

PICTURING POLITICS: DRAWING OUT THE
HISTORIES OF COLLECTIVE POLITICAL
ACTION IN CONTEMPORARY ART

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I hereby declare that the the work presented here is my own.

Hannah Ellul
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ABSTRACT

This project explores the appropriation of images of political upheaval in contemporary art, with a particular focus on artists who painstakingly draw from photographs. It is a project informed by contemporary debates on the convoluted temporality and performativity of the image, the aesthetic and affective dimensions of political subjectification, and forms of political agency.

The drawings of artists including Andrea Bowers, Fernando Bryce and Olivia Plender, discussed here, elaborate a piecemeal, meticulously-drawn iconography of protest. Photographs and documents of emancipatory political struggle from different periods and places are reworked by hand, in acts of salvage. Something like an affective atmosphere is limned in scenes and artefacts that may not have lost their capacity to move but nonetheless seem remote today, the collective political desire and will they evoke overwhelmed by the disconcerting vicissitudes of sociopolitical circumstance.

In light of the long and complex histories of art's engagement with the political, and the many and various modes of reciprocity devised along the way, what does it mean to be preoccupied with images of political action? To ask as much is to begin to address the complex ways in which such images intersect with and shape processes of political identification and affiliation, the emergence of collective subjectivity and the desire for political agency. Moreover, it is to speculate upon how these processes take place in a negotiation with the often obscure histories of collective action, and how such histories inform renewed efforts of political imagination. What attachments or detachment are played out in these drawings? What choreographies of binding and unbinding are traced in these lines?

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Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.

—Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 1936

1

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1.1 Andrea Bowers, *Dignity Safety Justice: Woman With Raised Fist* (Trans Latina Coalition, Blockade at the Beverly Center, L.A., CA, March 20th, 2015), graphite on paper, 38.1 x 56.5 cm, 2016.

Figure 1.2
Andrea Bowers,
*Emma Goldman
Speaking on Birth
Control at a Rally
in Union Square,
NY, 1916*,
graphite on paper,
64.5 x 84.2 cm,
2009 (detail
below).

A crowd, painstakingly drawn in pencil, listens to anarchist Emma Goldman talk about birth control at a rally in New York in 1916. Elsewhere, equally meticulously-rendered figures hold a banner: 'Fighting for our lives'. Protestors from the AIDS awareness campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s, they are echoed in other images of American activists in the 1960s abortion rights struggles, and more recent faces from a rally in support of immigrant rights, or in defiance of violence against transgender people. A vast series of ink drawings documents the Cuban revolution, its reception in the mass media and the revolutionary political movements which emerged worldwide in the subsequent decade. Series of portraits are dedicated to Leon Trotsky, Walter Benjamin, and French communist resistance fighters shot on the orders of the Vichy government in 1941. Other series gather images from the 1954 US-funded coup d'état in Guatemala, a formative experience in the life of a young Ernesto Che Guevara.

Figure 1.3 (above)
Fernando Bryce,
Trotsky, ink on paper,
series of 10 drawings,
each 41.9 x 29.8 cm,
2003 (detail).

Figure 1.4 (below)
Fernando Bryce,
Guatemala 54, ink on
paper, series of 4
drawings, each 32 x 24
cm, 2003.

Figure 1.5 (above) The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist: Suffragette Artists & Suffragette Attacks on Art*, chapbook, 2010.

Figure 1.6 (below) Olivia Plender, *Sylvia Pankhurst Protesting*, pencil on paper, 30 x 21 cm, 2014.

A crowd of suffragettes gathers beneath a thicket of placards in the shape of a painter's palette; Sylvia Pankhurst speaks at a rally for women's suffrage at Trafalgar Square in 1913, and appears again—much older this time—in a drawing of a 1932 protest, animated as she addresses a crowd that we do not see.¹

This project takes as its starting point contemporary works of art which revisit images of political upheaval and change. What can be traced in the practices of certain artists, including Andrea Bowers, Fernando Bryce, Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve, is the elaboration of a piecemeal, meticulously-drawn iconography of protest.² This is something that is particularly apparent in works from the turn of the century, although antecedents can be discerned from the 1990s onwards. Images and documents of political upheaval, insurrection and resistance from different periods and places are reworked by hand, in acts of salvage. Something like an affective atmosphere is limned in scenes and artefacts that may not have lost their capacity to move but nonetheless seem remote today, the collective political desire and will they

¹ The works referred to here are Andrea Bowers's *Emma Goldman Speaking on Birth Control at a Rally in Union Square, NY, 1916* (2009) (fig. 1.2); *The Annual AIDS Memorial March from Castro Street to San Francisco's City Hall, 1991* (2007) (not pictured); *Young Abortion Rights Activist, San Francisco Bay Area, 1966* (Photo Lent from the Archives of Patricia Maginnis) (2005) (fig. 2.6); drawings from May Day protests (figs. 2.20-2.22) and *Dignity Safety Justice: Woman With Raised Fist (Trans Latina Coalition, Blockade at the Beverly Center, L.A., CA, March 20th, 2015)* (fig. 1.1); Fernando Bryce's series *Revolución* (2004) (see figs. 3.1; 3.5-3.35); *Trotsky* (2003) (fig. 1.3); *Walter Benjamin* (2002) (fig. 3.36); *Les fusillés de Chateaubriant* (2011) (not pictured) and *Guatemala 54* (fig. 1.4); a drawing from the chapbook *The Suffragette as Militant Artist* by Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve (2010) (fig. 1.5); and Olivia Plender's *Sylvia Pankhurst Protesting* (2014) (fig. 1.6).

² We might also mention Kate Davis, who has produced drawings based on WSPU artefacts in 2011's *Reversibility (Militant Methods)*; Frank Selby's painstaking drawings from photographs of riots and protests; D-L Alvarez's renditions of pixelated photographs of the Black Panthers in 2005's *Rise*; Sam Durant's drawings from the same period in 2002's *Upside Down Pastoral Scene*; or even Mary Kelly's 2004 *Circa 1968* as well as more recent works where photographs of protests are reconstructed from compressed lint—among others. These artists are not discussed in detail in this project, and their particular approach to drawing and to the political charge of the images and artefacts they appropriate will differ in each case—as will the role of drawing in relation to their practice as a whole. Nonetheless, they—along with a whole swathe of artists who address similar material but do not generally work with drawing—are indicative of the level of interest in these histories of political dissent.

evoke overwhelmed by the disconcerting vicissitudes of sociopolitical circumstance.³ What does it mean to be returning to these moments which from our contemporary perspective seem to have been flashpoints in the history of the struggle for emancipation?

Appearing after a prolonged period when received wisdom deems the contemporary prospects for such political change remote, are these works expressions of faith in the possibilities of collective political action or empty aestheticisations of its past gestures? Does this amount to nostalgia for a kind of direct political action from which we are now estranged—that is, is this an art symptomatic of political paralysis? The use of these images amounts at the very least to making a claim for their continued potency. It can be construed, depending on particular circumstances, as an attempt to exploit the immediacy they invoke, or the sense of urgency of the propagandistic forms with which they are associated. And yet I would argue that there is more at stake in the works I address in this project than the blithe exploitation of a graphic shorthand for rebellion, or its manifestations in mass cultural tropes.

If our contemporary experience of life under capitalism is characterised by the paradox noted by Frederic Jameson—that ‘where everything now submits to the perpetual change of fashion and media image, that nothing can change any longer’—then these works draw our attention, very deliberately, to occasions when the future did not seem quite so definitively foreclosed.⁴ As such, they are in a certain sense memorials to moments of political engagement, constituting practices of recollection in a social context and historical period where the opportunities for exercising political agency have been pervasively undermined. Such images are reworked in a critical process which, I would contend, engages both the artist and viewer in a

³ Angharad Closs Stephens describes the idea of ‘affective atmospheres’ as ‘a provocation that invites us to address the role of “moody force fields” in the making and shaping of collective publics’. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift cited in Angharad Closs Stephens, ‘The affective atmospheres of nationalism,’ *Cultural Geographies* 23, no. 2 (2016): 182. The term was coined by Ben Anderson, who suggests that ‘the concept of atmosphere is interesting because it holds a series of opposites—presence and absence, materiality and ideality, definite and indefinite, singularity and generality—in a relation of tension’. Ben Anderson, ‘Affective Atmospheres’, *Emotion, Space and Society* 2, no. 2 (December, 2009): 77. Such liminality is a theme that will recur in my discussion of these works.

⁴ Frederic Jameson, ‘The Antinomies of Postmodernity’, in *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998* (London: Verso, 1998), 59.

reflection on political agency, as refracted through collective memory and historical consciousness.

Indeed, I argue that the practices I discuss call for a renegotiation of our relationship to the very idea of political agency, in begging the question of our contemporary relationship to competing models of political action, past and present. What is more, I contend that they can be understood as acts of affirmation, broaching the question of collective self-determination after a protracted period in which its very possibility has been discredited. Such practices, I suggest, can consequently be seen as a form of resistance to the the curtailment of political imagination characteristic of contemporary capitalism.⁵

For all their differences, these works share a preoccupation with the still image—a preoccupation that is manifested in often elaborate and painstaking acts of drawing, from photographs and other documents. Photographic documentation from official and unofficial archives feature regularly, but newspaper articles and other artefacts of the events’ media afterlives are also included, as well as relics of events in the form of placards or posters. Their principal qualities—even when they are reproductions of letters or pages from newspapers—are iconographic. ‘History decays into images’, Fernando Bryce writes in a caption, quoting Walter Benjamin.⁶ In light of the long and complex histories of art’s engagement with the political, and the many and various modes of reciprocity devised along the way, why is it that these artists continue to work with *images* of political action? To ask as much is to begin to address the complex ways in which such images intersect with and shape processes of political identification and affiliation, the emergence of collective subjectivity and the desire for political agency. Moreover, it is to speculate upon how these processes take place in a negotiation with the histories of collective action. What attachments or detachments are played out here, in drawings that at first glance might be mistaken for photographs? What choreographies of binding and unbinding are traced in these lines?

To address drawing specifically, and in particular a kind of drawing that is less invested in the medium’s connotations of spontaneity or personal expressivity than in

⁵ As explored in detail in Mark Fisher’s *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009).

⁶ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 476 [N11, 4]. See figure 3.36.

an arduous act of appropriation, is to directly address this theme of attachment—of holding on and letting go—that pervades any consideration of how political and historical consciousness are entwined. That dynamic, common to the work of all images, is laid bare in drawing, and amplified in the liminal forms I consider here in ways I will go on to consider. More or less faithful copies from photographs and other documents, they are testament to a profound personal investment of time and effort as well as processes of mediation—tokens of the subjective and objective forces by which political subjects are forged. As quasi-mechanical reproductions, they beg questions about the play of will, control and indeterminacy by which they are shaped. Through addressing such questions, I aim to arrive at an understanding of the kinds of political interventions at stake in these works.

THE SITE OF THE POLITICAL

The series of propositions about these works that I have set out are led by questions provoked by their content. There is, as I hope to make clear, an attentiveness to embodied political experience in these works—the physicality and materiality of political dissent. This is distilled in the kinds of events with which the artists discussed here seem so preoccupied—protests, revolutionary insurrection, high-profile campaigns of civil disobedience. Diana Taylor observes that mass protests in public spaces have of late become a matter of pressing concern once more, after a period in which it was felt that their value as a political strategy may have been exhausted, their continued existence testament less to their efficacy than to an impoverished political imagination, nostalgic for the activism of the sixties and incapable of coming to terms with a changing society.⁷ She makes specific reference to a 1994 work by Critical Art Ensemble, *Electronic Civil Disobedience*, in which it is argued that a focus on bodies in the streets is nostalgic and ineffective in contemporary society. Taylor argues that Critical Art Ensemble had been ‘blindsided’: ‘While they focused on efficacy, they neglected the other vital aspects of civil disobedience—the visionary, the communicative, the affective, and the contestational’.⁸ To come to terms with those dimensions of political experience and

⁷ Diana Taylor, ‘The Politics of Passion’, *e-misférica* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2013), accessed September 21, 2016, <http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/e-misferica-102/taylor>. Taylor refers specifically to the uprisings known as the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement and widespread protests in Chile and Spain, all in 2011, and to demonstrations in Brazil in 2013, as well as protests in the wake of the 2006 elections in Mexico.

⁸ Taylor, ‘The Politics of Passion’.

subjectification means understanding ‘the role of physical bodies in political movements’ in the success of street protests in the 1960s, among movements for civil rights, feminism and peace.⁹ Taylor argues in light of recent events that these forms are not exhausted: ‘instead of “endlessly replay[ing] the past as the present,” we might argue that the marches and occupations rehearse a democratic present too long promised and too long deferred’.¹⁰ In a similar spirit, I argue that the return to such scenes of collective political struggle in the drawings I discuss here (and in other artworks that deal with similar material, that lie outwith the scope of this project) also participates in that rehearsal, and makes a similar demand.

Taylor insists upon the role of the body in political experience, but acknowledges that it is a profoundly mediated embodiment; as she points out, ‘Recent protest movements show the degree to which earlier separations and tensions between “street” and “online” activism seem to be dissolving’.¹¹ The ongoing question of the contemporary relationship between digitally-networked activism and its physical manifestations can be understood in relation to what can be seen to be a return, in the art practices I discuss, to ostensibly conservative object-based forms, in the face of ‘dematerialised’ alternatives.¹² As Alana Jelinek puts it, with the advent of neoliberal reform ‘the immaterial, or the “dematerialised” to use Lucy Lippard’s coinage [...] is inherently property, commodifiable and monetisable as part of larger market innovations within the knowledge economy. [...] For the first time in history, no type of art practice stands a priori outside property law’.¹³ If such alternatives can no longer claim to elude market imperatives under the conditions of contemporary capitalism, how might this be related to a re-evaluation of the object, and of materiality? It may be that a broader context for these works is a reaction against the shortcomings of dematerialised

⁹ Taylor, ‘The Politics of Passion’.

¹⁰ Taylor, ‘The Politics of Passion’. An overview of the spread of new waves of protests and fast-developing social movements since 2011 can be found in Thomas Davies, Alejandro Milciades Peña and Holly Eva Ryan, ‘Protest, Social Movements and Global Democracy since 2011: New Perspectives’, in *Protest, Social Movements and Global Democracy Since 2011: New Perspectives*, ed. Thomas Davies, Alejandro Milciades Peña and Holly Eva Ryan (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 2016): 1-29.

¹¹ Taylor, ‘The Politics of Passion’.

¹² As most famously theorised by Lucy Lippard in *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

¹³ Alana Jelinek, *This Is Not Art: Activism and Other Not-Art* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 36.

practices—I will consider this possibility in the following chapter. But moving beyond a re-entrenchment of dichotomies of practice it is useful to consider how, as Diarmuid Costello and Dominic Willsdon describe it, a sense ‘that the privileging of sensuous affect in art was at odds with ethical criticality and [a] political project’ has given way today to ‘a range of practices and theoretical positions [that] are, in different, and often antagonistic ways, seeking to overcome this opposition’.¹⁴

The political character of these works is not simply a question of content. It is also about form, broadly understood as an unfolding process of being in the world—what it does, as an irreducible part of what it is. What it does, to be more precise, is contingent upon the encounters that it shapes and perpetuates, including those between the artist, any given viewer and the work. That is, it is a question of a relational context established by the works, as I will go on to explore in more detail. As Ariella Azoulay writes, ‘it is not possible to make of “the political” an attribute of the image, not even when the content of a given image engages with explicitly political matters’.¹⁵ Making reference to the writing of Hannah Arendt, Azoulay argues that ‘the state of being political [...] exists only insofar as people exist in public, and it ceases to exist when they part ways’.¹⁶ This, then, is an understanding that attends to an image’s reception, beyond the intentions of the artist. It displaces the artist and the art object as privileged terms of enquiry—Azoulay is scathing in her description of accounts in which ‘the artistic object supposedly constitutes the point of departure and point of summation for all discourse and action in the field of art’.¹⁷ It is, therefore, an account which opens up the question of ‘the many challenging spaces of relation between human beings that afford multiple possible junctions of intervention in determining the chain of utterances’, in which ‘the political, in the very basic sense of human coexistence in the plural’ is defended against attempts to make it

¹⁴ Diarmuid Costello and Dominic Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images: Ethics and Aesthetics* (London: Tate, 2008), 10.

¹⁵ Ariella Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography* (London: Verso, 2012), 54.

¹⁶ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 54.

¹⁷ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 55. Azoulay distinguishes the relational approach she advocates as part of ‘the paradigm of visual culture’, for which ‘the image is the source of special knowledge regarding the conditions of possibility of the gaze, but it is never sufficient in and of itself’. Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 56.

‘into a precious and singular commodity’.¹⁸ As such, it is possible to come to an understanding of these works in which their attentiveness to particular scenes of political encounter are not simply beholden to well-worn and perhaps obsolete ideas of what constitutes political action (to echo Critical Arts Ensemble’s critique of street protest as a tactic), but is a starting point, opening up onto a broader set of speculations about what the political might look like today. What is the site of political agency?

ON AGENCY

Diana Coole has written about ‘widespread claims that agency, and by implication politics, is in crisis. On the one hand, agency’s theoretical foundations look increasingly vulnerable to deconstructionist zeal; on the other, it has become notoriously difficult to locate and identify political agents within the configuration of late (or post) modern power relations’.¹⁹ There is a sense in these artworks of what has been lost in the period that has elapsed since the events they portray—a period characterised by debilitating epistemological scepticism and a critical emphasis on discursivity that inhibits any convincing engagement with material dynamics.

What Jodi Dean calls ‘we-skepticism’ is the corrosive affect underpinning the sense of political paralysis and consequent disenfranchisement characteristic of contemporary capitalism.²⁰ In Dean’s description, it ‘displaces the performative component of the second-person plural [sic] as it treats collectivity with suspicion and privileges a fantasy of individual singularity and autonomy’.²¹ Grant Kester describes a similar dynamic at work in ‘something very like a theoretical canon’ that, privileging rupture and dissensus, manifests ‘an extreme scepticism concerning organised political action and a hypervigilance regarding the dangers of co-option

¹⁸ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 95-96.

¹⁹ Diana Coole, ‘Rethinking Agency: A Phenomenological Approach to Embodiment and Agentic Capacities,’ *Political Studies* 53, no. 1 (March, 2005): 124.

²⁰ Jodi Dean, *The Communist Horizon* (London: Verso, 2012), 12.

²¹ Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 12.

and compromise entailed by such action'.²² Privileging 'distance over proximity, intimacy or integration', in this context political interventions become a matter of 'ontic disruption directed at any coherent system of belief, agency or identity'.²³ The result, Kester suggests, is 'a failure to conceive of the knowledge produced through durational, collective interaction as anything other than compromised and totalising'.²⁴

A suspicion of continuity, and what are understood to be the instrumentalising and coercive tendencies of any 'durationally extended process of social exchange', gives rise to what Kester identifies as the 'problematic synchronic bias of poststructuralist theory'.²⁵ Existential states are reified: 'treated as *either* static or fluid, coherent or incoherent, stable or de-stabilised, porous or impermeable, singular or collective'.²⁶ Kester comments shed light on the way in which the radicality of strategies of disruption or destabilisation is in fact often overstated: such terms belie the basic inertia of an emphasis on flux and change that has often amounted to complicity with the perpetual, tautologous reinventions of the commodity—bearing an uncanny resemblance to the rhetoric of globalised capitalism.

Such models have been found to be inadequate to an understanding of 'the complex and shifting processes of reception and participation, immersion and distanciation, and collective and singular identification at work in any given project'.²⁷ It is precisely these complex and shifting dynamics which I track in the works discussed in this project. Kester's comments coincide with recent critiques that, as Renée C. Hoogland writes, 'have focused on [poststructuralist] models' discursivisation of everything to the neglect of the materiality of social structures, of human bodies or

²² Grant Kester, 'Lessons in Futility: Francis Alys and the Legacy of May '68,' *Third Text* 23, no. 4 (July, 2009): 407. Kester has in mind the contemporary legacy of what he calls 'the rapprochement between neo-conceptual art practice and poststructuralist theory during the 1990s'. He traces its roots back to 'the dilemma of French intellectuals and artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Here the impossibility of positive political change (embodied in the perceived failure of May '68) legitimised a withdrawal into a zone of subversive textual play and *écriture*'. Kester, 'Lessons in Futility', 407-410.

