,

William N. Copley, *Think*, 1964. Oil on canvas, 25% x 32 inches (65.1 x 81 cm). The Museum of Modern Art. New York. Gift of Miss Jeanne Reynal



just as one-dimensional as the brightly colored wallpapers lining his interiors. Operating inside, behind, and between all these overdetermined bodies and surfaces, however—which fall into one when the artist, for example, dresses a pair of shapely female legs in real gold lace (*PANTI-LEGS ARE VERY GO FROM WAIST-TO-TOE*, 1962)—is the engine that drives all things human, namely our animal urges. And neither reason nor morality nor the long arm of the law can do anything to stop it. "We must eat our venison carefully not to spot silk neckties while the jungle cat can happily bathe his fine fur in blood."

Copley's and Lozano's works of the early 1960s may be taken as representative of the many "pictures of legs, thighs, genitalia, breasts and new positions" that Lippard imagined to be languishing in studios at the time of her rejection of figuration's experiential potential.<sup>27</sup> What their works represent above all else, however, is what-in both reference to and departure from Lippard-might be called eccentric figuration, meaning painting that deliberately mobilizes the clichés surrounding us to make productive their close relationship with affect and judgment for a contemporary concept of the body. Lippard's exhibition recognized a shift in notions of corporeality, but exactly how these notions were changing is most apparent in the works of Copley and Lozano. They reflect as much the ubiquity of advertising and cartoon as evolving notions of sexuality and gender and the growing influence of technology (revealed, for example, in Marshall McLuhan's 1962 best seller, The Gutenberg Galaxy, which discusses the prosthetic character of human technologies, among other things)—to cite just a few hot topics associated with the era.

The figurative in Copley and Lozano—that is, the illustrative, clichéd, sensational aspects of their worksdoes not inhibit the immediacy of affect; it functions, rather, as a form of mimicry that makes the body visible and negotiable within the economic, social, and linguistic systems on which it is predicated—and, in turn, endows the viewer with agency. The modes of displacement and stereotyping that characterize their paintings drive little wedges into the body of rules that allow corporeality, as a kind of unmanageable surplus, to flare up momentarily. Humor and wit have central roles to play here. They appeal to an imaginary other who is implicated in the production of meaning. To laugh in response to a joke means to translate an affect into a verdict. It signals participation in a community.28 Thus eccentric figuration does not, in the first place, mean eccentricity of subject matter (although eccentric subject matter is often present); instead, eccentric figuration operates as rhetorical figure, which, by pushing the narrativization of affect, creates corporeality in the political sense.29 The eccentric in eccentric figuration marks a historical break: since 1960, figuration has proved to be a form of opposition to the abstraction of the body, even when this means decentering, displacing, or even abstracting the body at the representational level. 10

One positive point of critical reference is the exhibition "The Other Tradition," curated by the critic Gene Swenson at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, which opened in January 1966. (Lippard, whose "Eccentric Abstraction" opened in September of the same year, wrote a review of the show.)31 While "Eccentric Abstraction" can be characterized as an attempt to find a niche for a more inclusive conception of the body within an increasingly narrow and constricting modernist paradigm (in accordance with the differentiation of the disciplines in the realm of sculpture), Swenson's project was intended to be a radical opening up. Openly opposing the formalism of those years, "The Other Tradition" explicitly claimed to be writing a different history, or writing history differently-and consequently has remained a footnote in standard twentieth-century art histories.32 In the eclectic forty-page pamphlet that accompanied-and extended the scope of-the exhibition, Swenson argued that "habits of abstraction" had come to define the reception not just of postwar painting but also of modernism as a whole.33 He therefore called for a different tradition to be recognized, a tradition that opposed the habit of experiencing and feeling "abstractly" and that promised to "reactivate our sense of the world around us."34 "Are we more informed," he asked, "if we compare the woman leaning out the window in Picasso's Guernica with the woman leaning over the wall in Raphael's Burning of the Borgo, or if we see the painting Guernica after seeing films of the Luftwaffe bombing of that ancient Spanish shrine?"35

Swenson also had an agenda: one of the first critics to deem Pop art worthy of serious discussion, he aimed to legitimize the movement by means of "The Other Tradition."36 The path he chose to do so is also of interest with regard to the question of the body in painting. To describe the specific quality of Pop art that cannot be grasped by formalist criteria, Swenson undertook a wholesale revision of modern art, in which, instead of examining formal questions, he inquired into subject matter and how paintings work ("how we know"). Not only had Cubism been misunderstood as the point of departure for a progressive flattening of painting, but other movements had deliberately been disregarded. Dada's "mechanical man," who processes impressions like a machine, for example, and the Surrealists' "concretization of the dream" and the unconscious had anticipated what Pop art was capable of, namely a confrontation with feelings that are no longer conceived as private but as public and communal—as already incorporated by the objects of mass culture.37 In the same vein, Swenson pleaded cautiously—homosexuality was still criminalized in 1966—for a new, "post-Freudian" understanding of sexuality, which he saw as rooted in the other tradition. Artists like Paul Thek, Joe Raffaele (later known as Joseph Raffael), and Mike Todd, he argued, aimed not at sublimation but at an objectification of the "thousands of varieties of sex and an equal number of ways of using