²³ Kester, 'Lessons in Futility,' 407.

²⁴ Kester, 'Lessons in Futility,' 408.

²⁵ Kester, 'Lessons in Futility,' 408.

²⁶ Kester, 'Lessons in Futility,' 408.

²⁷ Kester, 'Lessons in Futility,' 420.

“the flesh,” and of other less easily deconstructible aspects of/in the world’.²⁸ Hoogland mentions the ‘new materialisms’, to which Coole has been a significant contributor.²⁹ With Samantha Frost, Coole has written that such new materialisms have arisen ‘in response to a sense that the radicalism of the dominant discourses which have flourished under the cultural turn is now more or less exhausted [...] an allergy to ‘the real’ that is characteristic of its more linguistic or discursive forms—whereby overtures to material reality are dismissed as an insidious foundationalism—has had the consequence of dissuading critical inquirers from the more empirical kinds of investigation that material processes and structures require’.³⁰ Similarly, Laura Levin identifies ‘an affective turn’ that ‘calls for a return to subjectivity and emotions in response to the evisceration of the material body by poststructuralism, deconstruction, and a vanishing public sphere (formerly the context of sociality and the enactment of citizenship)’.³¹ The likes of Blake Stimson and Azoulay, both important reference points for me in the chapters that follow, seek in the work of the image and in our encounters with it a means of addressing the loss of that public sphere, and in doing so aim to reinstate the material body that would occupy it.

ON APPROPRIATION

It is in this critical climate that appropriation has been understood to be a practice fundamentally associated with detachment—the product of a kind of psychic dissociation, provoked by what Jameson diagnoses as the breach of historicity and consequent ‘inverted millenarianism’ of late capitalism, the ahistorical limbo that emerges in an era when perpetual flux belies the unassailability of capitalist

²⁷ Renée C. Hoogland, *A Violent Embrace: Art and Aesthetics After Representation* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2014), 5.

²⁹ *New Materialisms*, a volume edited by Coole and Samantha Frost, has been pivotal in articulating what such a renewed materialism might be. As the plural of the title suggests, it brings together disparate projects which nonetheless share an interest in and emphasis on ‘materiality’s productive contingencies’. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 78.

³⁰ Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*, 6.

³¹ Laura Levin, ‘The Performative Force of Photography,’ *Photography & Culture* 2, no. 3 (November, 2009): 28. In particular, Levin mentions the writing of Kathleen Woodward, Lauren Berlant, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Patricia Ticineto Clough.

relations.³² In this context, appropriation signifies ‘an interruption of temporal continuity, a blackout of historical time that mortifies culture and turns its tropes into inanimate figures, into pre-objectified, commodified visual material, ready to pick up and use’.³³ Jan Verwoert finds the definitive expression of this sense of deadlock in the appropriative strategies of the Pictures Generation of the 1970s and 1980s, archetypal cartographers of what Jameson called a ‘purely fungible present in which space and psyches alike can be processed and remade at will’.³⁴ These practices emerged in an intellectual climate pervaded by disaffection with the utopian pretences of the counter-culture of an earlier generation—and at a point where the dynamics of contemporary life were becoming apparent for the first time in their specificity, which is to say, ‘the dynamic of capital, its reification and fragmentation of fixed positions’.³⁵ The ‘topographical model of signification’ had broken down—that is, to briefly rehearse a familiar characterisation, what Jameson described as the ‘dissolution, penetrating the interior of the sign itself and liberating the signifier from the signified, or from the meaning proper’—and what transpired, in Verwoert’s reading, is a catalogue of the reified gestures and images left where intention has been irrevocably divorced from action.³⁶ To this extent, the work described by Verwoert by the likes of Robert Longo and Cindy Sherman was not merely a product of a breach in the relationship of the subject to history but also testament to fundamental renegotiations of subjectivity and agency.³⁷ As Elizabeth Freeman notes, ‘temporality is a mode of implantation through which institutional forces come to seem like somatic facts. [...] Manipulations of time also convert historically specific regimes of asymmetrical power into seemingly ordinary bodily tempos and

³² Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1993), 1.

³³ Jan Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation: Why Stealing Images Feels Different Today,’ in *Tate Triennial: New British Art*, ed. Beatrix Ruf and Clarrie Wallis (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), 15.

³⁴ Frederic Jameson, ‘Antinomies of the Postmodern,’ in *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983–1998* (London: Verso, 1998).

³⁵ Hal Foster, *Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996) p. 212

³⁶ On the ‘topographical model of signification’: see Timothy Bewes, *Reification, or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2002), xii; Frederic Jameson, ‘Periodizing the 60s’, *Social Text*, no. 9/10 (Spring/Summer 1984): 200.

³⁷ See Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation’, 15.

routines'.³⁸ This much is apparent in the 'posthistorical attitude' described in Hal Foster's writings on the trajectory of appropriation art in the 80s—an attitude he takes to be "the effect of an epistemological skepticism taken to a defeatist extreme".³⁹

The emancipatory and disruptive potential sought in the free play of signifiers served to articulate the understanding that, as Timothy Bewes notes, 'there is no escaping one's embeddedness in reification; yet, simultaneously, that recognition stands as an unstated and unstatable strategy of escape, a form of "praxis" situated in what Homi Bhabha calls "liminality" or "hybridity", a political space in between necessity and accuracy'.⁴⁰ In this sense, images such as Sherman's or her contemporaries' elaborate what Bewes calls a 'poetics of objectification', one 'arising out of a willingness to name that process as such, and a refusal to accede to its logic; a refusal, that is to say, to posit some essential identity outside reification to counterpose to it, for such a strategy would be complicit with the cycle of capitalist accumulation and appropriation'.⁴¹ And yet, while this basic gesture of refusal is a crucial one, today we increasingly see a pronounced scepticism towards the subversive potential claimed by a practice of 'hybridity' and role-play. As Foster remarks, 'if we celebrate hybridity and heterogeneity, we must remember that they are also privileged terms of advanced capitalism'.⁴²

Freeman points out that such 'ludic' theory 'has not always concerned itself with history understood as a collective consciousness of the significance, singularity, and sheer pain of exploitation, or as collective agency toward relief from that pain'.⁴³ If the breach of historicity diagnosed by Jameson goes some way to explaining why contemporary art has for some time been, as Christine Ross writes, 'a pivotal site of

³⁸ Elizabeth Freeman, 'Introduction,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13, no. 2-3 (2007): 160.

³⁹ Hal Foster, *Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 257.

⁴⁰ Bewes, *Reification*, 11.

⁴¹ Bewes, *Reification*, xv.

⁴² Foster, *Return of the Real*, 212.

⁴³ Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 9.

temporal experimentation’, nonetheless the understanding of time at stake in such experiments has often been, as she notes, ‘surprisingly dis-historicised’.⁴⁴ However, Verwoert has discerned the beginning of a shift in practices of appropriation from the early 1990s, attributing it to changes in our relationship to history—from the stasis of a deadlock during the Cold War to a sudden excess of previously silenced histories as it ends.

Verwoert argues that in the wake of the profound sociopolitical upheavals provoked by the fall of the USSR, a plethora of histories—‘a multitude of asynchronous temporalities’—have been unleashed by the demise of state communism in Eastern Europe, replacing the ahistorical stasis of postmodernity with ‘competing and overlapping temporalities born from the local conflicts that the unresolved predicaments of the modern regimes of power still produce’.⁴⁵ Ross draws on French historian François Hartog’s notion of the ‘regime of historicity’ to describe shifting ‘[relationships] between past, present, and future’ and how they are articulated in recent art.⁴⁶ The kind of shift diagnosed by Verwoert is indicative of what Hartog calls a ‘crisis of time [...] when the articulations of the past, the present, and the future become less evident’.⁴⁷ To appropriate images under such circumstances, Verwoert suggests, is to be alert to the contingencies of history, as futures once foreclosed become contentious yet again. As such, he argues, the intervening period has seen artists return to images in a critical process alert to the performative interventions of the artwork in the world. He suggests that the years since have witnessed the ‘shock of the unsuspected return of meaning to the arbitrary sign’.⁴⁸

Characterising contemporary appropriation as ‘invocation’, Verwoert makes a claim for the impact of images in the world.⁴⁹ The artefacts of neglected or forgotten histories hint at manifold, contradictory prospects unrealised and possibilities long

⁴⁴ Christine Ross, *The Past is the Present; It’s the Future Too: The Temporal Turn in Contemporary Art* (London: Continuum, 2012), 4-5.

⁴⁵ Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation,’ 16.

⁴⁶ François Hartog cited in Ross, *The Past is the Present*, 13.

⁴⁷ François Hartog cited in Ross, *The Past is the Present*, 13.

⁴⁸ Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation,’ 19.

⁴⁹ Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation,’ 17.

since spurned; to revisit them at a time of upheaval is a provocation. It is at such times, Verwoert argues, that the once ossified image becomes newly consequential. The lessons learnt persist, he implies: ‘to acknowledge the performative dimension of language means to understand the responsibility that comes with speaking, to engage in the procedures of speech and face the consequences of what is being said’.⁵⁰ Costello and Willsdon describe the urgent contemporary political nature of such interventions, in a periodisation that echoes that of Verwoert but which also situates developments in terms of art world shifts. They write, ‘the globalisation of social, political and economic conflict post-Cold War, and the concurrent globalisation of art practice, exhibition and debate, has created a context in which artists seek to document, reflect, supplement or intervene in representations of those conflicts worldwide’.⁵¹ Their analysis of shifts in politically-engaged art practice picks up on what Kodwo Eshun and Ros Gray diagnose as an ‘artistic turn towards research into militant cultural production’.⁵² It is this periodisation which frames this project. It is further inflected by more recent events, including the banking crisis of 2008 and the global waves of protest and upheaval discussed by Taylor that followed shortly afterwards and which have fundamentally changed the tenor of debates on political horizons, giving them complex, contested and unpredictable shape and substance.⁵³ As Anthony Iles and Tom Roberts put it: ‘since 2008, history has begun again’.⁵⁴

Where Verwoert dwells on the transformation in historical consciousness which underlies such conflicts, Costello and Willsdon draw attention to the fact that ‘what is primary here is the possibility of representations and counter-representations of points of political fracture’.⁵⁵ What is evident in both accounts is an understanding

⁵⁰ Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation,’ 20.

⁵¹ Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 12.

⁵² Kodwo Eshun and Ros Gray, ‘The Militant Image: A Ciné-Geography,’ *Third Text* 25, no. 1 (2011): 3. They refer in particular to Okwui Enwezor’s *Documenta 11* (2002) and ‘The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945–1994’ (2003); as well as work by Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc, Petra Bauer and Dan Kidner, the Otolith Group and Hito Steyerl. See Eshun and Gray, ‘The Militant Image’, 4.

⁵³ Taylor, ‘The Politics of Passion’.

⁵⁴ Anthony Iles and Tom Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows of Susceptibility and Refusal*, (Glasgow: Transmission Gallery and London: Mute Books, 2012), 291.

⁵⁵ Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 12.

of ‘a notion of aesthetic experience as at once experiential and material, an event with both potentially enabling and innovative effects, as well as reactive consequences’.⁵⁶ Accordingly, there is an ethical burden to be acknowledged in the use of appropriated material, understood to be a contentious intervention in ongoing disputes. Verwoert suggests that ‘this concern for practicalities simultaneously raises the question to what ends the ceremony is performed, that is, with which consequences the object of appropriation is put to its new use. This is a question of practical ethics: With what attitude should appropriation be practiced?’⁵⁷

BRUSHING HISTORY AGAINST THE GRAIN

The way in which historical material is addressed in much recent art distinguishes it from the appropriation of an earlier era. This much has been well noted: Mark Godfrey writes about the ‘artist as historian’, for example, who is driven by an impulse that addresses longstanding injustices and aporias in historical knowledge.⁵⁸ This impulse is also restitutive, guided by a desire to ensure that many different, subjective stories are told. Godfrey emphasises the contingency and fallibility of the archive, and the imaginative possibilities of fiction-making. Ultimately, the emancipatory potential attributed to the work inheres in a faith in the discursive plurality of narratives, a hopeful condition of ‘radical openness’.⁵⁹ Yet this understanding does not seem to be adequate to a reading of the work I am interested in here. What is at stake is the possibility of a material engagement with the political implications of such historiographical interventions.

It is clear that revisiting histories of dissent is important to elaborating new political imaginaries and strategies for collective self-determination. Gabriel Winant writes that ‘in left-wing thought, there’s always been a powerful emancipatory possibility associated with understanding the past; the specific opposite of false consciousness is historical consciousness. To see yourself in time is to grasp the way the world is in flux [...] the work of mobilising is always in urging people to un-forget, to see how

⁵⁶ Hoogland, *A Violent Embrace*, 15.

⁵⁷ Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation,’ 20.

⁵⁸ Mark Godfrey, ‘The Artist as Historian,’ *October*, no. 120 (Spring 2007): 140-172.

⁵⁹ Godfrey, ‘The Artist as Historian,’ 172.

their circumstances came to be, how others responded to similar circumstances, and how they might also—now, today. To engage in political struggle is necessarily to do history'.⁶⁰ This imperative becomes all the more pressing amid the perpetual distracted and discontinuous flux of what Mark Fisher calls 'the communicative sensation-stimulus matrix' of contemporary life.⁶¹ As Iles and Roberts suggest of a renewed interest in writing 'history from below', and the work of those historians affiliated with the term who documented radical and marginalised movements and communities, 'we might also consider the turn to history as deriving its energy from an intense period of transformation which appears bent on obliterating not just the past, but for many, the future too'.⁶²

And yet such 'un-forgetting' must happen in a manner alert to the contested and contradictory nature of past strategies and the complexities of formulating a contemporary response. As such, while I argue that collectively these works constitute an affirmation of political possibilities which stand in stark opposition to inert political imaginaries, it is also important that the diversity of the movements found in these images be acknowledged. This entails, as Verwoert makes clear with his trope of 'invocation', being alert to the unpredictable ways in which such 'strategies of remembrance'—of 'making memory matter', as Lisa Saltzman has it, can play out.⁶³ As Iles and Roberts note, 're-reading the past opens previous struggles

⁶⁰ Gabriel Winant, 'Slave Capitalism', *n+1*, no. 17 (Fall 2013), accessed 21 September, 2016, <https://nplusonemag.com/issue-17/reviews/slave-capitalism/>

⁶¹ Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, 24.

⁶² Anthony Iles and Tom Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows of Susceptibility and Refusal* (Glasgow: Transmission Gallery and London: Mute Books, 2012), 44.

The title of the book is taken from a comment by E.P. Thompson about 'the necessary awkwardness of effecting transformation by writing history', as Iles and Roberts describe it. Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*, 9. The full quote reads: 'For one must as an unassimilated socialist in this infinitely assimilative culture, put oneself in a school of awkwardness. One must make one's sensibility all knobbly—all knees and elbows of susceptibility and refusal—if one is not to be pressed through the grid into the universal mish-mash of the received assumptions of the intellectual culture'. E.P. Thompson cited in Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*, 9.

⁶³ Verwoert, 'Apropos Appropriation,' 17; Lisa Saltzman, *Making Memory Matter: Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

to contingency, and this in turn animates the forms of contingency and possibility available to the present.⁶⁴

Costello and Willsdon suggest that much recent politically-engaged art is indebted to long-established practices of counter-representation of the kind discussed by Iles and Roberts, situating such work in the context of a realist tradition in which the image is deployed to rhetorical (and polemical) ends—a tradition aligned with documentary as much as art practices.⁶⁵ And yet any such appraisal must happen in light of the critique to which such notions of counter-representational practice have been subject in recent years. John Roberts writes that for recent ‘relational’ or social practices, ‘counter-symbolic possibilities are now historically otiose’; indeed, such politically-motivated reconfigurations of form in art seek ‘the necessary dissolution of representation’ and the kinds of relationships it entails.⁶⁶ As Roberts puts it, such critiques ‘take it as axiomatic that representational forms of petitioning, explication, appellation, narrow or even destroy art as a space of resistance and democratic co-articulation and cooperation’.⁶⁷ To return to the idea of the counter-history as an emancipatory strategy, then, is to risk overlooking the ways in which it remains fundamentally dependent upon discredited ‘notions of the artistic subject or collective artistic subject speaking to, and speaking on behalf of, the “other”’.⁶⁸ The idea of redemption implicit in the restitutive impetus of the counter-history proves, as Hito Steyerl puts it, ‘to be ambivalent, in keeping with the politics of truth into which it inscribes itself’.⁶⁹ On the one hand, she explains, it draws upon ‘the Benjaminian “tradition of the oppressed”’; and yet on the other, it is ‘deeply enmeshed in vitalistic conceptions of an authenticity that is all too often [...] voyeuristic and instrumentalising’.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*, 296.

⁶⁵ Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 12-13.

⁶⁶ John Roberts, ‘Introduction: Art, “Enclave Theory” and the Communist Imaginary,’ *Third Text* 23, no. 4 (2009): 365.

⁶⁷ Roberts, ‘Introduction’, 365.

⁶⁸ Roberts, ‘Introduction’, 365.

⁶⁹ Hito Steyerl, ‘Documentarism as Politics of Truth’, *eipcp* (May 2003), accessed 23 September 2016, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1003/steyerl2/en>.

⁷⁰ Steyerl, ‘Documentarism as Politics of Truth’.

Historian Dipesh Chakrabarty expresses comparable reservations when he observes that ‘minority histories’—within which he includes the tradition of ‘history from below’—often presume the same principles of rational narration as mainstream history, merely seeking ‘incorporation’ rather than fundamentally challenging how histories are made.⁷¹ As such, a straightforwardly oppositional act of counter-representation, operating according to the same epistemological criteria as the canonical historiography it challenges, may overlook how certain histories are understood to be ‘minor’ in the first place. That is, it may fail to address what Chakrabarty calls ‘constructions and experiences of the past that stay ‘minor’ in the sense that their very incorporation into historical narratives converts them into pasts ‘of lesser importance’ vis-à-vis dominant understandings of what constitutes fact and evidence [...] in the practices of professional history’.⁷² This criticism crops up again in a critique of E.P. Thompson’s work and the writing of ‘history from below’ more generally understood by Joan W. Scott, to which I will return in the following chapter. Scott argues that such studies neglect to adequately examine the discursive forces which cause people and communities to be marginalised in the first place. In ‘The Evidence of Experience’, she cites Michel de Certeau’s comment that in such histories ‘this authorised appearance of the “real” serves precisely to camouflage the practice which in fact determines it. Representation thus disguises the praxis that organizes it’.⁷³ Her position is indicative of what Seyla Benhabib calls ‘a clash of paradigms’ in historiography’.⁷⁴ At the heart of the dispute is the question of ‘whether an emphasis be placed on structure or experience in the understanding of historical change’.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘Minority histories, subaltern pasts,’ *Postcolonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (1998): 15. Here Chakrabarty is explicitly addressing the British tradition of history from below, the tradition ‘of a Thompson or a Hobsbawm’. Chakrabarty, ‘Minority histories’, 16. This is the tradition discussed by Iles and Roberts in *All Knees and Elbows*.

⁷² Chakrabarty, ‘Minority histories, subaltern pasts,’ 18.

⁷³ Michel de Certeau cited in Joan W. Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience,’ *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 777.

⁷⁴ Seyla Benhabib, ‘Subjectivity, Historiography, and Politics,’ in *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*, Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Drucilla Cornell and Nancy Fraser (London: Routledge, 1994), 113.

⁷⁵ Iles and Roberts p. 6. Referring specifically to feminist histories, but with much that is of relevance to radical history writing more broadly understood, the terms of the debate are set out clearly in the series of exchanges gathered in the 1994 publication *Feminist Contentions*, by Benhabib et al (see previous note).

And yet the idea of counter-history remains valuable—I will consider why, and in what ways.⁷⁶ Clearly, though, it is important that any contemporary practice of counter-representation not be ‘structured by binaristic tensions’, in terms of ‘a clear-cut dialectic of the victors and the vanquished’; but rather be deployed in order to articulate more expansively different kinds of relationships to historical consciousness, collective memory and the shaping of political subjectivities.⁷⁷ If such practices are to be more than simply ‘the exchange of alienated appearances’, it is therefore necessary to ask: ‘If artworks have the potential to operate as counter-representations, what are the ethical conditions for representation in the culture at large, the context in which they need to operate?’⁷⁸ As Donna Haraway points out, in a warning worth quoting at length,

To see from below is neither easily learned nor unproblematic, even if “we” “naturally” inhabit the great underground terrain of subjugated knowledges. The positionings of the subjugated are not exempt from critical re-examination [...] The standpoints of the subjugated are not “innocent” positions. On the contrary, they are preferred because in principle they are least likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretative core of all knowledge. [...] “Subjugated” standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world. But *how* to see from below is a problem requiring at least as much skill with bodies and language, with the mediations of vision, as the “highest” techno-scientific visualisations.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Roberts, broaching this question within a discussion of Alain Badiou’s efforts to re-think the communist project in the wake of the collapse of the USSR, writes that ‘we are still, so to speak, inside the mnemotechnic horizons of communist history and practice [...] what is at stake is what *kind* of communism is appropriate to its defeated legacy’. Roberts, ‘Introduction’, 366. This project is guided by the sense that we are still within the mnemotechnic horizons of various historical forms of emancipatory politics, more broadly understood.

⁷⁷ Veronica Tello, *Counter-Memorial Aesthetics: Refugee Histories and the Politics of Contemporary Art* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 2.

⁷⁸ Roberts, ‘Introduction’, 365; Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 14.

⁷⁹ Donna Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,’ in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1991), 191. Haraway’s reference to objectivity should be understood in the terms of the ‘feminist objectivity’ set out in this essay, in which ‘only partial perspective promises objective vision’. Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges,’ 190.

Freeman draws on Chakrabarty's alternative model of 'affective histories' in her work on how 'time makes bodies and subjects'.⁸⁰ Shaped by a hermeneutics that 'produces a loving grasp of detail in search of an understanding of the diversity of life worlds', Chakrabarty suggests that affective histories '[find] thought immediately tied to places and to particular forms of life'.⁸¹ Negotiating idiosyncratic relationships to artefacts and documents, the drawings I discuss here might be understood to be affective histories in this sense, ranking among those 'practices linked to theatre, art, and ritual' mentioned by Rebecca Schneider which, in contrast to historiography's "'hard" facts', can articulate "softer," ephemeral traces such as the affective, bodily sensations or (re)actions of those living too far into the future for proper, evidentiary recall'.⁸² Such a history might be adequate to understanding that 'what changes over time is the value, relevance, or meaning of the archive, how the items it contains get interpreted, even embodied'.⁸³

Freeman's work addresses what happens 'if we re-imagine "queer" as a set of possibilities produced out of temporal and historical difference, or see the manipulation of time as a way to produce both bodies and relationalities (or even nonrelationality)'.⁸⁴ Her concept of 'chrononormativity' describes 'the use of time to organise individual human bodies toward maximum productivity'; Dana Luciano's notion of 'chronobiopolitics' is pressed into service to explain how 'people are bound to one another, en-grouped, made to feel coherently collective, through particular

⁸⁰ On Chakrabarty, see Freeman, *Time Binds*, xix-xx; Freeman, 'Introduction,' 160.

⁸¹ Freeman, *Time Binds*, xx. See also Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 18.

⁸² Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War In Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (Abingdon, Oxon: 2011), 14.

⁸³ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 19.

⁸⁴ Freeman, 'Introduction,' 159. Michael O'Rourke and Anne Mulhall write that 'the folds and unfoldings of "queer time" have been a dominant strand in queer theory over the last decade, to the extent that one could speak of a "temporality turn" in which Freeman's work has been one fulcrum'. Anne Mulhall and Michael O'Rourke, 'In a Queer Time and Space: Slowly, Closely, Over Reading Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds*', *Social Text: Periscope*, 10 July, 2014, accessed 26 September, 2016, http://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/in-a-queer-time-and-space-slowly-closely-over-reading-elizabeth-freemans-time-binds/. So too would be the work of others including Ann Cvetkovich, Carolyn Dinshaw, Lee Edelman, José Esteban Muñoz, and Kathryn Bond Stockton. See Mulhall and O'Rourke, 'In a Queer Time and Space'; and Freeman, 'Introduction', 175-176.

orchestrations of time'.⁸⁵ Temporality and history are intimately linked here; Freeman writes of a 'dialectic between time and history [...] characteristic of not only Euro-American modernity but also queer theory'.⁸⁶ What is at stake in addressing that dialectic is, she suggests, an understanding of 'the vagaries of temporality, as practiced and as embodied, that make new conceptions of "the historical" possible'.⁸⁷ It is this observation that makes it so valuable to a reading of works of art that try to come to terms with that intersection—and to thinking through how they are shaped by the need to 'unbind time and history from capitalism's regulated tempos'.⁸⁸ What is more, it sheds light on the possibilities of doing so through an attentiveness to how these works, as the products of arduous embodied practices of drawing, articulate 'conjunctions of bodies across temporal thresholds rather than [...] the dynamics of loss and lack that inform a focus on desire as the vector of cross-temporal longing and belonging'.⁸⁹ Freeman comments that 'writing is a way to speak with the dead, reanimate the past, gamble that there was one at all'.⁹⁰ For the artists I discuss, drawing presents this possibility too.

Freeman's turn of phrase brings us to the persistent trope of spectrality characteristic of many attempts to understand our relationship to the image, as well as to the past. That trope shapes Verwoert's recourse to the notion of invocation, informed by Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*. Jameson writes of *Spectres of Marx* that 'spectrality is here the form of the most radical politicisation and [...] far from being locked into the repetitions of neurosis and obsession, it is energetically future-orientated and active'.⁹¹ For Verwoert, Derrida's writing clarifies the indeterminacy at the heart of the form of appropriation he seeks to articulate; one that confronts 'ghosts' in order

⁸⁵ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 3.

⁸⁶ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 9.

⁸⁷ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 9.

⁸⁸ Pablo Assumpção, 'Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories by Elizabeth Freeman,' *e-misférica* 8, no. 1 (Summer 2013), accessed 26 September, 2011, <http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/e-misferica-81/assumpcao>.

⁸⁹ Mulhall and O'Rourke, 'In a Queer Time and Space'.

⁹⁰ Elizabeth Freeman, 'Introduction,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13, no. 2-3 (2007): 168.

⁹¹ Frederic Jameson, 'Marx's Purloined Letter', in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Spectres of Marx*, ed. Michael Sprinker (London: Verso, 2008), 60.

to learn ‘how to let them speak or how to give them back speech’.⁹² (The idea of presence that arises in such a scenario is one I will consider in more detail in the final chapter.) Derrida’s work on how ‘Marx [...] theorises an ethics of responsibility toward the other across time’ is also an important point of reference for Freeman, who writes that *Spectres of Marx* ‘contributes to queer theory the idea that time can produce new social relations and even new forms of justice that counter the chrononormative and chronobiopolitical.’⁹³

Freeman describes artists ‘mining the present for signs of undetonated energy from past revolutions’.⁹⁴ The turn of phrase makes clear her debt to Benjamin, who wrote of the historical materialist work to ‘blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history’.⁹⁵ The influence of Benjamin’s writing is apparent throughout the critical debates that inform this project.⁹⁶ Benjamin’s ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’ calls for a historiography that would ‘stop telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary’, and instead ‘grasp the constellation which [one’s] own era has formed with a definite earlier one’.⁹⁷ As Schneider writes, ‘Benjamin’s distinction between historicism and historical materialism is one that challenges historicism’s political investment in linear, non-recurring materiality. To articulate historical materialism, Benjamin repeatedly resorts to tropes of liveness-in-encounter. If historicism “presents the eternal image of the past,” historical materialism offers “a specific and unique experience with it”’.⁹⁸

⁹² Jacques Derrida cited in Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation,’ 21.

⁹³ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 9-10.

⁹⁴ Freeman, *Time Binds*, xvi.

⁹⁵ Walter Benjamin, ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’, in *Illuminations* (London: Fontana Press, 1992), 254.

⁹⁶ For example, Ross cites Giorgio Agamben in her discussion of Benjamin as initiator of a ‘practice of discontinuity’ in historical studies: ‘[i]t is certainly no accident that every time modern thought has come to reconceptualise time, it has inevitably had to begin with a critique of continuous, quantified time. Such a critique underlies [...] Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” [...]’. Giorgio Agamben cited by Ross, *The Past is the Present*, 40.

⁹⁷ Walter Benjamin, ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’, 255.

⁹⁸ Walter Benjamin cited in Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 197.

DRAWING AND ITS OTHERS

The much-contested matter of the role of representational practices in politically-engaged art finds a counterpart in, and indeed is entangled in, the similarly vexed question of the role of the aesthetic, the subject of much theoretical renegotiation since Foster's 1983 critique of 'the very notion of the aesthetic, its network of ideas'.⁹⁹ The kinds of anti-representational approach synonymous with radical art practice in recent years would have been identified as, in Foster's term, 'anti-aesthetic' practices.¹⁰⁰ Such negotiations of art and politics are explored by Jelinek, who describes a distinction between 'artlike' and 'lifelike' art, and suggests that 'assumptions about art practice have been built on a framework that invests specific types of practice with an inherent radical potency while denying the possibility of radicalism to other types of practice'.¹⁰¹ What, then is the relationship of the works discussed in this project to those other radical practices that reject representational form?

A consideration of embodied image-making practices—one that addresses the image in terms of the series of encounters that it mediates and perpetuates, as an ongoing event—is useful in coming to terms with what Hoogland calls 'the dynamic presentness (as distinct from its *representational* dimension) of the artistic event'.¹⁰² It is a perspective that brings ideas about performance to bear upon an understanding of the work of the image. As Levin notes, there is an established body of work about the relationship between performance and photography that focuses on the pose, and on theatrical staging (the frozen poses of the Pictures Generation artists that Verwoert discusses).¹⁰³ But, she points out, 'much less has been written about the performative encounter between spectator and image'.¹⁰⁴ The emergent body of scholarship on this question informs my project here.

⁹⁹ Hal Foster cited in Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 9.

¹⁰⁰ Foster cited in Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 9.

¹⁰¹ Alana Jelinek, *This Is Not Art: Activism and Other Not-Art* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 10.

¹⁰² Hoogland, *A Violent Embrace*, 15.

¹⁰³ Laura Levin, 'The Performative Force of Photography,' *Photography & Culture* 2, no. 3 (November, 2009), 327-336; Verwoert, 'Apropos Appropriation,' 15.

¹⁰⁴ Levin, 'The Performative Force of Photography,' 328.

Drawing—however it might be constituted via complex mediations of technologies of reproduction—is ‘an index of the body’.¹⁰⁵ As such, it can be set against photography in critiques that rely upon inverted but untroubled dichotomies of embodiment and detachment (where the photographic image is paradigmatic of a distanced, duplicitous kind of vision). This happens, for example, throughout Michael Taussig’s reflections on drawing—which he often compares favourably to photography, found wanting for its imposition of ‘a lot of technical junk between you and the world’.¹⁰⁶ This idea of photography as the quintessential ‘leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere’ is of course affirmed in much foundational photographic theory—as is clear from André Bazin’s 1945 comment: ‘All art is founded on human agency, but in photography alone can we celebrate its absence’.¹⁰⁷ I would contend that this is a caricature of photography—and of our encounters with images more generally—that does not stand up to much scrutiny. It is my contention that these works, which emerge in relation to photography *and* drawing, and productively complicate any easy distinctions between the forms, are a model for the performative dynamic of the image more broadly understood.

These drawings, in their painstaking fidelity to their photographic sources, play on the affective and evidentiary resonances of both mediums. In this they can be seen in light of attempts to situate much recent drawing within an expanded definition of documentary. The interest in what Hillary L. Chute calls the ‘hand-drawn document’ is part of a renewed attentiveness to and emphasis on the performative aspects of documentary, including the embodied, affective, and reflexive aspects of the

¹⁰⁵ Hillary L. Chute, *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 20.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 21. It is a comparison often reiterated in claims for drawing’s corporeality—not least by Chute herself: ‘Marks made on paper by hand are an index of the body in a way that a photograph, “taken” through a lens, is not.’ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 20. Clearly this is true—the particular character of the embodiment entailed by drawing and photography is different in kind and degree. And yet that does not mean that photography is not an embodied, materially-engaged practice.

¹⁰⁷ Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges,’ 188; André Bazin cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 20.

documentary image.¹⁰⁸ Saltzman describes Alison Bechdel's drawings of photographs in the graphic memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006) in terms that bear repeating here: for Bechdel as for the artists I discuss, these are 'drawings that come so close to their photographic objects that they are, in some sense, their surrogates, their doubles, [the] graphic renderings make the process of (photo)mechanical reproduction an intimate act of reconstruction'.¹⁰⁹

The photograph, Roberts argues, is a 'form of practical knowledge, an inscription of, and an intervention in, a socially divided world'.¹¹⁰ He writes that that 'the claims to "knowledge" and to "truth" still haunt the social functions of photography today, just as they haunt the wider assimilation of photography into the categories of art'.¹¹¹ And yet photography is also haunted by its failings—its inadequacy to the demands of truth-telling, as I will go on to explore; but also its artifice—the particular kinds of staging, framing and other editorialising acts that shape the photograph, and that are so gleefully exposed by the debunkers of its ostensible transparency. In an attempt to evade a simple dichotomy between the true and the false—or the found and the fabricated—Richard Shiff has described photography as 'a form of catachresis: that which can be two things and yet remain neither'.¹¹² It is neither straightforwardly 'figural' (the term Roberts uses to denote 'staged, digitally amended') nor 'proper' (or 'documentary'); 'neither an art nor a nonart'.¹¹³ Shiff writes, 'The advantage to

¹⁰⁸ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 7. This involves, as Chute discusses, working against view that 'the more the human hand can be seen as having worked on an image, the weaker is the image's claim to offer truth'. Bruno Latour cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 7. Chute is writing about comics, a field in which the growth of reportage and memoir is particularly notable.

¹⁰⁹ Lisa Saltzman, *Daguerreotypes: Fugitive Subjects, Contemporary Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 91.

¹¹⁰ Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, 4. This is something he develops in more recent work, including *Photography and its Violations*, in which he argues that 'what gives photography its politically exacting and philosophically demanding identity is, first and foremost, its unquenchable social intrusiveness and invasiveness, and, as such, its infinite capacity for truth-telling'. John Roberts, *Photography and its Violations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 1.

¹¹¹ John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography, and the Everyday* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 2.

¹¹² Roberts, *Photography and Its Violations*, 70. See Richard Shiff, 'Phototropism (Figuring the Proper),' *Studies in the History of Art* 20 (1989): 161-179.

¹¹³ Roberts, *Photography and Its Violations*, 3; 69 'Proper' is Shiff's term—see Shiff, 'Phototropism,' 161.

considering photography as catachresis [...] is that one understands why the art/documentation debate leads nowhere. [...] Its status seems to depend on a context of comparative representations, yet that context never becomes sufficiently complete to determine on which side of the distinction the catachresis should lie—figured or proper, art or documentation.¹¹⁴ Pursuing the idea of the ‘hand-drawn document’, I explore how these works might be seen as catachrestic in this way—tied to the truth claims of documentary, and yet distinct from them; two things and yet neither.¹¹⁵

Azoulay’s insistence on the event of photography as a practice that is perpetually developing across multiple participants troubles the caricature of photographic detachment that is set in opposition to the discursive, unfolding momentum of drawing. On the contrary, what Azoulay’s ontology makes clear is that such images can be both profoundly engaged in processes of mediation, rereading, and relational and embodied. Stimson describes photography in terms that bear comparison with Azoulay’s account of the photographic event, as a ‘*pas de trois* between photographer-subject, photographed object, and beholding audience—a dance that is defined only in the interaction of elements, not by the identity of any one of the elements themselves’.¹¹⁶ It is a dance that configures bodies and their mechanical prostheses via the accumulation of images. It is just such a relational understanding of the image as an unfolding process of embodied encounters that can account for its affective resonances—here, my understanding of affect is informed by Rosi Braidotti’s observation that ‘affects are the body’s capacity to enter relations—to be affected’.¹¹⁷ As Hoogland puts it, ‘affects are not presocial’.¹¹⁸ Affect here, then, is not synonymous with emotion or feeling (though it may involve taking those into account) but describes, in Hoogland’s terms, ‘the ability to affect and be affected’.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Shiff, ‘Phototropism,’ 175.

¹¹⁵ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 7.

¹¹⁶ Blake Stimson, *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 171.

¹¹⁷ Rosi Braidotti cited in Hoogland, *A Violent Embrace*, 11.

¹¹⁸ Hoogland, *A Violent Embrace*, 11.

¹¹⁹ Hoogland, *A Violent Embrace*, 15.

My understanding of drawing is therefore not one that seeks firm distinctions between practices of image-making but rather addresses the affinities between approaches in order to shed light upon the political stakes of particular practices and works, in ways that are attentive to the image's material presence. And so the broader context is a claim to something like what Haraway calls 'the embodied nature of all vision', in an attempt to 'reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body'—taking these drawings as particular exemplars that amplify those embodied dynamics.¹²⁰

Taylor elaborates an understanding of a 'repertoire of embodied practice/knowledge', which she sets in opposition to the apparent stability of 'the archive of supposedly enduring materials'.¹²¹ Both are forms of knowledge and of transmission, and as such articulate a relationship to the past: Taylor writes that 'the repertoire, like the archive, is mediated. The process of selection, memorisation or internalisation, and transmission takes place within (and in turn helps constitute) specific systems of representation'.¹²² And yet, as I will explore in more detail, Taylor's attentiveness to a repertoire of 'multiple forms of embodied acts [that] are always present, though in a constant state of againness', allows for an understanding of situated forms of knowledge and of memory—particularly those corporeal and affective dimensions of experience—that 'exceed the archive's ability to capture [them]', and that are consequently often overlooked.¹²³

Taylor, a performance studies scholar, is alert to the intersections of, and distinctions between, discourses of performance and performativity. J. L. Austin's foundational work on performativity 'points to language that acts', she writes.¹²⁴ She refers to the work of political theorist Benjamin Ardit, who notes the utopian potential of performatives: 'They are actions and statements that anticipate something to come as participants begin to experience—as they begin to live—what they are fighting for

¹²⁰ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges,' 188.

¹²¹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.

¹²² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

¹²³ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20-21.

¹²⁴ Taylor, 'The Politics of Passion'.

while they fight for it'.¹²⁵ The ways in which the term was subsequently picked up and developed raised the prospect of 'the oblique intersection', as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Andrew Parker put it, 'between performativity and the loose cluster of theatrical practices, relations, and traditions known as performance'.¹²⁶ Oblique because, as they point out, 'the stretch between theatrical and deconstructive meanings of "performative" seems to span the polarities of, at either extreme, the *extroversion* of the actor, the *introversion* of the signifier'.¹²⁷

Taylor proposes the term 'performativ' as an adjectival form for performance, in order to distinguish it from those discourse-centred, deconstructive accounts of performativity by theorists like Derrida and Judith Butler.¹²⁸ Nonetheless, she acknowledges that the concept of performativity '[calls] attention to different political acts, uptakes, and positionalities encompassed by the broader word, performance'.¹²⁹

Taylor describes how 'a performance studies lens would [...bridge] the schism' between different epistemological practices, 'challenging disciplinary compartmentalisation'.¹³⁰ It therefore seems suited to what are already hybrid forms: neither straightforwardly expressive tokens of physical effort nor mechanically-reproduced appropriations; incorporating both image and text; multiple and cumulative in form, working the line between one and many, between the isolated and stilled moment and the accreted time of the ongoing process; between past and present. In Taylor's terms, performance here becomes a 'methodological lens'—an

¹²⁵ Benjamin Arditi cited in Taylor, 'The Politics of Passion,' 6.

¹²⁶ Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds., *Performativity and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1995), 1.

¹²⁷ Parker and Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Performativity and Performance*, 2.