Maria Lassnig, *Selbstbildnis mit Telefon (Self-Portrait with Telephone*), 1973. Oil on canvas, 28% x 35% inches (72.5 x 90 cm). Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz

it."38 The confrontation with Thek's fetishistic objects, for example, had consequences for the viewer: "Is one conscious of style when one is 'hot and bothered'?"39

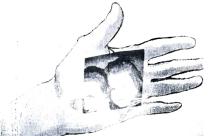
Like Lippard, Swenson considered the psychological interpretation to which modernist painting, in particular, had been subjected problematic; his answer, however, was not to negate the existence of emotions or to seek the erotic in the abstract. Rather, he turned emphatically to our visual "common property"-to the collective feeling that, having been reified as an object or image, has become cliché. He saw the potential of the artistic works he championed not in their formal innovativeness but in their functionality; they defined a new relationship between art and viewer that had implications both political and social: "The paintings of the other tradition . . . might be said to objectify experience, to turn feelings into things so that we can deal with them."40 According to Swenson, the images and technologies that mass culture provides are not threats but tools. The new subject will not retreat into the why but will engage with the how; it will use those images and technologies to learn about both its individual workings and the workings of society in general. The question of how instills agency.

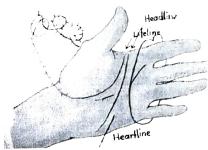
Though Ann Wilson was the only female artist to be included in "The Other Tradition," Swenson's reflections

prove especially useful to understanding late-1960s and 1970s feminist painting, in which one of the central concerns was the politicization of the body. "Ah, the artists, captives of their styles," wrote Maria Lassnig, "spurn style, change it every week, change your names every week, change your hair-color, your wig every day, change your vocabulary, your preconceived opinions about your neighbor and about politics, change them every day, change your way of life every week, change your jobs, and beat the changes our time has in store for us."41 Lassnig's paintings, especially her self-portraits, have sufficiently been psychologized in terms of loneliness, self-doubt, and inner struggle-all the stereotypical ingredients of the vita of a female artist who won international recognition woefully late in life. Far more worthwhile than any biographical reading, however, is approaching Lassnig's work as the long-term exploration of a "self" who used her own body as material to systematically and with utmost precision—in painting after painting after painting-inquire into the how. The radical subjectivity of Lassnig's work claims programmatic objectivity.

Cut to a bird's-eye view of a light-greenish, irregularly rippled surface—sand, perhaps, or sheets (canvas?). Close to the left edge there is a hand with a wristwatch resting on the ground. Attached to the hand is an arm and then







Maria Lassnig, stills from *Palmistry*, 1973. 16 mm film, color, sound, 10 min.

a body figuration, rendered according to principles other than those of mimesis. Dominating the composition in the middle is a peony-purple area, delimited at left by an auricular protuberance. Nestling against this bare "square skull" from above is a disproportionately small, off-center appendage, whose nose and mouth are turned to face the viewer. No eyes. Pfingstselbstporträt (Whitsuntide Self-Portrait, p. 135) of 1969 is a typical "body-awareness painting"—to use Lassnig's own term—of the late 1960s. At first glance confusing, the arrangement of colored lines and shapes is in fact a composite body assembled out of seen and felt parts: the hand, which the eye sees as a figure; the head, whose invisible corporeality is transformed into a painterly "thing" through concentrated analysis.42 A painting like Pfingstselbstporträt demonstrates that for Lassnig, abstraction and figuration were not stylistic or normative opposites, but rather two modes of picturing corporeality. Unlike Philip Guston, for example, who radically shifted direction in the late 1960s, Lassnig painted in both modes (at the same time) over the course of her career. 43

The outside world is emphatically present in the paintings of Lassnig's New York period (1968-80),44 when she supported women's lib, attended performances, bought her first-ever TV (cartoons!), and produced experimental films:45 Selbstporträt unter Plastik (Self-Portrait under Plastic) of 1972 resulted from the artist's encounter with fruit packed in cellophane; Selbstbildnis mit Telefon (Self-Portrait with Telephone, 1973) shows her with a telephone cable wound round her neck; Doppelselbstporträt mit Kamera (Double Self-Portrait with Camera, 1974) shows the artist brooding—her eyeless head a concertina-like object—in front of a naturalistic self-portrait with a movie camera pointing out of the picture. Parallel to this, Lassnig produced animated films, such as Self-Portrait of 1971, in which her own face is exposed to a range of external interventions (we see it being caressed, halved, and stamped, transforming into a movie camera, and taking on the facial features of Greta Garbo, etc.) only to continually regenerate itself in the manner of a cartoon hero; Couples of 1972