¹²⁸ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 6. As Taylor puts it, Butler's work on the concept addresses the 'subsuming [of] subjectivity and cultural agency into normative discursive practice'. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 6.

¹²⁹ Taylor, 'The Politics of Passion'. In this essay Taylor also proposes the additional term 'animatives' to describe that which 'exceeds discursive formulation', including affect, emotion and embodiment. She does this, she writes, '(in the spirit of Austin) to expand the range of political possibilities and methodologies within the broader rubric of "performance"'. Taylor, 'The Politics of Passion'.

¹³⁰ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 26.

epistemology of embodied practice.¹³¹ To understand these drawings in terms of performance, then—as an ongoing process unfolding contingently and unpredictably across multiple participants—‘allows us to expand what we understand by “knowledge”’.¹³² Azoulay makes the comparison between performance and photography explicit when she discusses ‘the stage of photography’: ‘Like the theatrical stage, the photograph serves as a kind of arena for putting on display setting, characters, actions and consequences that are not to be considered in isolation but which form part of the plot that the photograph sets in motion’.¹³³ Azoulay cites Arendt on theatre: ‘It is the only art whose sole subject is man in his relationship to others’.¹³⁴ The parallel is grounded in their shared claim to reality, a condition of these works’ fundamental heteronomy: ‘the concrete particulars of the event to which the photograph bears testimony, held generally within the paradigm of art to be a kind of excess that can be sloughed off, distinguish the photograph from other artistic images’.¹³⁵

Sharon Hayes writes about the experience of political images that induce an ‘affective space of witnessing’.¹³⁶ Thinking about what that might mean is one of my starting points for coming to an understanding of these works. The act of bearing witness, as Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas discuss, is performative.¹³⁷ Its dynamics have primarily been interrogated in relation to experiences of trauma, though I would suggest there is much to be learnt from such discussions about how political imaginaries are shaped in encounters with the histories of political struggle. As described by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in ground-breaking work on trauma and witness testimony, the act of bearing witness seeks to undo the survivor’s initial

¹³¹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 3.

¹³² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16.

¹³³ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 82.

¹³⁴ Hannah Arendt cited in Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 82.

¹³⁵ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 82.

¹³⁶ Sharon Hayes, ‘Certain Resemblances: Notes on Performance, Event, and Political Images,’ in *On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, ed. Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh and Jill Winder. (Rotterdam: Post Editions and Utrecht: BAK, 2011), 90.

¹³⁷ Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ in *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*, ed. Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, London: Wallflower Press, 2007): 1-20.

psychic foreclosure of the traumatic event, involving the survivor-witness in the experience of the event as if for the first time.¹³⁸ Truth is therefore produced in testimony, and not simply related. What is more, bearing witness performatively establishes and emerges within a ‘framework of relationality’—it has to be addressed to another, ‘a listener who consequently functions as a witness to the original witness’.¹³⁹ As such, the testimonial is distinct from the evidentiary, which is constative. The distinction is one that must inform any attempt to come to an understanding of the work of the image.

The understanding of the image as a constative form—and in particular the documentary image, of which the photograph is paradigmatic—has been central to a certain critique of images—indeed, to a generalised suspicion of images (not least, as many observers have pointed out, within trauma studies itself).¹⁴⁰ The image has borne, in Hallas and Guerin’s terms, ‘the singular burden of veracity’, the weight of the assumptions, dissected by Bruno Latour, about its promise of objectivity.¹⁴¹ And yet, of course, ‘reality is never entirely soluble in the visible’.¹⁴² It is in trauma studies that these limitations have been most painfully evident, and the capacity of the image to bear witness has been most thoroughly interrogated. The image ‘potentially offers invaluable knowledge of the event and, at the same time, it fails to do justice to the human magnitude of the traumatic event’.¹⁴³ In these terms the event is therefore

¹³⁸ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (London: Routledge, 1992). See also the discussion in Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction’, 10-11.

¹³⁹ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction’, 10-11.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction’, 2; and Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 5. Chute describes the non-fiction comics she discusses as interventions ‘against a culture of invisibility’. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 5. That invisibility is ‘enforced in two different ways’, she argues: by ‘a culture of censorship’ (which she suggests has become more prevalent in the US since the events of 11 September, 2001); and by ‘trauma theory’s focus on the unrepresentable’. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 268.

¹⁴¹ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction’, 4. For Latour’s discussion of objectivity see Latour, ‘What is Iconoclasm? Or Is There a World Beyond the Image Wars?’, in *Iconoclasm: Beyond the Image-Wars in Science, Religion and Art*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe and Cambridge, MA: ZKM and MIT Press, 2002), 20.

¹⁴² Jacques Rancière, ‘The Intolerable Image’, in *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2009), 89.

¹⁴³ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction’, 6.

beyond representation, though not beyond narration. The evident inadequacy of any given image, in the face of imputed claims to a notion of objective truth that can be shown to be chimeric, throws into question the very possibility of meaningful representation that is not voyeuristic or instrumentalising, to return to the terms used by Steyerl.¹⁴⁴ And yet the artists I discuss here persistently ‘take the risk of representation’ in their drawings.¹⁴⁵ Discussing a particular controversy about a series of photographs taken in Auschwitz, Jacques Rancière describes an attempt to ‘establish a radical opposition between [...] the visible image and spoken narrative’; and between ‘two sorts of attestation—proof and testimony’.¹⁴⁶ In this opposition, it is spoken narrative that delivers testimony, and the image that is on the side of proof: evidentiary, but inadequate to articulating experience, in all its excessive aspects. Behind this understanding of spoken narrative—and part of what has been understood to be its value—is what is understood to be its closeness to the body. As Hallas and Guerin discuss, ‘Words, particularly those of oral testimony, are still connected to the body of the sufferer while the material image implies a separation (spatial, temporal or both) from that which it captures’.¹⁴⁷ What is more, ‘seeing is a passive activity whereas saying is active’.¹⁴⁸ In fact, as I will explore in detail in these chapters, such oppositions are not tenable. The problematic notions of objectivity that sustain such a dichotomy between proof and testimony have been comprehensively interrogated, and the relationships between its terms—and the possible truth claims

¹⁴⁴ Steyerl, ‘Documentarism as Politics of Truth’.

¹⁴⁵ Hillary L. Chute, *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 92.

¹⁴⁶ Rancière, ‘The Intolerable Image’, 89. In the interest of directness, the ellipsis in the quotation here cuts out the words ‘two kinds of representation’—Rancière is at pains to point out that ‘he who testifies in a narrative as to what he has seen in a death camp is engaged in a work of representation, just like the person who sought to record a visible trace of it’. Rancière, ‘The Intolerable Image’, 90. It is an observation that further troubles any attempt to denigrate the performative possibilities of the work of representation by establishing artificial dichotomies between approaches.

¹⁴⁷ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction’, 7.

¹⁴⁸ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction’, 7.

that might nonetheless persist in any renewed understanding of those relationships —have been reconsidered.¹⁴⁹

EPISTEMOLOGIES OF EMBODIED VISION

To some extent, the distinction between proof and testimony discussed above can be mapped onto Taylor's distinction between the archive and the repertoire. In both cases, the former term is (apparently) stable, the product of a division between 'the source of knowledge [and] the knower'; the latter is contingent, embodied and ephemeral.¹⁵⁰ And yet the dividing lines that have been drawn in different instances cut across one another. Where oral testimony is often opposed to the image in trauma studies, Taylor describes a 'written/oral divide'.¹⁵¹ What is common to both is a suspicion of distance—a rejection of the disembodied epistemologies that give rise to what Haraway has described as 'various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims', in favour of 'situated knowledges'.¹⁵² Trauma theorists deplore the distance of the gaze: it is not only a flaw of images but a critique of visibility as such. Susan Sontag points out that 'Some of the reproaches made against images of atrocity are not different from characterisations of sight itself. Sight is effortless; sight requires spatial distance; sight can be turned off [...] The very qualities that made the ancient Greek philosophers consider sight the most excellent, the noblest of the senses are now associated with a deficit'.¹⁵³ It is that deficit that preoccupies Taylor when she argues that 'writing is about distance'.¹⁵⁴ She cites de Certeau: 'The power that writing's expansionism leaves intact is colonial in principle. It is extended without being changed. It is tautological, immunised against both any alterity that

¹⁴⁹ This question of truth claims is indebted to work done within trauma studies which might nonetheless fail to provide an adequate account of the work of images. As Guerin and Hallas point out, 'trauma studies [...] offer poststructuralist theory a means to reintroduce a political and ethical stake in the representation of the real without regressing to the very notions of mimetic transparency that it has striven to overturn'. Guerin and Hallas, 'Introduction', 3.

¹⁵⁰ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.

¹⁵¹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 24.

¹⁵² Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges,' 191; 188.

¹⁵³ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2003), 105.

¹⁵⁴ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 18.

might transform it and whatever dares to resist it'.¹⁵⁵ If these works make one thing clear then it is that such tautology is not possible: in reiteration, there is change and development. To come to know something is in some way to become entangled with it. These drawings lay bare the entanglement of artist, image, and each participant in the many accreted encounters whose traces are in some way recorded in them, and the encounters which they in turn perpetuate.

Taylor acknowledges that the distinction she deploys between archive and repertoire involves broad characterisations of what in practice are often hybrid and multiple forms of knowledge, and 'acts of transfer' through which such knowledge is shared.¹⁵⁶ In practice, 'the archive and the repertoire exist in a constant state of interaction' across 'performatic, digital, and visual' as well as discursive fields.¹⁵⁷ Taylor's interest is not in simply inverting these acts of validation in advocating the value of what she describes as the repertoire—leaving the reductive and misrepresentative characterisations upon which they rely intact—but in challenging those forms of knowledge and understanding that have been overlooked as a result. Situated knowledge, of the kind that these images provide—as examples of embodied sight—has been discredited—deemed to be an 'epistemic vice'.¹⁵⁸ Taylor insists upon such a distinctive repertoire of embodied forms of knowledge and acts of transfer as a means to contest the ways in which such practices of differentiation have historically been invoked in order to validate one form of knowledge above another, on an often spurious basis: the archive is not stable, of course.

It is because of its 'situatedness', its relationship to particular bodies, that a certain 'discomfort' exists, as Chute observes, 'with the notion of drawing (and its attendant abstractions) as possibly "true" or "nonfictional"—as opposed to writing, a system of communication seen to be more transparently true or accurate'.¹⁵⁹ These drawings, like the non-fiction comics discussed by Chute, '[raise] productive issues of taxonomy and classifiability'—as Chute puts it, making reference to Peter Galison and Lorraine

¹⁵⁵ De Certeau cited in Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 18.

¹⁵⁶ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 2.

¹⁵⁷ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21; 6.

¹⁵⁸ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 49.

¹⁵⁹ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 7.

Daston, ‘the next relevant question [...] is not “Is it true?” but rather “How does it work?”’¹⁶⁰ The question recalls another, posed by Kosofsky Sedgwick in her call for ‘moving from the rather fixated question Is a particular piece of knowledge true, and how can we know? to the further questions: What does knowledge do—the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows? How, in short, is knowledge performative, and how best does one move among its causes and effects?’¹⁶¹ These drawings stand as efforts to attain a kind of situated knowledge, of how political subjects are formed and how political agency is enacted, in ways that open up a discussion about the specific forms of political agency available to the work of art. As Haraway puts it, ‘This is an objective vision that initiates, rather than closes off, the problem of responsibility for the generativity of all visual practices’.¹⁶²

In the chapters that follow, I begin to address the themes and questions I have outlined here in detail, bringing them to bear on specific art practices. In work by Andrea Bowers, Fernando Bryce, and Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve, we see drawing used as a means of confronting the ‘after-life of that which is understood, whose pulse can still be felt in the present’.¹⁶³

The work of Andrea Bowers is my starting point for the next chapter. Bowers’s carefully-worked pencil drawings weaves a tangled skein of affiliations, between the individual and the collective and between different movements across time. Drawing comparisons between Bowers’s practice and those of radical historiography, I ask what understanding is at work here of the idea of political agency. How does that in turn shape a particular sense of the politics of the aesthetic, and of the artwork more narrowly defined? These are partisan images—Bowers has spoken of her work as a

¹⁶⁰ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 38.

¹⁶¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, ‘Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You,’ in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 124.

¹⁶² Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges,’ 190.

¹⁶³ Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street* (London: Verso, 2006), 352. The phrase is also mentioned by Schneider—see Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 197.

form of ‘advocacy’.¹⁶⁴ In her drawings she takes on documentary material in a process that is time-consuming, attentive and precise. More than acts of critique, Bowers’s works are tokens of a profound personal investment. How does the entangled subjectivity forged in the process of political affiliation play out here?

In the third chapter I discuss Fernando Bryce’s 2004 work *Revolución*, an iconography of the Cuban revolution and the global revolutionary left that developed in its wake, elaborated across a series of 219 drawings. I consider the temporal and spatial syntax of Bryce’s work, and of the kinds of figurative drawing common to all the artists I discuss, addressing the serial image and practices of copying. How is the work shaped by a politics of deferral and delay? Bryce’s work plays out across a series of images, in a process both embodied and analytical. I look at how such formal strategies open up a space for the exercise of social imagination and the testing of collective subjectivities.

In the final chapter, I consider how drawings might be understood as embodied practices that give shape to situated knowledge. How do these works, understood as performative acts of documentary, engage a politicised mode of bearing witness? How might understanding these art practices in such terms make it possible to think more clearly about the kinds of political agency available to them? Looking at collaborative work by Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve, on the history of the British suffragette movement and in particular the Women’s Social and Political Union, in this chapter I also consider how practices of drawing sit alongside other, performance-based approaches. With reference to Azoulay’s writing on the ‘event of photography’, I consider how Plender and Reeve’s drawings might be understood to occupy a liminal position between what Taylor calls the ‘performatic’ and the visual.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Andrea Bowers cited by Jill Dawsey, ‘Andrea Bowers’s History Lessons’, *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, no. 14 (Autumn/Winter 2006): 23.

¹⁶⁵ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 26; Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 6.

2

CHOREOGRAPHIES
OF BINDING AND
UNBINDING
THE DRAWINGS OF
ANDREA BOWERS

Andrea Bowers's work cumulatively charts a radical egalitarian tradition as it has developed across the United States during the twentieth century and as it persists today, with a particular emphasis on the role of women in that tradition. Individual works dwell on the stories of particular movements as Bowers revisits archival and documentary material, most notably by redrawing the artefacts and documents of past struggles in meticulous, photorealist detail. These drawings are inflected by the other works in different media encountered alongside them—not least video, featuring staged performances or documentary footage of protests, and collections of source material. With each exhibition, the balance of elements is reconfigured slightly; here, I will consider two related bodies of work, almost a decade apart, in which the drawings are most prominent.

Not all the movements depicted by Bowers are widely known. Geographically scattered and with ostensibly disparate concerns, approaches and constituencies, there is a sense that the skein of affiliations within which they operated have been forgotten, eclipsing the ways in which they emerged as part of a broader movement of resistance—and their legacies. As such, to some extent the tradition is established in its telling, in the face of a contradictory and hostile narrative of US politics which would doubt its coherence and diminish its significance. There is, then, the sense that these histories—and, by implication, these works—are contentious. Their repercussions persist in ways not yet fully played out. This much is apparent in the recurrence of themes in Bowers's works in unexpected ways, as she has shifted attention between historical and contemporary sources, from early anti-nuclear protests to the recent Occupy movement. The breadth of her engagement with these struggles—and the often complex and ambiguous legacies with which she contends—belie dismissive criticisms that artworks which revisit images of protest simply fetishise a hackneyed trope for rebellion (more often than not one with its roots in the 1960s), out of fashion or nostalgia. Rather, I will contend it can be more productively aligned with those works of radical history which, in common with art practices like Bowers's, 'affirm some autonomy, in everyday life and self-perception, in the formation of popular consciousness', and which 'perceive and animate the space for people to think differently with and against the forces determining them'.¹

¹ Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*, 44. See chap. 1, n. 54.

What kinds of images are these? What experiences of affiliation and political engagement are articulated in and through these scenes? How does a sense of collective subjecthood play out in a relationship to the past in these drawings? And what passions, what antagonisms inflect these lines? In her notes on the political image, Sharon Hayes reflects upon a convoluted temporality which, she suggests, ‘produces a kind of opening [...] that has as much to do with our present relationship to the past as it does to our ability to project ourselves into the future’.² Hayes argues that particular ‘arresting images’ implicate us in the experience of the event. She writes that such images ‘seize me, they hold me, freeze me in some affective space of witnessing—witnessing what I also know to be an event I have not witnessed’.³ For Hayes, an encounter with the political image comes to constitute a form of experience. There is a sense in which these works are implicated—and in turn, implicate us—in a political encounter.

Hayes’s metaphors of immobility in the face of such upheaval call to mind Walter Benjamin’s comment that ‘image is dialectics at a standstill’, and should perhaps be understood as akin to the modernist impulsion to seek that which disrupts the smooth flow of progress and continuity.⁴ Indeed, Hayes herself describes her attempt to consider how such images might function ‘as a disruption to various straightforward narratives of the progressive march of historical time’.⁵ For Benjamin, ‘materialistic historiography [...] is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well’.⁶ Christine Ross describes how Benjamin ‘establishes a new relationship between past and present through a specific exploration of the image’, which ‘has the ability to produce a constellation (a dialectics) that brings the present “into a critical state”’.⁷ She cites Jürgen Habermas: ‘The anticipation of what is new in the future is realised only through remembering a past that has been suppressed. Benjamin understands the

² Sharon Hayes, ‘Certain Resemblances’, 94. See chap. 1, n. 136.

³ Hayes, ‘Certain Resemblances’, 90.

⁴ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 463.

⁵ Hayes, ‘Certain Resemblances’, 90.

⁶ Walter Benjamin, ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’, 254. See chap. 1, n. 95.

⁷ Christine Ross, *The Past is the Present*, 159. See chap. 1, n. 44.

sign of such a messianic cessation of events as “a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past”.⁸

In addressing the obscured histories of resistance movements which shaped contemporary attempts to find new political horizons, Bowers is able to ‘re-historicise the critical resources and productive aporias’ they bear, ‘as models with ramifications [...] now’.⁹ In what follows, I will consider how her work opens up questions about what political agency might mean now—how and through what it might operate, and how the image, and the artwork, might intervene in that process.

MAGICAL POLITICS

The three drawings in Andrea Bowers’s 2003 series *Magical Politics* depict acts of civil disobedience by groups that emerged from the confluence of feminist and environmental movements in the United States during the early 1980s. The series takes its name from a term coined by historian Barbara Epstein in her 1993 book, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, to describe the often disparate coalitions of women engaged in nonviolent direct action against nuclear power and weaponry.¹⁰ Epstein has described the way in which the specific struggles against the establishment of nuclear power stations, around which such coalitions of activists coalesced, were grounded in the belief that such actions would foment a revolutionary movement for a nonviolent, egalitarian society. This was to be a cultural revolution, one for which transforming consciousness was as important as, and often prioritised above, working towards the seizure of power.¹¹ Opposition to nuclear power might, it was felt, develop in time into a movement for nuclear disarmament

⁸ Habermas cited in Ross, *The Past is the Present*, 160.

⁹ John Roberts, ‘Introduction’, 354. See chap. 1, n. 66.

¹⁰ Barbara Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution: Non-Violent Direct Action in the 1970s and 1980s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹¹ Epstein suggests that cultural revolution was, for the New Left of the 1960s, ‘a widely felt impulse rather than a coherent political direction’: she writes, ‘in the late seventies and early eighties, the direct action movement took up the task of cultural revolution and tried to give it greater coherence, to articulate it as a philosophy of political protest, and to draw out its implications for forms of organisation and styles of political action’. Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 21. In part, this was motivated by the need for ‘a theory of revolution that [...] pointed to the need for revolution without raising the expectation that it would happen quickly’. Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 24.

and go on to feed a broader desire for radical and nonviolent change. Nonviolence in this context was not to be straightforwardly equated with pacifism and did not amount to a commitment to abjuring violence in all circumstances. Rather, it emerged from a sense that it was strategically necessary to building a mass movement in the United States which could mobilise diverse constituencies, a position which arose at least in part in response to the violent rhetoric and sectarianism of the revolutionary movements of the late 1960s.¹² It was also indicative of the prefigurative character of the movement, for which building alternative communities was a means of realising in practice the new society at stake in the struggle. It led to the involvement of a broader range of people than had been typical of the movements of the late 1960s and 1970s, including activists with heterodox spiritual affiliations. Most notably, alliances of pagans and Christians of various denominations (many influenced by the ascent of liberation theology in Latin America), became involved.¹³ In all cases, women played major roles.