(p. 139), which is about communication and copulation problems between the sexes; and *Palmistry* of 1973, in which a clairvoyant's attempt to draw conclusions about personality from a body part—the palm of the hand—fails dismally. "Resemblance is not identity," wrote Lassnig in a diary entry. 46 If you apply the "scalpel to a willing object, one's self," it disintegrates into disparate sensations, which painting—as the speculative register of the interdependence of individual and society—can narrativize. 47 "Between the ears, there is room for the universe or for the battlefield of expunged attempts." 48

Lassnig's painterly objectifications of individual bodily sensations finds what, at first glance, might seem an unlikely counterpart in Ree Morton's work of the mid-1970s. In 1974, after a period of mapping personal experience in comparatively idiosyncratic works, Morton decidedly turned to forms of cliché, the occasion being a "women's exhibition" for which she staged a "bake sale,"49 using the theater-prop material Celastic, a kind of malleable canvas.50 This was followed by painted and decorated Celastic "word pictures," in which sentimental platitudes ("The plant that heals may also poison") were combined with ribbons, banderoles, draperies, and flashing lightbulbs to create emblematic assemblages, and somewhat later by Regional Pieces (1975-76), oil diptychs combining dramatic sunsets and stereotyped underwater views of fish in CinemaScope format framed by Celastic drapes. Morton indicates her fascination with cliché in an entry in her notebook: "It is impossible not to be dealing with cliché when drawing flowers. How to do it and let that show? / Diagrams—by stating the collective image, you incorporate the individual. / Cliché includes memory."51 Cursory remarks like these accompanied systematic research into the history of sign systems and their emotive impact. Thus the artist's notebooks are full of remarks on romanticism and symbolism, emblems and heraldry, and color and gestalt theory.

This engagement culminated in the expansive installation *Signs of Love* (1976, pp. 102–3), which also marked

the climax of the artist's work with Celastic. Spread across a long stretch of wall are ladders festooned with colored crepe, baroque draperies, and beribboned roses—all looking as if they have landed there by chance, as if someone had swung a giant cornucopia of "signs of love" (the baskets on the floor overflowing with Celastic draperies?). Among the painted surfaces modeled to look like clichéd bodies are variously gendered panel paintings: seemingly Renaissance portraits of a prince and a princess, a bouquet of flowers that looks as if stenciled onto an Italianate villa, a monumental rose in a lyrical landscape in CinemaScope format, and a pink-and-blue pair of swans at the center of a panel with a chessboard pattern. Then there are various words in black capital letters attached to the wall: pleasures and poses, moments and gestures, objects and symbols, settings and atmospheres.

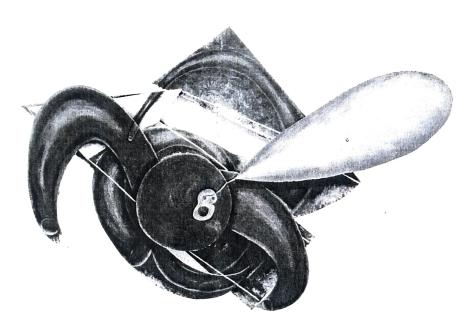
With Signs of Love, Morton pictures not only signs of love but also a love of signs. Every conceivable romantic cliché is invoked and displayed in all its glorious artifice and theatricality. But Morton's work is no morality play on the inescapability of conventionality, nor is it a didactic rejection of outdated notions of subjective expression or modernism's originality imperative. Signs of Love is actually a celebration: the affect of love, the most clichéd of all feelings, has infused painting and molded it into cliché; painting, in turn, has animated these clichés and pieced them together to create a public body. What is celebrated here is the shared (formal) history of personal emotion—conventionality as a form of collectivity. Both Morton's

and Lassnig's artistic praxes can be understood as attempts to objectify experience, to transform feelings into things in order to understand how they work. Both treat affect not as an abstraction but as necessarily implicated in the outside world. While Lassnig sought to generalize individual bodily sensations in pictures, Morton turned commonplace images into bodies that resonate with affect. The feminism of the 1970s thus made the question of the body in/of painting an *explicitly* affective affair, a matter of emotional investment that is clearly recognizable as such at the level of representation itself.

"Examine the two statements, 'Help!' and 'I need help.' The first language is a cry; the second, a description. Only the cry, art, rather than the description or criticism, is primary. The cry is stupid; it has no mirror; it communicates. / I want to cry. / Why should anyone listen? / ... Today in the art world ... art has to sell to mean; artwork to sell should be a description, an image, rather than a cry . . . / Can Art Be Both My Cry and Image? Can I Exist? What's this activity called 'art'?"52 By the time Kathy Acker published her text "Models of Our Present" in Artforum in 1984, the situation for painting had fundamentally changed.53 Painting was in demand as never before, having "refigured" in grand style and been given the license to behave "badly." Art in America dedicated two whole issues to Neo-Expressionism—as this revival was dubbed54—while Artforum published articles on Salvador Dalí, Francis Picabia, Francis Bacon, and Willem de Kooning, flanked by such attempts to take

Ree Morton, *The Plant That Heals May Also Poison*, 1974. Enamel and glitter on wood and Celastic, lightbulbs, 46 x 64 x 4 inches (117 x 162.5 x 10 cm). FWA—Lieve Van Gorp. Foundation for Women Artists





Elizabeth Murray, Can You Hear Me?, 1984. Oil on canvas, 8 feet 10 inches x 13 feet 3 inches x 12 inches (2 m 69 cm x 4 m 4 cm x 30 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Foundation for the Arts Collection, anonymous gift, 1985.4.A–E.FA

stock artistically as "Figuring It Out" and "Stampede to the Figure."55 Critique, too, was louder than ever before: Douglas Crimp, writing about Frank Stella's work of the late 1970s, opined that "each [painting] reads as a tantrum, shrieking and sputtering that the end of painting has not come,"56 while Thomas Lawson, Craig Owens, and Hal Foster diagnosed what was happening as the death throes of a modernism that was now truly spent yet continued to live on, zombie-like, in empty formalisms, calculated gestures of authenticity, and tactical historical references.<sup>57</sup> And, of course, Deleuze, who sought in the figural a possible escape from cliché's hall of mirrors, must not be forgotten. What artists like Lassnig or Morton had achieved—namely in mobilizing both the affective qualities of cliché and those of painting for a political notion of the body—had become altogether suspect: in late capitalism, affect per se is compromised.

Against this backdrop, Acker's "Models of Our Present" can be read as a search for modes of experience and expression that might resist the all-encompassing onslaught of capital—or at least produce a surplus of meaning that is nonexploitative. Acker's quest is for a language that is immediate and that at the same time—being inescapably, materially "true" on the part of the speaker—might serve as a model: a language that reconfigures reality. "I write. I want to write I want my writing

to be meaningless I want my writing to be stupid. But the language I use isn't what I want and make, it's what's given to me. Language is always a community. Language is what I know and is my cry." Acker finds this language "close to home," in her Lower East Side neighborhood of New York, where numerous new galleries opened in the 1980s. Acker's neighborhood, however, does not speak the language of gallery art but rather the (body) language of junkies, whores, and bums. It speaks the language of graffiti. Acker describes and makes use of these languages because in the logic of capitalism they are at once both present and absent; their *conspicuous* "nonexistence" communicates (and points to) forms of experience that exist both amid *and* beyond urban economies—they tear holes in causalities.

The scenes that Acker describes are programmatically local and singular: a spaced-out teenage prostitute orders a coffee in a knish shop; a bum steals a trailer (to use as a shelter) from the corner of a nearby restaurant and is promptly arrested; a gigantic illusionist graffiti mural on the facade of Acker's own block shows a subway train populated by huge cats, reptiles, and birds.<sup>60</sup> For Acker, Isaac Newton's absolutist concept of time and space and the objectifying black-and-white fashion photography of Helmut Newton and his ilk each represent concepts of reality that belong firmly to the past. They are predicated

on distance between viewer and model; they do not "touch"; they cannot capture the dissociative and neurotic dimensions of contemporary experience. New, experimental models of reality are needed, models whose usefulness is determined solely by the experience of the experimenter. Acker cites the physicist David Bohm: "Instead of starting with parts and showing how they work together . . . we (must) start with the whole. . . . Description is totally incompatible with what we want to say."61 The potential of the language of the 'hood paradoxically lies in the fact that it is trapped in a specific public place, in a specific public body, in a specific public situation, and hence has no choice but to privatize the same. The swaying body of the teenage prostitute and the monumental graffiti animals are part of the economic logic of the city and at the same time "wholes"-totalities that are not subsumed by this logic but remain visibly opaque. They are models of a language that is at once "cry" and "image."62

Can You Hear Me? is the title of a 1984 painting by Elizabeth Murray, even if Murray herself prefers to speak of names rather than titles in connection with her work: "The name of the painting describes what I'm really thinking I feel about it. . . . I don't name it so much for other people, I name it for me."63 What I'm really thinking I feel about it. Murray's painting is a scream: an unhinged, twisted blue body outlined in fire-truck red, rotating on its own axis and screaming its head off, its outburst reverberating to who knows where. Sitting slightly off-center inside the round panel that forms the centerpiece of this work, which is in fact made up of several irregular parts, is a tiny green face with a wide-open mouth (Edvard Munch's Scream of Nature [1893] is the obvious reference). Set physically apart yet connected to the mouth by means of paint is another panel—an empty speech bubble that pokes out of the frame like a gigantic, shimmering greenand-red insect wing. Rotating behind (or perhaps below) the face and the scream are open conduits-arteries, intestines, windpipes-and tangled up in them is an absurdly distorted yellow table.