This emphasis on establishing wide support for the movement meant that it developed processes of consensus-based decision-making, adopting a broadly anarchist structure founded on networks of affinity groups.¹⁴ Becoming influential in the United States during the anti-Vietnam War movement of the 1960s and 1970s, that such approaches prevailed among the nonviolent direct action groups of the period is due at least in part to the efforts of Murray Bookchin, anarchist founder of the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont and member of the Clamshell Alliance,

¹² This point is made by Epstein in a radio interview recorded in 2012, on *Against the Grain with Sasha Lilley*, KPFA, January 24, 2012, accessed September 9, 2016, <https://kpfa.org/episode/77202/>. In *Protest & Cultural Revolution*, Epstein writes that, during the late 1960s, 'the countercultural left, like the more conventional antiwar movement, was fascinated by violence. Groups such as the Motherfuckers made a point of playing with violence, using violent imagery as a mirror in which mainstream America might see itself'. Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 50. Elsewhere, she suggests that this preoccupation accompanied a 'militaristic style' influenced by 'Third Worldism', which took anti-colonial struggles as a model for revolutionary activity. Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 45. (In this sense, the work broaches the much-contested question of militancy, that recurs as a theme throughout the drawings discussed in subsequent chapters.)

¹³ Among these were the Atlantic Life Community, a network of communities and individuals centred on Jonah House, a 'House of Resistance' in Baltimore and part of the Catholic Workers Movement; and the ecumenical Ground Zero Center in Poulsbo, Washington.

¹⁴ These processes and their development are described by Epstein on *Against the Grain with Sasha Lilley*.

the initial manifestation of the anti-nuclear movement and a model for later developments.¹⁵ Epstein also draws attention to the part played by Quakers in introducing affinity groups to the Alliance.¹⁶ Such groups, which often emerged from associations formed outwith the movement, met to discuss tactical questions and appointed spokespeople to a decision-making council, in a structure which remains widely used by political activists today.¹⁷ At the heart of the movement was a programme of civil disobedience, including occupation.

Few of the myriad ideological currents discernible among those involved in the movement were universally accepted or uncontested. What persisted, in the development of each new iteration of the movement in specific struggles, was the commitment to feminist and environmentalist politics. Epstein writes that ‘women’s affinity groups, women’s clusters and women’s actions [took] place within and outside the framework of the existing ‘mixed’ organisations of the movement’.¹⁸ It is on these actions that Bowers focuses in her drawings.

In *Diablo blockade, Diablo Nuclear Power Plant, Abalone Alliance, 1981* Bowers reproduces in meticulous detail a photograph of a protest by the group Mothers for Peace, against an electricity-generating nuclear power station built near the San Andreas and Hosfrie fault lines (fig. 2.1). As elsewhere in Bowers’s work, the title of the drawing indicates quite clearly the particular historical and political context of the source image used. The Abalone Alliance was formed from a coalition of activists in San Luis Obispo, California, and Mothers for Peace were a central contingent. Their struggle against the Diablo plant, which had been built and was being prepared for use, followed the efforts of the Clamshell Alliance on the New Hampshire coast, which had failed to prevent the building of a nuclear power station in the town of

¹⁵ See Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 167. Epstein writes, ‘Bookchin argued that post-scarcity conditions transformed the nature of revolution, making a classless, stateless, ecologically balanced society attainable for the first time’. She continues, ‘Bookchin’s utopian politics and his contention that the working class had been replaced by youth and the counterculture as the leading edge of revolution provided a theoretical framework for those whose outlook was shaped by the movements of the early seventies’.

¹⁶ See Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 66.

¹⁷ Most notably, such processes are used by the Occupy movement. See the discussion on *Against the Grain with Sasha Lilley*.

¹⁸ See Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 157.

Seabrook but had been successful in bringing together thousands of people before fracturing over strategic questions. The commitment to nonviolence was more explicit in the Abalone Alliance than in its predecessor, as was the influence of anarchism, and particularly anarcho-feminism, which put the position of women and the role of the family at the heart of its critique of power. It was here, too, that activists whose political convictions were inflected by spiritual beliefs became preponderant, in what was not only the result of adopting strategies more amenable to those of a spiritual bent, but also a reflection of a sensibility then widespread on the west coast of the United States.¹⁹ The Diablo site was occupied for a two-week period after the plant was licensed. On the final day of the occupation, an engineer from the plant announced that he had found a major error in the blueprints for the site, and it was closed down indefinitely for major repairs in what was considered a victory by the blockaders.

¹⁹ A point made by Epstein on *Against the Grain with Sasha Lilley*.

Figure 2.1 Andrea Bowers, *Diabloblockade, Diablo Nuclear Power Plant, Abalone Alliance, 1981*, graphite on paper, 2003.

The photograph has been taken through a chain-link fence which dissects our view of the protestors, its mesh echoed in the knotted shirts around the protestors' waists, which seem to be lashing them together, and in their linked arms. Bowers's interest in physicality—developed in in earlier work about sporting events or amateur athletes, like 1999's *All the World is Waiting for You*—is evident here.²⁰ Resistance—and the collective bonds that sustain it—are embodied in braided arms. It is a theme that recurs in the works that accompany it as space is physically staked out and power is broached, countered and reworked, across meshes, webs, chains—barriers and bindings of all kinds.

The fence reappears in *Seneca Falls, New York, 1983, Women climbing over the fence to protest the nuclear test site* (figs. 2.2-2.3). Not only was the town of Seneca Falls the site of the first feminist convention in the United States in 1848, but by 1983 it was

²⁰ Andrea Bowers, *All the World Is Waiting for You*, laser disc, laser disc player, video projector and Plexiglas, 1999. This was one of a series of video installations about amateur female ice-skaters, following works made at baseball games, parades and air shows.

Figure 2.2 Andrea Bowers, *Seneca Falls, New York, 1983, Women climbing over the fence to protest the nuclear test site*, graphite on paper, 2003 (detail).

Figure 2.3
Andrea Bowers,
*Seneca Falls, New
York, 1983.*

also home to the Seneca Army Depot, from where cruise missiles were sent to the Greenham Common air force base in the UK. The Seneca Women's Peace Camp was established on grounds adjacent to the depot, inspired by and in solidarity with the longstanding encampment at RAF Greenham Common. Bowers's drawing of women breaching the site's perimeter stretches out from the torn left edge of the paper. It does not fill the page but is adrift high on a vast and otherwise blank sheet (see figure 2.2). In this it is unlike the other drawings of the same series, but typical of Bowers's elliptical approach in many other works. She had previously isolated figures from a crowd, in the series *Spectacular Appearances* (1997-8), or on foil sheets in *Intimate Strangers* (2000) (figs. 2.4-2.5)—a device she would return to as her subject matter became more overtly political in subsequent works about protestors.

Figure 2.4 Andrea Bowers, *Spectacular Appearances (Man in a San Jose Crowd)*, coloured pencil on paper, 1997 (detail).

Figure 2.5 Andrea Bowers, *Intimate Strangers*, foil, coloured pencil and graphite on paper, 2000 (detail).

Mike Sperlinger has noted that the figures so assiduously and faithfully rendered ‘are so small that they are forever being reproduced as “details”, when in fact they themselves are already details of an event, faces in a crowd’.²¹ This drawing meets the same fate when reproduced, but here Bowers does not isolate a detail from her source image in quite the way Sperlinger has in mind; the scene is clamorous and self-contained. And yet one’s eyes are drawn to the heads of the main protagonists, in stark profile above the mêlée: the backdrop of the army depot has been excised. It is the protestors themselves that demand our attention, their actions elevated literally and figuratively by the image’s ability to command such space. Suspended in the top left-hand corner of the page, we might imagine that it marks the start of a statement; we are inclined to read out from the scene into the expanse that follows. Or, being more pictorially inclined, that the fence that they climb begins to stake out a space from which they emerge, a voluble emptiness alerting us to the morass of untold stories upon which they climb. The part here, does not stand for the whole but speaks of its absence. The source image is not reproduced in its appearance as an artefact, as happens in a later work (see fig. 2.6). It emerges from the page: at points the undulating line where fence and ground meet dissolves into it. Against the shadow cast by the paper’s edge, the drawing billows from the left like a flag from a pole.

Figure 2.6 Andrea Bowers, *Young Abortion Rights Activist, San Francisco Bay Area, 1966* (Photo Lent from the Archives of Patricia Maginnis), coloured pencil and graphite on paper, 2005 (detail).

²¹ Mike Sperlinger, ‘Bad Example: Andrea Bowers,’ *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, no. 14 (Autumn/Winter 2006): 11.

Barriers of the kind breached by activists at Seneca Falls are détourned by the meshes of the Weavers Alliance in *Women's Pentagon Action, 1981: Woven Web Around Pentagon* (fig. 2.7). Several women sit beneath a loose web, strung out from a knotted apex in the top left hand side of the drawing, with more strands of yarn visible in the distance. It forms a canopy over them, and binds the doors of the Pentagon, which have been woven shut. The fences encountered by the protestors are echoed in their own meshes, which became a visual and tactile emblem of the networked power of the movement, embodying resistance but also expansive and generative.

Figure 2.7 Andrea Bowers, *Women's Pentagon Action, 1981: Woven Web Around Pentagon*, graphite on paper, 2003.

As attention turned within the direct action movement to the arms race, feminisms of different kinds gained more influence.²² Anarcha-feminism and eco-feminism in particular were prominent by the time of the Pentagon Actions of 1980 and 1981 but, notwithstanding the differing emphases of the various feminist constituencies, what was particularly noticeable was the prevalence of some fundamentally essentialist assumptions within the movement, buttressed by the association of militarism and patriarchy. The tradition of women's work, invoked not only in the practice of weaving, but also in the disarmingly delicate work of unpicking that it demands of the police unbinding bodies and objects (much more time-consuming than clearing discarded placards), is one of many archaisms drawn upon in the affirmation of a female identity.²³ Spiritual groups elaborated a mythopoetic ritual practice founded on a belief in a lost matriarchal heritage which linked 'women's power with peace, ecology, spirituality, and egalitarianism... [giving] women a special role in movements for peace and social change'.²⁴ As Marina Warner wrote of the women's peace movement in the UK, 'Greenham Woman dances, keens, picnics in fancy dress, wears witches' costumes; constantly, she has recourse to archaic female customs and tasks, as mother, mourner, midwife and wisewoman'.²⁵ Seneca Woman, and the women of the Pentagon Actions, did much the same. Webs became popular as a (colourful) metaphor of the power of the women's peace movement. The web, as Marina Warner observes, is 'an organic structure, found in nature rather than man-made, fragile in its parts and strong in its whole'.²⁶ Weaving and web-making was taken up by peace protestors across the United States and elsewhere.

It is a trope that Bowers takes up in a piece exhibited alongside the drawings, *Defense of Necessity*, a 'soft blockade' of woven fabric embroidered with webs (fig. 2.8), which she would reprise elsewhere.²⁷ Tim Ingold, in his taxonomy of the line, notes that 'we

²² This point is made by Epstein in *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 167-178.

²³ See Marina Warner's account of weaving and protest at Greenham Common peace camp, in Marina Warner, *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985), 58.

²⁴ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 174.

²⁵ Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, 58.

²⁶ Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, 57.

²⁷ Most notably, with *Soft Blockades*, quilted fabric, 2004.

use the same verb, to draw, to refer to the activity of the hand both in the manipulation of threads and in the inscription of traces'.²⁸ A preoccupation with the handmade is apparent throughout Bowers's work, as a counterpart to the meticulous but laborious work of drawing.

The assorted feminisms within the nonviolent direct action movement had roots in the radical feminism of the later 1960s and early 1970s, and its legacy shaped the movement's practices. A belief in the need to transform consciousness accompanied a critique of the Marxist emphasis on economic structures, and was at the root of the desire for a cultural revolution founded in the building of prefigurative communities. In this it had much in common with anarchism, and anarcha-feminism's ascendancy came about in part because of its flexibility in fostering these affinities and incorporating a radical feminist analysis whilst

Figure 2.8 Andrea Bowers, *Defense of Necessity*, steel, fabric and yarn, 2003.

²⁸ Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 43.

distancing itself from the contentious issue of separatism.²⁹ In its commitment to establishing alternative communities the politics that emerged was paradigmatic of what John Roberts, after Frederic Jameson, has called utopian ‘enclave thinking’.³⁰ Jameson has written of enclaves as ‘something like a foreign body within the social’.³¹ He notes that, at the same time that they exist as ‘a space in which new wish images of the social can be elaborated and experimented on’, they remain ‘momentarily beyond the reach of the social and testify to its political powerlessness’.³² In the perennial antagonism in the politics of the left between what Andy Merrifield calls a ‘cold stream’ of negation and critique, and the ‘warm stream’, of optimism and ‘liberating desires’, it is the latter camp to which the nonviolent civil disobedience movement belongs.³³ Merrifield quotes Ernst Bloch: ‘Marxism as a doctrine of warmth is thus solely related to that positive Being-in-possibility, not subject to any disenchantment, which embraces the growing realisation of the realising element... The path then opens up within it as function of the goal, and the goal opens up as substance in the path’.³⁴ Indebted to that tradition of a politics of affirmation—imaginative, affective, and anticipatory—the movement sought to prefigure the society to come not only in the building of alternative communities (which was understood to be ‘in itself a political act’), but also in ritual and theatre, projecting a utopian vision and sustaining a collective identity for those communities.³⁵ The influence of the ‘feminist spirituality’ which had emerged was felt in such symbolic actions.³⁶ A pagan emphasis on countercultural community coincided with a

²⁹ While separatism became less credible and popular as a strategy, the structure of affinity groups obviously made it possible for women-only groups, which continued to have an important and enduring presence, especially in lesbian communities, to contribute to a broader movement.

³⁰ Roberts, ‘Introduction,’ 355.

³¹ Jameson cited in Roberts, ‘Introduction,’ 355.

³² Jameson cited in Roberts, ‘Introduction,’ 355.

³³ Andy Merrifield, *Magical Marxism: Subversive Politics and the Imagination* (London: Pluto Press, 2011).

³⁴ Bloch cited in Merrifield, *Magical Marxism*, 116.

³⁵ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 159.

³⁶ The phrase is Epstein’s: ‘Feminist Spirituality and Magical Politics’ is the title of the fifth chapter of *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*.

Christian idea of moral witness in a ‘politics of example’.³⁷ The stakes of the protest were dramatised in *tableaux vivants* and ritualistic performances of death and mourning, as cardboard tombstones were planted on the lawn of the Pentagon. Around the same time, similar tactics were being deployed by artists like Leslie Labowitz and Suzanne Lacy (who would go on to work with Bowers on a number of projects), whose 1977 event *In Mourning and in Rage* staged a ‘militant memorial’ to the victims of the Hillside Strangler, in which veiled women emerged from a hearse before gathering on the steps of Los Angeles City Hall.³⁸ Feminism was, as Epstein writes, ‘the main source of the symbolism, ritual, and political theater that have been used to affirm and create bonds among movement participants’.³⁹ The barricades of enmeshed bodies encountered in these drawings defiantly rework the language of enclosure as a metaphor for collective strength and unity.

The ambivalent acts of enclosing and binding recur throughout *Magical Politics*, and proliferate in the *Feminist Spirituality and Magical Politics Scrapbook* (fig. 2.9), where Bowers collects and shares her source material—newspaper cuttings, photographs with captions or scrawled annotations, and images of lattices, webs, and weavings of all kinds. The scrapbook itself is handmade, covered in a woven material much like that of *Defense of Necessity*, and similarly embroidered with webs. As Warner writes, ‘the web became an image of the message radiating from the peace camp and the bush telegraph which could gather hundreds, even thousands of women together for a mass protest’.⁴⁰

The scrapbook elaborates upon the drawings, but exposition is not the main object here—what contextual information there is must be snatched from captions, headlines and brief fragments of longer texts. It is for the most part an iconographic assemblage, and yet the only images that occupy the whole page are blown-up details

³⁷ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 160.

³⁸ The phrase is taken from the caption of a photograph of the event on the cover of the Los Angeles Times, 1977, as reproduced in Gregory Sholette, ‘After OWS: Social Practice, Art, Abstraction and the Limits of the Social’, *E-flux journal* no. 31 (January 2012), accessed 10 September, 2016, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/after-ows-social-practice-art-abstraction-and-the-limits-of-the-social/>. Lacy’s most notable collaboration with Bowers was on *Drawing Lessons* at the Drawing Center, New York, in March 2014.

³⁹ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 159.

⁴⁰ Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, 57.

Figure 2.9 Andrea Bowers, *Feminist Spirituality and Magical Politics Scrapbook*, photocopies on paper, 2003 (details).

of woven fabrics and fencing, slipped in between pages of clippings. The material collected in the scrapbook perpetuates the allusive nature of the other works, partial accounts in both senses of the word, which multiply, ramifying and reinforcing one another. It is in this sense that the work, disarticulated, finds itself in sympathy with the 'movement' itself, emerging as it does as a nebulous agglomeration of affinity groups and targeted campaigns. It is in this part of the work, which presents it most explicitly as the product of an engagement with a particular archive, that a tension between the part and the whole becomes most clear—though it inflects all the drawings. It is this tension that becomes more apparent in works which address the role of the individual.

As one commentator has noted of these works, 1981 'is the wrong moment for nostalgia'.⁴¹ Far from those movements of the late 1960s which have long since been exploited as a graphic shorthand for fashionable rebellion, the legacy of the nonviolent direct action movement of this period is ambiguous. Although, as Epstein insists, spirituality may not have been a ubiquitous or uncontested aspect of the movement, it was accommodated and became influential, and the spiritual nature of many activists' commitment (and the essentialisms often fostered by such beliefs) are difficult to reconcile with much contemporary feminist thought and activism.⁴² And yet, Bowers warns of too easily disregarding those aspects of our radical past we may find discomfiting, arguing that to dismiss such 'value actions' offhand is too often to be dismissive of political action per se. 'It is my attempt through this body of work,' she explains, 'despite my atheism, to remember a group of people's playfulness, their concept of politics as theatre, their egalitarian process and their utopian vision'.⁴³

This theatrical, visionary politics provides a model of sorts for Bowers as she begins to address more explicitly political subject matter and to reconcile it with the work of the aesthetic. In this respect she shares the interest in 'exemplary (but relatively ineffective) gestures' characteristic of recent relational art forms.⁴⁴ Roberts, writing

⁴¹ Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 23. See chap. 1, note 164.

⁴² As Dawsey comments, 'Many contemporary feminists (myself included) shy away from what we perceive to be a turn toward new-age spirituality on the part of many second-wave feminists'. Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 23.

⁴³ Bowers cited in Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 24.

⁴⁴ Claire Bishop, cited in Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 17.

about these new forms of ‘sociability’ in art, discerns in such practices the convergence of utopian ‘enclave thinking’ typical of both post-1960s socially-engaged art and a heterodox post-Stalinist ‘communist imaginary’.⁴⁵ This imaginary is one informed by the autonomist thought of the late twentieth century, in which ‘the early Marx’s emphasis on the radical and revolutionary function of *Bildung* (communities of collective self-learning) comes to define non-statist and autonomous forms of productive, intellectual and creative community’.⁴⁶ At the same time as it has influenced a re-evaluation of communism which assimilates utopian communalism, such thought has been influential, Roberts argues, in the emergence in art of ‘a kind of anti-doctrinal communist praxis in which notions of artistic community stand in for a critique of debased public notions of bourgeois community and democracy and the anti-democratic vicissitudes of neo-liberalism as a whole’.⁴⁷ Notwithstanding the traditional Marxist critique of utopian thought, ‘in this current moment’, Roberts suggests, utopianism ‘actually provides a pathway *through* to communist form and praxis’.⁴⁸ As such, the women of *Magical Politics* can in some sense be seen to be forebears of both the contemporary left and contemporary artists, and take their place alongside other antecedents in ‘a legacy of diverse, hidden struggles that contradicted and more or less consciously flew in the face of orthodox Marxist and Stalinist visions of history’, as it emerged in the work of radical historians.⁴⁹

Bowers is paraphrasing Epstein in her explanation of the value she finds in this ‘magical politics’.⁵⁰ And yet Epstein argues that, for all its compelling force, in fostering an emphasis on ritual and political theatre feminism also ‘encouraged an already substantial streak of anti-intellectualism [...] in the movement—the tendency to avoid theory, history, and political economy and to substitute magical thinking for strategic analysis’ (just as Merrifield, in his paean to a ‘magical Marxism’,

⁴⁵ Roberts, ‘Introduction,’ 351.