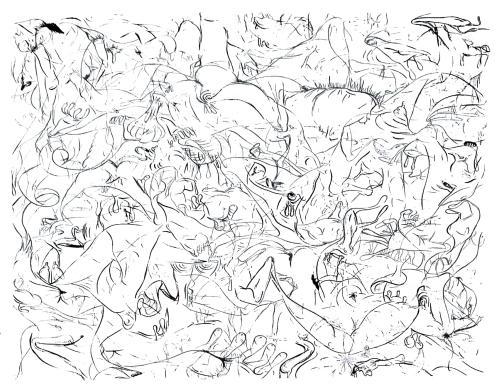
Murray's works of the mid-1980s are bodily utterances, as well as images of bodily utterances. They scream and they laugh and they cry; they find visual equivalents for screaming and laughing and crying. Both painted and three-dimensionally created through the combination of panels-two strategies that cannot be separated if we are to do justice to the paintings as "wholes"-certain motifs crop up again and again: vessels (interiors, cups, glasses, head shapes), orifices (windows, doors and keyholes, mouths), and substances that pass through them or flow out of them (beams of light, shadows, liquids, "sounds"). Architectural elements like walls, tables, and chairs, which in Newtonian space (in this case Isaac) serve as coordinates, as props, or as support, cannot defy the experiential logic of Murray's images. Stretched, deformed, and pressed flat, they mark a topology of interiority (note the

domestic connotations riding on the bodily ones) that has blown apart and then frozen in a precarious state of maximum tension—"to model something that's already modeled."<sup>64</sup> But what affects us physically about Murray's painted bodies is not only their simultaneous pulling and pushing, expanding and contracting. Their surfaces, too, pursue us with everything that painting has to offer in the way of effects: the countless layers of paint that become especially visible at (and beyond) the edges of the panels; the wide range of painterly techniques—pointillist and gestural, dense and loose, dry and wet, impasto and fluid. Everything at once and to excess.

Murray's painted bodies are immoderate and behave inappropriately. They take up too much space, are too loud, too garish, and seem unsure of their viewers' presence or rather their capacity for empathy. Despite the machinery that the works roll out in their effort to be "heard," they cannot or will not articulate clearly. The speech bubble of the screaming figure in Can You Hear Me? is empty, and a comparable face in More Than You Know (1983) produces no more than a tiny scrap of paper with illegible pink scribbles on it. The message of these paintings is: in a society that capitalizes on affect, the aim must be to represent affect per se, as compromised, and to individualize it as a pictorial body that hogs as much space as possible. It is not enough to scream; what is needed, as Acker and Murray-each in her own way-demanded in 1984, is an audible image of a scream. Compromised affect must be rendered visible; it must become body in the political sense of the term.

Sue Williams, It's a New Age, 1992. Acrylic and oil on canvas, 64 x 54 inches (162.56 x 137.16 cm). Art Institute of Chicago; Norman Wait Harris Purchase Fund, 2006.68





Sue Williams, Empathy Displacement/Loopy in Blue and Orange, 1997. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 64 x 72 inches (162.56 x 182.88 cm). Art Institute of Chicago, Jacob and Bessie Levy Art Encouragement Fund; Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Armstrong, William and Bertha Clussman, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Brower, Martin B. Cahn, John G. Curtis, Jr., and Robert Rice Jenkins prize funds; Municipal Art League of Chicago Fund, 2005.94

"It's a new age—and it is hot," states a typically chartreuse Sue Williams painting from the early 1990s. Spinning in the top left-hand corner of the work (It's a New Age [1992]) is the new globe whose atmosphere is declared to consist of 50 percent ammonia and 50 percent bleach. The middle of the canvas is taken up by a bulky body, outlined in black, which from the chest downward-accentuated by a horizontal band of offwhite-bears the following message: "One thing I've gotten with age, is free to choose. I have choices, I choose and trust my instincts. You can't do anything wrong because—um—you learn from mistakes things . . . I chose yellow + I'm not sorry." This continues on the hairy pubes: "There are no problems—only solutions," followed by "I then chose a rotten Navajo white but it looks like putty," followed by-in capitals-"I say so what" and—in a minuscule hand—"Then I eat foods not on my list." Sandwiched between "fat thighs" is a depiction of a behind with a clump of hair growing out of it-another two "choices." The central body is flanked by the face of a desperate-looking woman, whose "helping hand" appears to be gouging out her own eye, while the other

points at the slogan "free to choose" and below it, at her elbow: "Yes, what about abortion?—Wrong painting," followed by the drawing of a fetus, a sizzling fried egg with the name Max scrawled on it, and a splash of white with the letters *PUD* (as in puddle, pudding, pud, or peptic ulcer disease); a list with "Yes Feelings" containing concepts like "self hatred" and "codependent" culminates in a drawing of a second behind with a sleepy ("ZZZZ")/limp penis hanging over it; and, last but not least, hands displaying stained panties with the comment "Don't fight it, go with the flow."65