⁴⁶ Roberts, ‘Introduction,’ 353.

⁴⁷ Roberts, ‘Introduction,’ 353.

⁴⁸ Roberts, ‘Introduction,’ 354.

⁴⁹ Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*, 18.

⁵⁰ See note 43, above.

disparages ‘cool analysis’ and ‘precise strategy’ as ‘cold’).⁵¹ Epstein has suggested that the legacy of the movement is apparent in contemporary activism—most notably the anti-capitalist and Occupy movements—not only in the widespread use of consensus decision-making processes and direct action, but also negatively, in a preference for thinking about tactics rather than strategy and an aversion to antagonism.⁵² It was not simply disorganisation which ensued: in rejecting leadership as inherently autocratic (rather than seeking new models of leadership) the de facto leaders who inevitably did emerge were unacknowledged and unaccountable.⁵³ Moreover, Epstein argues, the desire for cohesion that motivates a movement fundamentally committed to the prefigurative dynamic of community can, in the end, prove counter-productive: ‘community building and politics in fact are not the same thing: they can sustain one another but they can also contradict. A movement that makes political impact its only goal must sacrifice community’.⁵⁴ Which is to say, it must be outward-looking, and engage with broader constituencies, beyond the context of the enclave.

Epstein discerns more and less sophisticated kinds of magical politics, arguing that at best, ‘collective action based on a shared vision opens critical questions, helps to define the views of people outside the movement, and spurs political pressure in other arenas’.⁵⁵ It is synonymous with a politics of what Merrifield calls ‘our liberating desires, [...] our utopian Totem’, appealing to political imagination as it emphasises the prefigurative element present in any radical politics.⁵⁶ Yet this approach is often accompanied by a ‘naive’ kind of magical thinking, which overstates the practical influence of symbolic actions and ‘makes it difficult [...] to remember

⁵¹ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 182; Merrifield, *Magical Marxism*, 116. Merrifield calls for ‘a Marxism that’s not just critical analysis, that’s liberated from debates about class and the role of the state, about the dictatorship of the proletariat [...] a Marxism that stakes out the contours of a new dream-like reality, a materialist fantasy, a fantastic materialism, a Marxism that utters sighs of disenchantment with the present yet affirms the most tenacious nostalgia for dreams of the future’. Merrifield, *Magical Marxism*, 1.

⁵² See *Against the Grain with Sasha Lilley*.

⁵³ Jo Freeman, writing as Joreen, wrote about the problem in an influential essay, ‘The Tyranny of Structurelessness,’ cited in Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 168.

⁵⁴ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 192.

⁵⁵ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 184.

⁵⁶ Merrifield, *Magical Marxism*, 116.

that the impact of visionary collective action is on consciousness rather than directly on its institutional targets'.⁵⁷ The headline on the page in the centre of figure 2.9 ('[B]lockaders say action not symbolic') hints at the pervasive tensions in the movement over questions of symbolic action and efficacy, tensions which persist today not only for political movements but also for any attempt to articulate a relationship between the aesthetic and the political. The history of the nonviolent direct action movement is one of aspirations that remain compelling, and of encountering difficulties that are far from resolved.

And yet ultimately, in encountering these scenes of protest in Bowers's work, we are confronted not only with the conviction, discomfitingly anachronistic in an age when politics is often assumed to be synonymous with technocratic administration, 'that meaning and values exist and that politics is the attempt to define and act upon them'; but also with the processes of constituting and sustaining a collective subject.⁵⁸ Roberts writes that 'in conditions of political retreat or 'closure' the function of the communist imaginary is to keep open the ideal horizon of egalitarianism, equality and free exchange; and art, it is judged, is one of the primary spaces where this 'holding operation' is best able to take place'.⁵⁹ At a time when such experiences of collectivity have become rare, perhaps superseded in public life by the ersatz fellowship of media spectacle (Jodi Dean, following Giorgio Agamben, suggests that such spectacles of mass participation exploit our 'aspirations for common being' and in so doing dispossess us of the 'very possibility of a common good'), this may be the works' most striking attribute.⁶⁰

THE ONE AND THE MANY

Where the works in *Magical Politics* address forms of embodied collectivity, through metaphors of binding and affiliation, in subsequent works Bowers dwells on the recalcitrant physicality of the civil disobedience tactics shared by activists at the Diablo plant blockade. The photograph from the newspaper article in figure 2.9,

⁵⁷ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 184.

⁵⁸ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 193.

⁵⁹ Roberts, 'Introduction,' 354.

⁶⁰ Jodi Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 151, see chap. 1, n. 20; Agamben quoted in Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 151.

Figure 2.10 Andrea Bowers, *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Training*, graphite on paper, 2004.

included in the *Feminist Spirituality and Magical Politics Scrapbook*, was reworked by Bowers in a 2004 drawing, *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Training* (fig. 2.10). In documenting the tactics of resistance used against attempts to pull apart the knotted bodies of protestors, Bowers is not only reprising the interest in physical participation and gesture apparent in many earlier works. The drawing, like the headline in the original image, draws attention to the very physical resistance at the heart of a symbolic politics. Where Epstein worried that the direct action movement's main legacy was an insubstantial one of 'politics as theatre and magic, as experience and example rather than a social force engaged with other social forces'—and as such in keeping with an emergent postmodern sensibility—Bowers's emphasis here is on the materiality of such resistance.⁶¹

⁶¹ Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 193. Epstein's concern was that that the movement was attentive to the ludic spectacle of politics, at the expense of 'objective forces that limit the ability of human consciousness to shape social reality'. As such, it is basically rooted in a concern about materiality and efficacy. Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution*, 193.

Figure 2.11 Andrea Bowers, *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Training*, two-channel video projection, 2004 (stills).

A video of the same name continued and deepened Bowers's exploration of the training given to protestors at the Diablo plant, and commonly used in protests since (fig. 2.10).⁶² In the two-channel projection, ten dancers are instructed in the history and methods of direct action, and passive resistance to confrontation and arrest. The footage, of one six-hour training session filmed in a church hall (putting one in mind, as Jill Dawsey notes, of that in which the Judson Dance Theater were based) is edited into a diptych of contrasting scenarios.⁶³ An instructional video is paired with a performance in which the tactics are acted out, attaining a certain grace in deliberation and beginning to resemble a dance. One group forms a chain of bodies, linking arms and legs in a circle. Another group take on the role of the police, breaking the chain. As their bodies are pulled apart, the protestors are taught to 'go limp', becoming cumbersome weights and impeding the movement of the police. The echoes of the Judson Dance Theater do not end with the surroundings, but are borne out in the heightened awareness that the dancers bring to an exercise in the 'stubborn physicality of the body'.⁶⁴

From these images of the physical knotting of a collective body, Bowers shifts her attention to the individual. The *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Drawings* (2004) suggest what civil disobedience means when training is put into practice (figs. 2.12-2.14). The drawings, each from different sources, propose a community of direct action that extends outwards in time from the anti-nuclear and peace movement to other struggles, forming a continuum of countercultural and political action. The drawings continue Bowers's characteristic framing of the details of a scene by singling out figures from a crowd.

⁶² *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Training*, 2004, two-channel video projection.

⁶³ Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 23. Growing out of a class taught by Robert Dunn, The Judson Dance Theater's experiments in minimalist choreography took place at Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village, New York, between 1962 and 1964. Members included Trisha Brown, David Gordon and Yvonne Rainer.

⁶⁴ Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 23. Bowers had referenced the Judson Dance Theater in an earlier work, *Democracy's Body —Dance Dance Revolution* (2001). In it, images of their collaborative and repetitive performances of mundane actions accompanied a four-channel video installation in which young Californians play an arcade game, following dance steps flashing up on-screen from an interactive platform. Chris Kraus describes the comparisons Bowers draws in the work between the two groups of dancers in the essay 'Sentimental Bitch', in Chris Kraus, *Video Green: Los Angeles Art and the Triumph of Nothingness* (Semiotext(e): Los Angeles, 2004), 195-197.

Figure 2.12 (L) Andrea Bowers, *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Drawing (Poor People's Campaign, June 1968, Washington D.C.)*, graphite on paper, 2004 (detail below).

Figure 2.13 (R) Andrea Bowers, *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Drawing (Civil Rights Demonstrators, Federal Building, Los Angeles, 1965)*, graphite on paper, 2004 (detail below).

Figure 2.14 Andrea Bowers, *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Drawing—Transvestite Smoking*, coloured pencil on paper, 2004 (detail below).

Filtering our encounters with the multitudes through the experience of individuals is a well-worn rhetorical device. Steve Edwards, in considering how the crowd has been represented in contemporary artists' revisions of documentary modes, has argued that a tendency to focus upon individuals rather than the mass in which they are encountered betrays an inability to imagine a collective subject. Such inhibitions are to be expected, he suggests, in a society characterised by 'we-skepticism', to return to Dean's term—a society predicated upon the mythos of the individual, which denigrates and actively impedes the existence and work of collective subjects.⁶⁵

And yet documentary itself is implicated, Edwards argues, in the synecdochic tradition in which stories are 'humanised' by a focus on the individual which 'generates subjective identification, but at the cost of losing sight of social relations'.⁶⁶ As Teresa de Lauretis writes, 'experience is the process by which, for all social beings, subjectivity is constructed. Through that process one places oneself or is placed in social reality, and so perceives and comprehends as subjective (referring to, originating in oneself) those relations—material, economic and interpersonal—which are in fact social and, in a large perspective, historical'.⁶⁷ What is needed is a means of countering the characterisation of the crowd as an 'acephalous rabble', fostering a sense of its (historically and socially situated) existence not as a mob but as a collective articulation of opposition, of aspirations and demands.⁶⁸ Despite Edwards's scorn of the 'humanising' platitudes characteristic of a certain documentary tradition, elsewhere he acknowledges that this is done foremost by putting a face, or indeed many faces, to the monstrous headless multitude.⁶⁹ Attempts to write a 'history from below' have responded to a need to find 'the faces in the crowd', not only to give a sense of their experiences and motivations as

⁶⁵ Steve Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds: Figuring Photography from Above and Below,' *Third Text* 23, no. 4 (2009): 448. He mentions Philip-Lorca diCorcia's take on street photography and Sophie Calle's 'stalking art'. On Dean's term 'we-skepticism': Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 12.

⁶⁶ Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 453.

⁶⁷ Teresa de Lauretis, cited in Hayes, 'Certain Resemblances,' 87.

⁶⁸ Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 461.

⁶⁹ Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 450.

individuals but to do so in a way that reaffirms the reciprocal logic of the one and the many in tracing ‘the patterns of solidarity in communities’.⁷⁰

Bowers’s drawings pick out an individual, or as we have seen elsewhere, a detail of a scene, not in order to encourage a process of identification which obscures the relationships and circumstances from which they have emerged or diminishes them by recounting a personal struggle. Rather, the figures serve to represent a tension between the individual and the crowd—and their mutual constitution, in what Edwards calls a ‘dialectic of the one and the many’ that forms a collective subject.⁷¹

In the triptych *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Drawing—Go Perfectly Limp and Be Carried Away*, 2004, this dialectic is articulated not through a process of empathetic identification—of the four figures depicted, the faces of three are obscured—but through the interaction of bodies (fig. 2.15). The figures on the otherwise empty page are suspended not just figuratively but literally, by the absent hands of their collaborators and antagonists, whose presence is nonetheless felt in the negative space carved out of the bodies they hold.⁷² There is something partial about these figures; torn from the knot, they are incomplete. In their partiality, these individuals are always fragments of a collective. Their odd ‘spatial syntax’, as figures float in the pictorial limbo of the blank page, emphasises what Chute identifies as drawing’s capacity to ‘place pressure on traditional notions of chronology, linearity, and causality’.⁷³

The drawings continue and develop the analogies and affiliations traced in *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Training* between tactics of nonviolent resistance and the attentiveness to prosaic movement found in the work of the Judson Dance Theater and others; testing the parameters and limits of the body in the elaboration of a collective corporeality, and taking a certain pleasure in its forms. The images dwell on the individual body to emphasise a physicality of resistance implicit in the linked arms, webs and fences of *Magical Politics*. But more than this, they draw out an

⁷⁰ Edwards, “Commons and Crowds,” 461.

⁷¹ Edwards, “Commons and Crowds,” 464.

⁷² Bowers has done the same in *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Drawing (Poor People’s Campaign, June 1968, Washington D.C.* See figure 2.12.

⁷³ Hillary L. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 4. See chap. 1, n. 105.

aesthetics of resistance bound up in that physicality to complement the one elaborated in the ritual and symbolic actions of the nonviolent direct action movement.

Figure 2.15 Andrea Bowers, *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Drawing—Go Perfectly Limp and Be Carried Away*, graphite on paper, 2004 (details below).

HELP THE WORK ALONG

Sustained by a preoccupation with physicality and gesture, *Magical Politics* and the subsequent works about nonviolent civil disobedience training develop longstanding themes of Bowers's, discernible in the idiosyncratic gestures of spectators at baseball or basketball games in *Spectacular Appearances*, or the routines of amateur figure skaters in *All the World Is Waiting for You*. And yet retrospectively they clearly also mark a shift in Bowers's concerns, as a general interest in spectacle—and more specifically the identities of a crowd, emerging in slippages between spectatorship and participation, charted in the gestural and physical grammars of performance—became more explicitly invested in political struggles. 'It was just a matter of time', Bowers has commented, 'before documenting people's actions turned into documenting people's activism'.⁷⁴ The political sensibility elaborated in subsequent works has to some extent emerged piecemeal, from issue-based campaigns and local projects. Important works have addressed AIDS activism (including 2007's *The Weight of Relevance*) and immigration rights (2010's *No Olvidado (Not Forgotten)*; 2007's *Sanctuary*, and more). Cumulatively, however, the works can be seen to occupy a political terrain staked out by the activists of *Magical Politics*: egalitarian, with an environmentalist sensibility, and above all feminist. What persists throughout the work is the preoccupation with collective struggle, and its histories. More recently Bowers has begun to link these struggles to contemporary protests, turning to the kind of anti-corporate campaigns which gave such impetus to the recent Occupy movement. In doing so, more explicitly economic analyses have become apparent in her work, as have episodes from the history of the labour movement.

At the heart of Bowers's 2012 exhibition, *Help the Work Along*, three images of allegorical female figures from early twentieth-century political iconography are redrawn in marker pen on vast patchwork sheets of cardboard (figs. 2.16-2.18). Standing thirteen feet high, the drawings set the tone for a show about the struggle for workers' rights in which political graphics, signs and slogans come to the fore.

One of them, in which a female figure holding aloft a beacon is garlanded with the words, 'One Big Union,' bears the initials of the Industrial Workers of the World

⁷⁴ Cited in Sperlinger, 'Bad Example,' 15.

Figure 2.16

Andrea Bowers, *One Big Union*, ink on cardboard, 2012.

(fig. 2.16).⁷⁵ The exhibition takes its name from a phrase used by the founder of the IWW, William D. Haywood ('Big Bill'), when signing his correspondence. Its presence is suggestive. As Bowers's works have become more politically engaged, and at the same time more forthrightly partisan, the kinds of political activity encountered in her work have been those broadly associated with the New Left in the United States. Anti-authoritarian radical groups predominate in her archaeologies of the American left. Countercultural activism and direct action are recurrent themes, as were those movements that rejected what was felt to be a

⁷⁵ We are told in the accompanying press release that it is taken from the cover of a copy of the sheet music for the 'Internationale'. 'Andrea Bowers: Help the Work Along,' Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects press release, September 2012, accessed 11 September, 2016, <https://www.vielmetter.com/artists/andrea-bowers/exhibitions/389/pressrelease.html>.

reductive emphasis on the part of classical Marxism on capital and labour, grounded instead in identity and culture (her exploration of feminism is a constant) and sometimes in specific issues (abortion rights, for example, or AIDS awareness campaigns). In this work, the reference to a socialist pre-history situates Bowers's genealogy of the left, and inflects the rest of the show as an attempt to find the point where these disparate histories converge. At the centre of important labour struggles in the United States in the early twentieth century, the status of the IWW as an avowedly non-hierarchical labour organisation is suggestive of Bowers's continued interest in a libertarian socialist tradition that flourished in the United States amid reformist trades unions and the orthodoxies of party socialism.

The other two drawings are taken from the covers of radical journals. One is from a 1908 edition of Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth*, published between 1906 and 1917 (fig. 2.17).⁷⁶ Called 'A Menace to Liberty,' its cover shows the armoured figure of Patriotism standing victoriously upon Liberty's supine body. Liberty raises an arm in feeble protest but is defeated; her Phrygian cap has slipped and lies disconsolately near her head.

The other is a celebration of May Day by Walter Crane taken from a 1902 copy of *The Comrade*, a magazine published in New York between 1901 and 1905 devoted to 'such literary and artistic productions as reflect the soundness of the Socialist philosophy' (fig. 2.18).⁷⁷ Crane, an English socialist affiliated with the Arts and Crafts movement, had originally produced the illustration in 1895 for the Manchester socialist newspaper *The Clarion*, and his garland is wreathed in a ribbon of slogans, some of which remain and some of which have been altered. The pastoralism of Crane's declaration that 'The plough is a better backbone than the factory' is replaced in Bowers's version with the call to 'Stop violence against women'. Elsewhere, the sentiment is preserved but one archaic turn of phrase is amended: 'No child labor', Bowers writes, where Crane had demanded 'No child toilers'. And yet this is clearly a work that embraces anachronism; as viewers, we are supposed to recognise the unlike times and places that have made this image. A careful eye

⁷⁶ Goldman had previously being the focus of Bowers's 2006 exhibition *Views*, about marriage, and 2009's *An Eloquent Woman*, which arose from an exploration by Bowers of Goldman's archive.

⁷⁷ 'Greeting,' *The Comrade* 1, no. 1 (October 1901): 12.

might spot Crane's call for 'Solidarity of labour' not far from Bowers's reference to 'labor', but the incongruity of the phrase 'Climate change kills' in a fin-de-siècle Arcadia is not so easily missed. The work is in this sense a microcosm of the exhibition and its relationship to Bowers's other work; drawing together the many different political campaigns whose slogans wreath the garland, recent and longstanding, into a socialist tradition. In the bottom right hand of the image, in the final sweep of the ribbon, Crane signs off with the phrase 'Merrie England' (a reference to the collection of essays on socialism from *The Clarion* by its founder, Robert Blatchford, published not long before the illustration was produced).⁷⁸ Here, in an allusion that will be borne out elsewhere in the exhibition, it reads 'Occupy everything'.

The anachronism is purposeful, a literal rendering of the assumption implicit throughout these works—that these battles are still being fought. Elsewhere, the sentiment is made explicit: 'the suffering and exploitation of workers is not an historic event; it is happening on a daily basis in our own city,' we are told.⁷⁹ It is 'a deliberate confusion of temporality' much like that described by Sharon Hayes when she proposes to 'disrupt the spatial and temporal assumptions of what events, persons, objects, and actions constitute our realm of experience'.⁸⁰ Far from being relics of a distant age, this iconography is part of a living tradition invoked in its materials. Remade in marker pen on cardboard, the drawings were provoked by Gregory Sholette's observation of Occupy Wall Street that 'Zuccotti Park and other OWS encampments revealed a mix of high-tech digital media and handmade signs, a mix of the archaic and the new as if beneath the Internet there is cardboard'.⁸¹

⁷⁸ The *Manchester Guardian* famously wrote of the book that 'for every British convert to socialism made by *Das Kapital* there were a hundred made by *Merrie England*'. The comment is cited in Alastair Bonnett, *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia* (London: Continuum, 2010), 60.