Williams's painting recalls the kind of restroom graffiti in which one comment elicits another, one drawing responds to another. Statements are relativized, embellished, and corrected; puns, innuendos, and semantic shifts overlie the picture like a hypertext; in many places, the viewer is either implicitly or explicitly called on to join in the dissonant chorus. What this chorus is trying to come to terms with are the consequences of the "new age" for the individual: the forced optimism of positive thinking that declares all physical and emotional states to be a matter of choice and free will and propagates the functional

optimization of all body parts and areas of life. In this new age, economized affects occupy, dismember, and replace the body, which is no longer whole but rather a functional context. Yet "performance culture . . . is a sickness; performing badly is the cure," and Williams's painting performs well—too well. 66 Far exceeding the systemic demands, the painting disintegrates into a web of contradictory and mutually undermining qualities. The self-reassuring loops regarding the choice of color, the warning to the self that it is in the "wrong picture," the repeated repainting and correcting make for a pictorial body whose nervous messiness is the ideal carrier for a picture of the body as possessed and scattered. The affect economy goes into a spin if, for example, fat thighs, soiled panties, and abortion are allowed to pass as free choice.

The problems of a systemic body-and-affect performance that It's a New Age parses also shaped the discourse of the abject, which was polarizing the art world (and beyond) in the early 1990s, rekindling the age-old controversy between content (abjection) and form (l'informe).67 In Williams's works of subsequent years, such as Empathy Displacement/Loopy in Blue and Orange (1997), this controversy seems to have literally dissolved into painting. Bodies have dissipated into elegantly sweeping blue and orange lines, which together form an allover network of arabesques. Only on closer scrutiny do we read them as an ethereal mass of seething breasts and buttocks, arms and legs, penises and scrota, anuses and vaginas. Inside and outside, beginning and end are indistinguishable; the body of painting is one endless, open contour that absorbs everything and everyone. Those were the years when the Internet became a genuinely mass medium of the Western world; a first wave of commercialization set in. What kind of figuration befits an age in which electronic surveillance and the commodification of the most intimate aspects of life were becoming reality on an unprecedented scale? A figuration that immersed the individual in the collective; a figuration that delayed identification. "[This] is . . . not the language of the web so much as the language that makes webs."68

Leidy Churchman's video work *Painting Treatments* of 2010 (p. 164) shows bodies subjected to painterly actions that recall not only spa treatments but also gestural abstractions of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>69</sup> From above, we see bodies reclining, sitting, and squatting, alone or in groups, some clothed, some naked, most draped with towels, textiles, or newspapers. Diverse objects and substances are arranged on top of them (twigs, books, building blocks) or poured over them (potatoes, instant coffee, ice cubes). Paint is rubbed in, dabbed on, and banged in with brushes, mops, and tape dispensers. Numerous abstract-concrete compositions and just as many subject object constellations are created—and then disappear. The treatment (of the bodies? of painting?)



Leidy Churchman, Native Elongating Transcript Reveals Human Transcriptional Activity at Nucleotide Resolution, 2015. Oil on linen, 24 x 18 inches (60.96 x 45.72 cm). Collection Stirling Churchman

is at once hands-on and tender; the painterly collective body, both anonymous and radically individualized, seems relaxed. Layers of paint and material rise and fall in sync with the breath of the bodies; hands are held; a soap bar that has slid away is politely returned. *Painting Treatments* functions like an inverted touchscreen. Everything is material, corporeal, touched, and moved. Painting is presented here as a model of bodily (inter)action and world appropriation, albeit a model that is permeated by mediation and editing on all levels: from the intermediary "tools" that administer the treatments to the composition of the individual pictorial bodies/body pictures to the cutting of the image sequences to the literal embodiment of painting's very own history.

At a solo show in 2015, Churchman presented three paintings in immediate proximity to one another: Freud! (2012–15), a shadow kingdom, which can be entered or exited through a half-open white door, with dark silhouettes of animals and objects (cropping up elsewhere as motifs) and illegible books and notes (like those painted by Philip Guston). Native Elongating Transcript Reveals Human Transcriptional Activity at Nucleotide Resolution (2015), which is based on a microscopic view of the only partially decoded process of genetic transcription in a human cell. The painting shows how the DNA organized in a double helix ("scroll") is read, and a certain section is copied and replicated as an RNA strand. It shows swirling, dancing dabs of color, a mysterious underwater scene, a delicate botanical arrangement, a cosmic event. It shows the multiplication of an abstraction in the smallest unit of