⁷⁹ See the press release for the show, 'Andrea Bowers: Help the Work Along'.

⁸⁰ Hayes, 'Certain Resemblances,' 99.

⁸¹ Sholette, 'After OWS: Social Practice, Art, Abstraction and the Limits of the Social'. For details of Bowers's reference to Sholette, see the press release for exhibition: 'Andrea Bowers: Help the Work Along'.

Figure 2.17
Andrea Bowers, *A
Menace to Liberty*,
ink on cardboard,
2012.

Figure 2.18
Andrea Bowers, *A
Garland for May Day*
(*Illustration by Walter
Crane*), ink on
cardboard, 2012.

The drawing's makeshift character brings into tension some antonymous associations. It invokes the immediacy of a protest in its allusion to improvised, hand-drawn cardboard signs, on a monumental scale that seems to aspire to the petrified solidity of the allegorical figures it depicts. While Crane's languidly decorative image inflects Bowers's work with the anti-industrial, artisanal ethic of the Arts and Crafts movement, all of these drawings—including *A Garland for May Day*—are of course from mass-produced and widely-disseminated political graphics. As Robert Philippe notes, 'the history of political graphics is really the history of mass graphic reproduction'.⁸² To go to such arduous lengths to remake them by hand, then, is to court the reactionary associations that such drawings, necessarily unique, never quite manage to shake off. Bowers has described such labour-intensive drawings as acts of homage, and yet these are also works which take images from the public domain, reproducible and accessible, and make them into artworks.⁸³ The drawings bring her longstanding interest in craft as a means of mass participation into conversation with the objects made and used by protestors, and in doing so create auratic art objects from them. It is a series of antinomies which is perpetually encountered in dealings with the political image in art.

Monumental in scale, the allegories are displayed in separate rooms, flanked by two much smaller drawings; in each case this includes one from a series of text-based graphics that Bowers designed for a US campaign known as the Dream Act movement, and one of a female protestor holding a placard (fig. 2.19).⁸⁴ The emphasis on political graphics is a development of Bowers's interest, evident in *Magical Politics*, in pageantry as a political tool. Where in the earlier works such pageantry was manifest in the theatrical and ritual actions of protesters, here it is invoked in the preoccupation with banners, placards and posters, the material traces of protest culture as public display. Bowers brings the contingent infrastructure of protests into the gallery too, with tables running the length of exhibition bearing leaflets from Los Angeles-based workers' rights organisations.

⁸² Robert Philippe, *Political Graphics: Art As a Weapon* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982), 3.

⁸³ For Bowers's description of her work as homage see, for example, the interview in Stephanie Cristello, 'Unsettled Landscapes: An Interview with Andrea Bowers', *ArtSlant*, July 2014, accessed 11 September, 2016, <http://www.artslant.com/ew/artists/rackroom/854-andrea-bowers>.

⁸⁴ The Dream Act is proposed legislation for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors, that would grant conditional permanent resident status to young immigrants to the United States who have been educated in the country. See 'The DREAM Act: Creating Opportunities for Immigrant Students and Supporting the U.S. Economy', American Immigration Council, 13 July, 2010, accessed 16 February, 2017, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/dream-act>.

Figure 2.19 Andrea Bowers, *Help the Work Along*, installation view, 2012.

On the walls, the female protestors drawn holding placards are dwarfed not only by their allegorical sisters but also by the sheet of paper upon which they float, in the pictorial limbo familiar from Bowers's other works which seek out figures in a crowd (figs. 2.20-2.22).

These women were part of a May Day protest in Los Angeles in 2012; the images have been taken from one of the two videos which accompany the drawings in the exhibition. Bowers had documented the Los Angeles May Day demonstrations before, as part of the 2010 exhibition *Political Landscape*, in a series of black and white pencil drawings of protestors bearing signs or slogans. Bowers has spoken of the works as a means of 'honouring' the individuals, drawing attention to their political position 'because I agree with the political ideologies they're promoting and I think that these political subjects should be a part of historical discourse as well as art discourse'.⁸⁵

While the videos, both filmed at protest marches, dwell on the signs and banners held by the crowd, the drawings' shared emphasis on the defiant female figure continues Bowers's ongoing attempt to picture political resistance as it is embodied in

⁸⁵ Andrea Bowers interviewed by Julie Henson, 'The Political Landscape: a conversation with Andrea Bowers,' *DailyServing*, August 7 2010, accessed 11 September, 2016, <http://dailyserving.com/2010/08/the-political-landscape-a-conversation-with-andrea-bowers/>. The comment makes it clear that Bowers consider the artworks to be interventions in both discourses.

Figure 2.20 Andrea Bowers, *People Before Profits (May Day March, Los Angeles, 2012)*, coloured pencil and graphite on paper, 2012.

Figure 2.21 Andrea Bowers, *For My Transgender Sisters (May Day March, Los Angeles, 2012)*, coloured pencil and graphite on paper, 2012.

Figure 2.22 Andrea Bowers, *Legalize my Man (May Day March, Los Angeles, 2012)*, coloured pencil and graphite on paper, 2012.

female form. The female characters she seeks out in the political iconography of the early twentieth century are described in a press release as ‘representations of powerful women’.⁸⁶ It is perhaps a somewhat disingenuous description of what are, after all, allegorical figures. As Marina Warner writes, ‘Liberty is not represented as a woman, from the colossus in New York to the ubiquitous Marianne, figure of the French Republic, because women are or were free... Often the recognition of a difference between the symbolic order, inhabited by ideal, allegorical figures, and the actual order, of judges, statesmen, soldiers, philosophers, inventors, depends on the unlikelihood of women practising the concepts they represent’.⁸⁷ To fail to recognise that fundamental distinction was to risk ridicule: when Liberty’s cap became the emblem of the French Revolution, the *bonnet rouge* was frequently worn by revolutionary citizens. And yet, as Warner describes it, ‘the radical and feminist Société des Républicaines Révolutionnaires were laughed out of their attempt to promote the *bonnet rouge* as a hat for female partisans as well; it had to remain the identifying sign of an ideal Liberté, and could not be worn by a free woman’.⁸⁸ It is difficult to seek inspiration in allegorical females when, during their ascendancy, living women were openly ridiculed for emulating them.

And yet, ‘a symbolised female presence both gives and takes value and meaning in relation to actual women, and contains the potential for affirmation not only of women themselves but of the general good they might represent and in which as half of humanity they are deeply implicated’.⁸⁹ As such, they are open to appropriation by the project to creating a counter-tradition to what has been called the ‘virile syndicalism’ of the IWW as well as the masculinist iconography of the traditional labour movement.⁹⁰ In seeking to chart a history of the powerful political woman, perhaps it is inevitable that these allegorical figures would be pressed into service.

⁸⁶ ‘Andrea Bowers: Help the Work Along’.

⁸⁷ Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, xx.

⁸⁸ Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, 276.

⁸⁹ Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, xx.

⁹⁰ Francis Shor, ‘Virile syndicalism’ in comparative perspective: a gender analysis of the IWW in the United States and Australia,’ *International Labor and Working Class History*, no. 56 (October 1999): 65-77.

Of 2000's *Intimate Strangers*, the earlier series of drawings in which she picked out the gestures made by individuals in a crowd on a gold foil ground, Bowers has said, 'the actions of my drawn figures contradict the Platonic idealism often represented in classical imagery. Instead they are meant to approximate the gestures of resistance that defined the Punk movement of the late 1970s'.⁹¹ A similar relationship might be expected to emerge in the slippage between the allegorical female figures and the women of the May Day protest, despite the suggestion that these are all simply images of female empowerment. Warner suggests that the gendered nature of allegorical figuration has linguistic roots, pointing out that in the Romance languages, and in Greek and Latin before them, abstract nouns are generally feminine, while active agents are masculine.⁹² Here, the protestors are the labile, contingently-embodied counterpart to the abstractions of the allegorical images, adamant and definitive as statuary. The discrepancy in scale between the works emphasises as much: the May Day protestors are local and contingent, everything the allegorical figures are not, the humble echo of the vast cardboard patchworks in the women's homemade placards notwithstanding. That is not to say that in their corporeality they are trammelled by an essentialised femaleness which would pit volatility against stability or pliancy against integrity. In these brief pictures of women diverse in age and race, with references to transgendered sisterhood and immigration, the drawings invoke a complex femaleness. Together, the two series of drawings describe the work of political resistance as it emerges somewhere in the wilderness between the ideal and the embodied.

The homemade placards brandished by the May Day protestors in *Help the Work Along* find a counterpart in the posters Bowers has produced for the Dream Act campaign (figs. 2.24-2.26). Bowers's posters intervene in what is a high-profile debate in the United States—the vexed proposals for legislation on Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors had been contested in Congress for eleven years by the time of this exhibition—and her typographic designs do not offer any

⁹¹ Bowers cited in Sperlinger, 'Bad Example,' 12.

⁹² Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, 63-87. So, in French for example, from *juger* (to judge), we have *le juge* (the judge, whether male or female), and *la justice*. Notwithstanding the almost certainly arbitrary circumstances by which such grammatical distinctions came to be assigned terms associated with biological distinctions, 'the ascription has proved much more important', Warner argues, 'than the grammarians could have perhaps foreseen, as the connotation of femininity certain nouns thereby acquire has inspired ponderings over the semantic links with human female character'. Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, 67.

explanations of the bill. Nor do they make the unambiguous demands of the May Day protestors. Instead, they invoke the valences of the word ‘dream’, framed by a sunburst that echoes Liberty’s beacon in *One Big Union*, or the barbed wire fences of the huge drawing *No Olvidado (Not Forgotten)*, Bowers’s 2010 memorial to the lives lost in illegal border crossings (fig. 2.23).

Figure 2.23 Andrea Bowers, *No Olvidado (Not Forgotten)*, graphite on paper, 2012 (detail below).

Figure 2.24
Andrea Bowers,
*Pass The Dream
Act (Dream Act)*,
coloured pencil on
archival board,
2012.

Figure 2.25
Andrea Bowers,
*Pass The Dream
Act (Barbed Wire)*,
coloured pencil on
archival board,
2012.

Figure 2.26
Andrea Bowers,
*Pass The Dream
Act (Dreamers)*,
coloured pencil on
archival board,
2012.

Consequently, if the historical political graphics elsewhere in the show are a call to action, the same cannot unambiguously be said of these drawings. In *Pass The Dream Act (Dream Act)*, the name of the bill becomes two imperative verbs: 'act' is the epicentre of the sunburst but is nonetheless dwarfed by the command to 'dream' (fig. 2.24). In the top right corner of *Pass the Dream Act (Barbed Wire)*, a phrase is printed in tight lettering (fig. 2.25). The only additional text in the posters, it is a line from an Abbas Kiarostami film, *Certified Copy*. More an appeal to something like fellow feeling than a political demand, it reads, 'if we were more tolerant of each other's weaknesses, we would be less alone'. Invoking a community of 'dreamers', the posters are an appeal to political imagination.

And yet as works they are curiously inert, the slogans devoid of urgency. The demands and declarations of solidarity of the May Day placards and early socialist graphics are diminished here. Invoking the name of the Dream Act in ways both literal and nebulous, Bowers overestimates its rhetorical force. Without context, they lack a relationship to the bodies and artefacts of protest that make resistance material. Though perhaps designed to be put to use in campaigning, on flyers and placards, as drawings they seem trite, their slogans bromidic.

Elsewhere, however, the allusions to contemporary activism are brought more convincingly into dialogue with the historical material, not least in the references to Occupy. A second video in the exhibition was filmed at Occupy the Rose Parade, a demonstration held at a New Year pageant in Pasadena, California. Though it gives Bowers another opportunity to seek out banners and theatrical props of all kinds, amid floats carrying vast tarpaulins painted with the words of the US constitution or a gigantic octopus fashioned from plastic bags, there is more at stake in its inclusion. Certainly, within this exhibition, Occupy is set against an older tradition of labour organisation, albeit a non-hierarchical one which shares its aversion to traditional top-down leadership structures. The videos posit an equivalence between the Occupy the Rose Parade and the May Day protests, which casts the Occupy movement more generally as the inheritors to Crane's socialists. Within the broader context of Bowers's ongoing engagement with protest movements, it is situated in a living tradition of political activism.

And yet the event's chequered background, organised without formal approval from the general assembly of Occupy Los Angeles or Occupy Pasadena, is a reminder that

the parallels between Occupy and the predecessors to the movement which appear elsewhere in Bowers's work—not least the nonviolent direct action protests depicted in *Magical Politics*—are not always auspicious. Epstein, as we have seen, has spoken of the tactics Occupy has inherited from the direct action movement in the United States, and the lessons to be learnt from its predecessors.⁹³ Consensus-based decision making, she argues, can work well in encouraging the meaningful involvement of large numbers of people. And yet it 'cannot cope' with severe disagreements, or the need to make rapid decisions (both factors in the disputes preceding Occupy the Rose Parade).⁹⁴ Moreover, Occupy has encountered the same problems in aspiring to establish a non-hierarchical movement, as Dean has also noted.⁹⁵ The fear of the authoritarian and dogmatic, and concomitant difficulties in acknowledging and accommodating antagonism, are Dean suggests the self-defeating (if understandable) correlates of coming to terms with the failings and defeats that have dogged the organised left. This complicated relationship to its past, she suggests, means that, often, 'such a Left confuses discipline with domination'.⁹⁶ And so what are we to read into the voracity with which Bowers broaches such a complex skein of affinities and legacies, in drawing together otherwise disparate campaigns and movements?

In seeking to draw historical material into conversation with contemporary events, Bowers creates something like what E P Thompson called a 'horizontal sort of beast', the multitude 'in which differences are contiguous'.⁹⁷ For Thompson, 'the horizontal beast registers differences primarily in relation to an external force... rather than internal 'vertical' differences that split the multitude against itself'.⁹⁸ Occupy itself is a horizontal beast of sorts: situating activists from different backgrounds in a unified anti-capitalist struggle, it marks a moment in which splintered radicals find common cause: 'as organised opposition to capitalism, the political form of occupation inscribes a gap that makes antagonism appear and forces this inscription as the

⁹³ See *Against the Grain with Sasha Lilley*.

⁹⁴ *Against the Grain with Sasha Lilley*.

⁹⁵ Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 236.

⁹⁶ Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 175.

⁹⁷ Cited in Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 451.

⁹⁸ Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 451.

division between the 1 percent and the rest of us'.⁹⁹ Elizabeth Freeman's notion of 'temporal drag' articulates the complicated relationship between different historical periods, the fluctuations of continuity and diversions between them. She writes that reductive ideas of how political generations succeed one another might be complicated by such a notion, 'thought less in the psychic time of the individual than in the movement time of collective political life'.¹⁰⁰ In her work, Bowers stages the anachronistic contiguity of collective political struggles, reforging atrophied ties between historical labour movements and contemporary political activism.

PARTISAN IMAGES

These are partisan works. In developing a politically-engaged mode of address, Bowers has acknowledged the important influence of artists like Barbara Kruger and Hannah Wilke.¹⁰¹ And yet Bowers has spoken of how her relationship to the appropriation art of an earlier generation is coloured by her aversion to the 'detached perspective, the "exterior position" characteristic of such work as she encountered it during the 1980s'.¹⁰² This distinction is a crucial one. Bowers's oft-stated desire to be personally implicated in her work—she has described it as 'a form of advocacy'—is at odds with the ironic distance affected by its forebears, and aligns it less with common interpretations of appropriation as a kind of affectless pastiche than with a tradition of counter-representation.¹⁰³

Catherine Grant has written of the appearance of art about 'protest culture' in the last decade, poised somewhere between nostalgia for a political past and the attempt to articulate the possibilities of the political present, in terms of the figure of the

⁹⁹ Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 144. Just as, in Thompson's study of the English working class, the external force was the 'gentleman'.

¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth Freeman cited in Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism: Re-writing Histories of Second-wave Feminism in Contemporary Art,' *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 2 (2011): 234.

¹⁰¹ Kruger and Wilke are mentioned in an interview in 'What the World Needs Now... 22 artists respond to four questions on political art,' *Frieze*, 20 July, 2012, accessed 11 September, 2016, <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/what-the-world-needs-now>; and in comments cited in Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 20.

¹⁰² Andrea Bowers cited in Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 20.

¹⁰³ Andrea Bowers in Stephanie Cristello, 'Unsettled Landscapes'.

fan.¹⁰⁴ Drawing on Hayes's ongoing series of performances, *In the Near Future*, in which the artist identifies with the figure of the protestor as she stages one-woman reenactments of past protests, Grant writes that 'rather than an appropriation strategy that privileges irony and distance, the action of a fan focuses on attachment and desire'.¹⁰⁵ Such works return to historical material not in an exercise in estrangement (be it ironic or nostalgic) but in an arduous act of identification which, as Mike Sperlinger has noted, indicts the present.¹⁰⁶ Sperlinger draws attention to the parallels between Bowers's drawings and an earlier work of Hayes's, *Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) Screeds #13, 16, 20 & 29* (2003), in which she recites transcripts of Patty Hearst's messages. It is the slavish attention paid to the act of copying, in the effort to memorise or draw in meticulous, photographic detail, which demands our attention. But it also demands that the degree to which the artist is personally invested in the work is acknowledged.

To adopt the role of a fan in one's engagement with an object, then, is to understand that object 'as a key component in the formation of [one's] own identity'.¹⁰⁷ In doing so, Grant suggests, one can come to a productive understanding of how to articulate one's relationship to histories of political engagement, in ways that acknowledge ambiguous legacies, antagonism and frustration as well as fascination. The fan, then, is 'a model through which to explore the psychic and political pull of the past on the present'.¹⁰⁸ Drawing on the concept's roots in the murky history of fanaticism, Grant suggests that 'the figure of the fan brings up the irrational, passionate, and violent aspects of the desire to embrace feminism', in a description redolent of the affective and emotional aspects of political protest addressed in *Magical Politics* and Bowers's other works on the nonviolent civil disobedience movement.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the fan remakes the object of its desire in appropriating it. To return to historical material and put it to use in a spirit of affirmation is not to preclude any critical engagement with it. Indeed, 'in the context of fandom, the failure of the fan object to fulfil the

¹⁰⁴ Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism'.

¹⁰⁵ Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism,' 269.

¹⁰⁶ Sperlinger, 'Bad Example,' 16.

¹⁰⁷ Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism,' 271.

¹⁰⁸ Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism,' 284.

¹⁰⁹ Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism,' 272.

fan's desire is often the cause for production, for the construction of an alternative narrative'.¹¹⁰ To bring what is dormant into contention once more means to be alert to the complexity of its legacies and interventions into the contemporary world. As such, works like those of Bowers are not only acts of commemoration but also intervene in the reception and understanding of history and, given the subject matter, in debates about political agency. Describing the journals produced by the New York-based LTTR collective, Grant notes the development of 'an increasing awareness that having a successful platform for discussion within the art world can provide a place to disseminate information that goes beyond playful re-workings. The feminist project is used as a starting point for a consideration of inequality and politics in a much broader context, one in which the act of being a fan leads into an interrogation of how to be an activist'.¹¹¹ It would make an apt description of the trajectory of Bowers's work.

Grant was writing at a point where political protest had become more visible as subject matter for artists who were specifically addressing its histories, and second-wave feminism had been the subject of much discussion. Five years earlier, Jill Dawsey could still write of 'feminism's fairly unfashionable status in the art world today'.¹¹² Bowers's work, Dawsey writes, 'risks a certain embarrassment by unearthing seemingly obsolete objects'.¹¹³ Even as feminism has become more fashionable, and political activism more generally has become a more widely countenanced and discussed topic in art and beyond, aspects of the activism of *Magical Politics* might provoke a certain awkwardness, as we have seen (not least the turn to new-age spirituality and the reductive notions of gender, as Dawsey admits).¹¹⁴ And yet in revisiting moments long-since relegated to embarrassing footnotes within mainstream feminism, the works confront those who are apt to be squeamish about such earnestness with the difficulties of being a fan—of making one's allegiances known. In taking on the subject of protest, collective political subjectivity and the role of aesthetics in establishing and sustaining that subjectivity, Bowers's works do

¹¹⁰ Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism,' 289.