Leidy Churchman, *Rousseau*, 2015. Oil on linen, 66 x 84 inches (167.64 x 213.36 cm). Defares Collection

the human body. And Rousseau (2015), a conceptual copy of Henri Rousseau's The Repast of the Lion (c. 1907), one of the artist's jungle paintings, featuring a lion feasting on a cheetah within strangely motionless tropical scenery. The mortal combat looks more like a tender embrace; gazing out of the painting, the lion looks as if caught in the act, and in turn the viewer is caught in the act of illegitimately watching a moment of great intimacy. Rousseau considered himself a realist,71 a genuinely modern painter;72 while working on his enigmatic jungle paintings—which in fact synthesize his visits to various zoos and botanical gardens, his interest in popular illustrations, and references to both academic and avant-garde painting-he also produced pictures featuring airplanes and smoking chimney stacks, the Eiffel Tower (which at the time was doubling as a telegraph mast), and airships.

Churchman's version—enlarged by a third—of Rousseau's painting was no more produced after the original than the original was painted en plein air. It is based on an image found on the Internet whose colors are warmer and gaudier than those used by Rousseau<sup>23</sup>—an effect that the artist amplifies in places by warming up the horizon line and depicting flowers in radiant pinks instead of Rousseau's dark blue and apricot. The intentionality<sup>24</sup> of other deviations is less easy to pin down. The vacuous gaze of the lion, for example—who looks more roguish

than embarrassed—or the flat, graphic rendering of the white plant(?) on the left could be a result of the lowresolution digital image that Churchman was working from. The ambiguity caused by the difficulty of locating the exact origin of certain effects is of interest when determining the concept of the body and of affect in contemporary painting. Churchman's painting embodies the simultaneity of one image's different manifestations (from the original to the digital copy to memory) and at the same time individuates this synthesis to an extent that provokes the question of how: the body moves within the images, the images move within the body, and painting traces the resulting figurations, configurations, and reconfigurations. Rousseau as phenomenon and Rousseau as model—the naive who imagined jungles he had never seen; the realist who drew on the world (and the images) all around him to artificially/artfully create the jungle-provide the affective framework75 for a painting practice that reflects the relationship between body and digitality. Churchman's lion, halted in the consumption of his prey, stands for an asynchronous immediacy that painting, as opposed to digitality, can create. Digitality banks on synchronicity; its interest lies in an uninterrupted flow, in minimizing delays, disruptions, and obstacles. Its logic is a logic of affirmation continued in perpetuity: As long as I affirm the images (by posting them, liking them, sharing them, etc.), the images

affirm me. Painting, on the other hand, insists on a boundary, and it makes this boundary corporeal in the political sense of the term. Since it cannot—indeed *will not*—escape its own corporeality, it posits a counterpart just as unable, *just as unwilling*.

"How's my painting?"

"There must be a secret hidden in this book or else you wouldn't bother to read it."

## NOTES

- 1. In Nicole Eisenman's 2005 solo exhibition "A Show Called Nowhere," hosted by the Galerie Barbara Weiss in Berlin, *Bloody Orifices* was presented as one of a series of small-format, bust portraits of men, which also included those of a mummy and a skull, as well as the painting *Corn Fed Guy* (2005, p. 158). Appended to the latter work is a sticker that reads "How's My Painting?" and, by way of a reply, "Call 1-800-EAT SHIT." This constellation led one critic to observe that the paintings were "shot through with aspects of putrefaction in various stages of decomposition," the purpose of which was to offer an "ironic take on the self-image of the artist as macho genius." See Stefanie Kleefeld, "In den Minen der Utopie: Nicole Eisenman in der Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 59 (September 2005): https://textezurkunst.de/59/in-den-minen-der-utopie.
- 2. Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003). The French original, Francis Bacon: Logique de la Sensation (Editions de la Différence, Paris), was published in 1981. Deleuze also published an article related to this book in the English-speaking art context: Gilles Deleuze, "Francis Bacon," Artforum 22, no. 5 (January 1984): 68–69.
- 3. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon* (2003), 44, 34. Deleuze's idea of a body without organs draws on the writings of Antonin Artaud.
- 4. Ibid., 2.
- 5. Ibid., 17.
- 6. Ibid., 52.
- 7. Ibid., 87, 96. 8. Ibid., 110, 97.
- 9. Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacres et Simulation* was published in French in 1981 (Paris: Éditions Galilée) and in English, as *Simulations*, two years later (New York: Semiotext[e], 1983).
- 10. In his fascinating analysis of the history of affect theory, Todd Cronan identifies the antirepresentational impulse as a core concern of modernism and argues persuasively that the first "affective turn," which in fact took place in the late nineteenth century, has had a crucial impact on postmodernist art theory (represented by authors such as Deleuze, Yve-Alain Bois, and Rosalind Krauss). See Todd Cronan, *Against Affective Formalism: Matisse, Bergson, Modernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
- 11. Deleuze, Francis Bacon, 56-57.
- 12. Cronan, Against Affective Formalism, 36.
- 13. Especially worthy of mention here, of course, is the American art critic Clement Greenberg and his concept of medium specificity, which he first floated in his early essay "Towards a Newer Laocoon" of 1940 and later elaborated in "Modernist Painting" of 1960. See Clement Greenberg, The Collected Essays and Criticism, vol. 1, Perceptions and Judgments, 1939–1944, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 23–38; and vol. 4, Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957–69, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 85–91.

  14. See Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism" (1962), in Modernism with a Vengeance, 121–34, and Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood" (1967), in Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 148–72.
- 15. In addition to the exhibition text, Lippard wrote a longer essay on her concept of eccentric abstraction, though this was not published until after the exhibition. See Lucy Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," in *Art International* 10, no. 9 (November 1966): 28, 34–40. In a revised reprint

- of this text, Lippard sought to play down the Surrealist references of the original. Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," in *Changing: Essays in Art and Criticism* (New York: Dutton, 1971), 98–111.
- 16. Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction" (1966), 34, 39.
- 17. "In fact, the eccentric idiom is more closely related to abstract painting than to any sculptural forms.... But where formalist painting tends to focus on specific formal problems, eccentric abstraction is more allied to the non-formal tradition devoted to opening up new areas of materials, shape, color and sensuous experience." (Ibid., 28.)
  18. Ibid., 39.
- 19. Ibid., 28 and 39. Note that, like Lippard's text, Susan Sontag's influential Against Interpretation and Other Essays was published in 1966 (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York).
  20. Ibid., 40.
- 21. See, for example, my essay "From Modernist 'feeling' to Minimalist 'coolness': Affektive Schubumkehr in der amerikanischen Kunst(kritik) der 1960er Jahre," in *Affekt und Urteil*, ed. Thomas Hilgers, Gertrud Koch, Christoph Möllers, and Sabme Müller-Mall (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2015), 75–91.
- 22. Helen Molesworth, "Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out: The Rejection of Lee Lozano," in *Lee Lozano: Win First Dont Last—Win Last Dont Care*, ed. Adam Szymczyk (Basel: Schwabe, in association with the Kunsthalle Basel and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2006), 133.
- 23. Lozano's abstract paintings produced just a few years later, as well as her "self-experiments," which she recorded in texts and in which she defined herself as an "open system," can also be characterized as an engagement with "borderline bodies" and body borders. See my essay "'Private, Man': On Private Matter and Public Notes in the Life Work of Lee Lozano," in *Jabresring* 61, *PS*, ed. Dominic Eichler and Brigitte Oetker (2014): 54–59.
- 24. In fact, this by and large applies to Copley's work in general. Unlike Lozano, Copley remained stylistically consistent throughout his career. 25. William N. Copley, in William N. Copley: Bilder und Zeichnungen (Munich: Galerie Klewan, 1981), n.p.
- 26. William N. Copley, in William N. Copley: True Confessions (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje, in association with the Ulmer Museum, Ulm, 1997), n.p.
- 27. Lozano, who arrived in New York in 1960, would win Lippard's appreciation with her later work; the artist's early works were never exhibited, as far as we know. Copley, meanwhile, moved from Paris to New York in 1963 and mounted an exhibition at the Alexander Iolas Gallery that same year.
- 28. See Rachel Haidu, "Laughter," in Part Object Part Sculpture, ed. Helen Molesworth (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 130–39. Haidu analyzes the role of humor in the works of Marcel Broodthaers, among others, referring both to Sigmund Freud's Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious (first published in German in 1905) and to Henri Bergson's Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic (first published in French in 1900).
- 29. Robert Slifkin has argued that Philip Guston's return to figuration in the late 1960s defined itself in opposition not to abstraction but to its rhetorical counterpart, "literalness," as did American postwar art generally. See Robert Slifkin, Out of Time: Philip Guston and the Refiguration of Postwar American Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013). 30. Slifkin puts the focus elsewhere: "All modern art is inherently figurative—in that it is a material, literal thing that always presents itself as something else—and thus the pertinent question is not whether the work is figurative but what figurative tropes it uses." Ibid., xii—xiii. 31. Lippard went to college with Swenson and knew him well. Her idea of eccentric abstraction can also be read as an implicit answer to—or even correction of—his approach. See Lucy Lippard, "An Impure Situation (New York and Philadelphia Letter)," Art International 10, no. 5 (May 1966): 60–65.
- 32. This omission has to do, at least in part, with Swenson's biography and premature death in 1969. For an account of his life and works, see Scott Rothkopf, "Banned and Determined," *Artforum* 40, no. 10 (September 2002): 142–45, 194. In 2014, the ICA Philadelphia paid homage to "The *Other* Tradition" with the show "Feelings Are Things." 33. G. R. Swenson, *The* Other *Tradition* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1966), vii. 34. Ibid., 11.
- 35. Ibid.