¹¹¹ Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism,' 13.

¹¹² Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 20.

¹¹³ Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 20.

¹¹⁴ Dawsey, 'Andrea Bowers's History Lessons,' 23.

not ignore the complications or antagonisms which arise, as she pays tribute to those efforts. The works are partisan, but demand a critical engagement from us. As the works come to involve more explicitly contemporary events and debates, that becomes yet clearer.

To admit to being a fan is to risk one's critical distance, courting associations 'of embarrassing desire, and of a loss of perspective' anathema to those of a more ironic disposition.¹¹⁵ And yet, as we have seen, Jan Verwoert suggests that sustaining the ironic distance familiar to much appropriation art has become more difficult as artists have had to contend with the 'shock of the unsuspected return of meaning to the arbitrary sign'.¹¹⁶

Such a shift, in making it more difficult for artists to maintain an aloof distance from their appropriated material, has moreover cast doubt on the critical purchase of a particularly prevalent mode of criticism, one which Jameson characterised as 'the avoidance of the affirmative sentence as such, of the philosophical proposition'.¹¹⁷ As Gail Day has noted of the vicissitudes of art history writing since the 1980s, 'the basic assumption across all modes, and which mirrored the postmodern conception prevalent during the late twentieth century, was a suspicion—pursued and proselytised with different degrees of rigour—of all value claims, from "the aesthetic" and "the canon" to "art" per se'.¹¹⁸ The obvious criticism is that a critical position predicated on the commentary form has fostered a political quietism tantamount to fatalistic complicity with the socio-economic conditions of the status quo, and with what Hal Foster, after Peter Sloterdijk, called 'cynical reason'.¹¹⁹ 'Cynical reason', he writes, 'does not cancel so much as relinquish agency—as if agency were a small price to pay for the shield that cynicism might provide, for the immunity that ambivalence

¹¹⁵ Catherine Grant, 'Fans of Feminism,' 267.

¹¹⁶ Verwoert, 'Apropos Appropriation', 14. See chap. 1, n. 33.

¹¹⁷ Writing in response to Derrida, Jameson continues: 'Deconstruction... "neither affirmeth nor denieth": it does not emit propositions in that sense at all'. Frederic Jameson, 'Marx's Purloined Letter', 33-4. See chap. 1, n. 91.

¹¹⁸ Gail Day, *Dialectical Passions: Negation in Postwar Art Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 13.

¹¹⁹ Hal Foster, *Return of the Real*, 99. See chap. 1, n. 39.

might secure'.¹²⁰ Foster argues that 'to a great extent the aesthetic of cynical reason emerged not only as a reaction against the presumptive truth claims of ideology critique but also as an exaggeration of the epistemological skepticism of deconstruction'.¹²¹ For Timothy Bewes, 'the cynic is the typical "postmodern" character, a figure alienated both from society and from his or her own subjectivity'.¹²² She is the manifestation of 'a tendency to capitulate to reality, rather than hazard oneself in the political project of defying and reconstituting reality'.¹²³ By contrast, this work demands judgement calls, as material becomes mediated through personal attachments and identification. This creates the space for the psychically and emotionally invested figure of the fan, confronting that attachment as it is inflected with self-consciousness and antagonism as well as commitment and affirmation. It is a complex of emotions well suited to the negotiation of a relationship to political legacies and the tangled debates about political agency that go with them.

SELF-MAKING

Verwoert points to a shift in the use of appropriated material as artists become more alert to what Diarmuid Costello and Dominic Willsdon call 'the political agency of artworks and images in a larger context of representation and reception'.¹²⁴ It is a changed understanding of the impact the artwork has in its trajectories through the world—a world not of pure fungibility after all, but of meaningful differences to be negotiated. In embracing that negotiation, and confronting the antagonisms thereby provoked, such art is animated, where previously there had been paralysis.

And yet to characterise this paralysis as solely or primarily a consequence of the strange limbo of the Cold War, though drawing attention to the profound

¹²⁰ Foster, *Return of the Real*, 223. This activity is, in Jameson's words, 'augustly parasitical', its 'consecrated form: that of the commentary'. Jameson, 'Marx's Purloined Letter', 34.

¹²¹ Hal Foster, *Return of the Real*, 257.

¹²² Timothy Bewes, *Cynicism and Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1997), 2.

¹²³ Timothy Bewes, *Cynicism and Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1997), 2.

¹²⁴ Diarmuid Costello and Dominic Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 12. See chap. 1, n. 14.

repercussions its end would have, occludes the ways in which that paralysis emerged from a much more complex confluence of developments, whose legacy persists. As we have seen, such work emerged in an intellectual climate pervaded by disillusionment with the countercultural utopianism and the militant politics of the previous generation. This dissatisfaction surely contributed as much as the apparent stalemate of the Cold War to the ‘inverted millenarianism’ which Jameson diagnosed as characteristic of late capitalism, in which anticipation of what is to come has been displaced by the overwhelming moribundity of being amid endings of all kinds.¹²⁵ In some respects such pervasive disillusionment can also be seen to be the consequence of the ‘epistemological skepticism’ noted by Foster.¹²⁶ As Timothy Bewes suggests, such developments are ‘the *formalisation* of an endemic disappointment—unknowability, undecidability—as the definitive modern condition, by way of the concept ‘postmodern’.¹²⁷ In such circumstances, the unmooring of the image no longer unleashes the transgressive charge of carnivalesque travesties, but gives rise to a numb, almost pathological, performance of impotence.

Peter Osborne describes the fall-out from the end of the USSR in terms that contextualise Verwoert’s periodisation, writing that ‘a revival, deepening, multiplication and complication of discourses of the modern—with ‘multiple’, ‘alternative’ and ‘postcolonial’ modernities at the fore—accompanied and followed the decline of the category of the postmodern’.¹²⁸ And yet this is not to say that the position of capitalism is more precarious than at the time of Jameson’s paradigmatic diagnosis of postmodernism. Indeed, its position has been strengthened, its ubiquity matched only by its plasticity. ‘How very late it now seems,’ Osborne writes, ‘still to have been periodising capitalism as ‘late’ in 1991, at the very moment of its most powerful renewal’.¹²⁹ As well as delimiting a particular phase of capitalism’s development, the ‘naturalistic connotations’ of the term, he argues, ‘allowed the prefix

¹²⁵ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 238. See chap. 1, n. 32.

¹²⁶ Foster, *Return of the Real*, 257.

¹²⁷ Bewes, *Cynicism and Postmodernity*, 6.

¹²⁸ Peter Osborne, ‘The postconceptual condition: Or, the cultural logic of high capitalism today,’ *Radical Philosophy*, no. 184 (March/April 2014): 19.

¹²⁹ Osborne, ‘The postconceptual condition,’ 19.

of Jameson's 'postmodernism' surreptitiously to anticipate a post-capitalism (that was not to come)'.¹³⁰

Current debates on agency can, to some extent, be seen to be informed by a desire to counter the narrowing of political horizons that has happened during this period; and, in doing so, to reclaim the possibility of change from the perpetual, tautologous reinventions of the commodity within an unassailable capitalism both 'petrified and plastic'.¹³¹ The Foucauldian revision of Marxist notions of revolutionary praxis that dominated radical theories of change and agency during the early 1970s gave valuable insights into the workings of power and the complexities of subjectification. And yet the theorisations of the self, the subject and of agency which were to be established in its stead have been found wanting. Lois McNay described the emergence at this period of 'a primarily negative paradigm of identity formation'.¹³² If we follow Foucault's notion of subjectification as a dialectic of freedom and constraint, McNay suggests, then the poststructuralist model is one in which the moment of subjection and constraint in identity formation is given more attention than practices of liberation, becoming a deterministic account of a passive subject which cannot account for independent and creative reflection and action. As Seyla Benhabib argues, 'the situated and gendered subject is heteronomously determined but still strives toward autonomy'.¹³³ As it cannot account for this dynamic, this is a model which can only offer an attenuated account of agency, disruptive but not generative. Moreover, an emphasis on the symbolic, or more narrowly the linguistic, within these debates lacked a convincing account of what McNay calls the 'material dynamics in the process of identity formation'.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Osborne, "The postconceptual condition," 19.

¹³¹ Fabio Gironi, 'Science-Laden Theory: Outlines of an Unsettled Alliance,' *Speculations*, no. 1 (2010): 22.

¹³² Lois McNay, *Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2000), 2.

¹³³ Seyla Benhabib, 'Feminism and Postmodernism,' in Seyla Benhabib et al., *Feminist Contentions*, 21. See chap. 1, n. 74. Benhabib notes that for Judith Butler, such accounts depend upon the untenable notion of a stable subject who precedes the field in which it operates - 'on such a model, "culture" and "discourse" *mire* the subject, but do not constitute that subject'. Judith Butler cited in Benhabib, 'Feminism and Postmodernism,' 110.

¹³⁴ McNay, *Gender and Agency*, 13.

It was in articulating the dialectic of freedom and constraint that Thompson hoped to rescue his historical subjects ‘from the enormous condescension of posterity’.¹³⁵ ‘By focussing on the experience of material conditions and foregrounding the conflict between agency and determination,’ Iles and Roberts suggest, Thompson’s work conveys ‘the complex process by which working people made themselves—coming to constitute themselves as a political body—as much as they were made by the imposition of industrial capitalism’.¹³⁶ It is through this emphasis on experience that Thompson and other historians of the New Left sought to nuance the orthodox Marxist understanding of class: ‘we explored both in theory and in practice, those junction-concepts (such as “need”, “class”, and “determine”) by which, through the missing term, “experience”, structure is transmuted into process, and the subject re-enters into history’.¹³⁷ This notion of experience was part of an attempt to articulate a reciprocity between the subjective and the material through an understanding of ‘social being’, embracing as Joan W. Scott explains it ‘the lived realities of social life, especially the affective domains of family and religion and the symbolic dimensions of expression’.¹³⁸ In allowing for the role of ‘feeling’—that is, ‘the psychological dimension of experience’—Thompson finds an answer to the question that would be posed by Benhabib in her debates with Judith Butler: ‘how can one be constituted by discourse without being determined by it?’¹³⁹ Feeling is articulated through and is shaped by culturally normative forms of expression, and yet it also ‘somehow precedes these forms of expression and so provides an escape from a strong structural determination’.¹⁴⁰

Yet Scott argues that Thompson’s analysis, far from historicising the category of class, ‘ends up essentializing it’.¹⁴¹ As he makes use of the term, ‘experience is the start of a process that culminates in the realization and articulation of social consciousness, in

¹³⁵ E.P. Thompson, cited in Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*, 23.

¹³⁶ Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*, 23.

¹³⁷ E.P. Thompson cited in Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience,’ 784. See chap. 1, n. 73.

¹³⁸ Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience,’ 784.

¹³⁹ Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience,’ 784; Benhabib, ‘Subjectivity, Historiography, and Politics,’ in Seyla Benhabib et al., *Feminist Contentions*, 110.

¹⁴⁰ Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience,’ 784.

¹⁴¹ Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience,’ 786.

this case a common identity of class'.¹⁴² Moreover, 'because it is ultimately shaped by relations of production, [experience] is a unifying phenomenon, overriding other kinds of diversity'.¹⁴³ And yet there is no consideration, Scott objects, of how activity comes to be considered as meaningful experience in these terms, which is to say of consequence to social organisation or politics. As such it occludes other subject-positions: 'the positions of men and women and their different relationships to politics are taken as reflections of material and social arrangements rather than as products of class politics itself; they are part of the "experience" of capitalism'.¹⁴⁴ Thompson is in the end, Scott insists, reliant on the 'ontological foundation' of (working class) experience: 'the ground may seem to be displaced from structure to agency by insisting on the subjectively felt nature of experience, but the problem Thompson sought to address isn't really solved'.¹⁴⁵ Scott's criticisms are indicative of a shift that had happened by 1994, when Benhabib noted that 'after nearly two decades of postmodernist, feminist, deconstructionist and other versions of contextualist criticism, universalist ideals in ethics and politics sound anachronistic and indefensible'.¹⁴⁶ It is a difficulty Dean tries to address with the notion of 'reflective solidarity': 'the bridge between identity and universality, as the precondition of mutual recognition necessary for claims to universality under pluralist, postmodern conditions'.¹⁴⁷ Dean explains that 'this conception of solidarity relies on the intuition that the risk of disagreement which accompanies diversity must be rationally transformed to provide a basis for our intersubjective ties and commitments. This means that the expression "we" must be interpreted not as given, but as "in process," as the discursive achievement of individuated "I"s'.¹⁴⁸ Such a

¹⁴² Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 785.

¹⁴³ Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 784.

¹⁴⁴ Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 785.

¹⁴⁵ Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 786. She subsequently emphasises that 'it is precisely the questions precluded—questions about discourse, difference, and subjectivity, as well as about what counts as experience and who gets to make that determination—that would enable us to historicise experience.' Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 790.

¹⁴⁶ Seyla Benhabib, 'In Defense of Universalism—Yet Again! A Response to Critics of Situating the Self', *New German Critique*, no. 62 (Spring/Summer 1994): 173.

¹⁴⁷ Jodi Dean, *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism after Identity Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 3.

¹⁴⁸ Dean, *Solidarity of Strangers*, 3.

process is akin to that of Peter Linebaugh and Rediker's 'universalisation from below', described by Edwards as a 'process of collective self-making'.¹⁴⁹ Continuing and developing the work of Thompson (and his peers among the British Communist Party Historians Group), Linebaugh and Rediker '[recast] this account of class formation as multi-ethnic and gendered, while remaining committed to a revolutionary socialist vision of collective agency and solidarity'.¹⁵⁰

At the root of Scott's criticisms of Thompson's work is an objection to an approach to history writing, influential in feminist scholarship, that fails to address how 'subjectivity is produced, the ways in which agency is made possible'.¹⁵¹ Benhabib frames the debate as 'a clash of paradigms within women's historiography'.¹⁵² In an overview of a dispute between Scott and Linda Gordon, Benhabib writes that the clash is 'between the social history from below paradigm used by Gordon, the task of which is to illuminate the gender, class and race struggles through which power is negotiated, subverted, as well as resisted by the so-called "victims" of history, and the paradigm of historiography, influenced by Foucault's work, in which the emphasis is on the "construction" of the agency of the victims through mechanisms of social and discursive control from the top'.¹⁵³ As Judith Butler puts it in a riposte to Benhabib, 'it is not a question of whether there is evidence for agency [...] but rather how one accounts for the agency that exists'.¹⁵⁴

As Scott describes it, 'subjects are constituted discursively, but there are conflicts among discursive systems, contradictions within any one of them, multiple meanings

¹⁴⁹ Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 452.

¹⁵⁰ Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 452.

¹⁵¹ Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 787.

¹⁵² Benhabib, 'Subjectivity, Historiography, and Politics,' 113.

¹⁵³ Benhabib, 'Subjectivity, Historiography, and Politics,' 113.

¹⁵⁴ Butler, 'For a Careful Reading,' in Seyla Benhabib et al., *Feminist Contentions*, 137. Scott writes, in terms that pick up on Butler's point here, 'and subjects do have agency. They are not unified, autonomous individuals exercising free will, but rather subjects whose agency is created through situations and statuses conferred on them'. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 793. She suggests, 'a change of object seems to be required, one that takes the emergence of concepts and identities as historical events in need of explanation'. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 792.

possible for the concepts they deploy'.¹⁵⁵ Butler's formulation of 'agency *as* resignification' is exemplary in this respect.¹⁵⁶ She explains, 'if the subject is a reworking of the very discursive processes by which it is worked, then "agency" is to be found in the possibilities of resignification opened up by discourse'.¹⁵⁷ As such, the space thereby conceptualised for the exercise of political agency is one primarily understood in terms of the disruption or dislocation of dominant norms. Looking back on several decades in which our sense of the space available for political action has been dominated by such ideas, we might sympathise with McNay's observation that the impact attributed to such strategies is often overstated: 'the terms resistance and dislocation have, in some respects, become truisms in that they are used to describe any situation where individual practices do not conform to dominant norms'.¹⁵⁸

And yet for Scott, it is in the attempt to understand the complexities of the changing processes by which identities are formed that a radical political historiography can emerge: 'this kind of approach does not undercut politics by denying the existence of subjects; it instead interrogates the processes of their creation and, in so doing, refigures history and the role of the historian and opens new ways for thinking about change'.¹⁵⁹

As such, the rehabilitation of a useful notion of agency, formulated with an eye to an account of political agency, is one that must happen in an attentiveness to how

¹⁵⁵ Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 793. She continues, 'these conditions enable choices, although they are not unlimited. Subjects are constituted discursively and experience is a linguistic event (it doesn't happen outside established meanings), but neither is it confined to a fixed order of meaning. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 794. For Benhabib, Scott is working within a Foucauldian paradigm for which 'every act of resistance is but another manifestation of an omnipresent discourse-power complex [...] women who negotiate and resist power do not exist; the only struggles in history are between competing paradigms of discourses, power-knowledge complexes'. Benhabib, 'Subjectivity, Historiography, and Politics,' 113.

¹⁵⁶ Butler, 'For a Careful Reading,' 135.

¹⁵⁷ Butler, 'For a Careful Reading,' 135.

¹⁵⁸ McNay continues, 'This is a tendency evident, for example, in some types of cultural studies which impute to certain everyday practices a kind of inherently subversive status.' McNay, *Gender and Agency*, 4.

¹⁵⁹ Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 797.

subjects operate in unanticipated and innovative ways, through the material realities of socioeconomic conditions. But it cannot neglect the complex dynamics of subject formation in doing so. In works of art which deal with historical attempts to assert a political subjectivity, we can find an attempt to articulate a relationship to the past which comes to terms with how our political horizons have changed. A critical engagement with the notion of political agency does not simply aestheticise a discredited model of political will in the spirit of nostalgia. Rather, it raises the question of the vicissitudes to which the notion has been subjected, as articulated in changing relationships to political action, and asks what our relationship to the idea of political agency is now. In this sense, works like those of Bowers can address Scott's call to pay attention to 'the history of foundationalist concepts themselves'.¹⁶⁰ And yet Bowers explores histories of political resistance in a spirit of affirmation, interrogating the fortunes of our notions of political agency in order to recast it for our current circumstances, in an attempt to understand what kind of politics might be available to us today. As Nancy Fraser writes in a contribution to the series of exchanges from which Benhabib's comments are taken, 'feminists need both deconstruction and reconstruction, destabilization of meaning and projection of utopian hope'.¹⁶¹ We might argue that the same is true of all those engaged in a radical politics of emancipation.

THE WORK OF PICTURES

If Bowers's works affirm a collective political subjectivity in a time of revanchist neoliberalism, and in doing so demand a discussion about political agency itself, how is the work of art itself figured in this process? And what, more specifically, is the role of the image? Insofar as such ideas are figured in Bowers's work, it is in the form of what WJT Mitchell has called 'metapictures'.¹⁶² Broadly speaking, these are pictures of pictures—although 'there is also a sense', Mitchell writes, 'in which any picture

¹⁶⁰ Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 796. Scott argues that 'the history of these concepts (understood to be contested and contradictory) then becomes the evidence by which "experience" can be grasped and by which the historian's relationship to the past he or she writes about can be articulated.' Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 796.

¹⁶¹ Fraser, 'False Antitheses,' in Seyla Benhabib et al., *Feminist Contentions*, 71.

¹⁶² W.J.T. Mitchell, 'Four Fundamental Concepts of Image Science,' in *Under Pressure: Pictures, Subjects, and the New Spirit of Capitalism*, ed. Daniel Birnbaum and Isabelle Graw (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2008), 21.

may become a metapicture, whenever it is employed as a device to reflect on the nature of pictures'.¹⁶³ In this sense, we encounter in Bowers's drawings scenes of political action which are also reflections upon the role of pictures in exercising political agency. Bowers, we have seen, turns to the theatre of prefigurative political practices and the spectacle of protest in seeking a role for the aesthetic in political life. Elsewhere, her labour-intensive works are commonly framed as acts of homage and commemoration (not least by Bowers herself).¹⁶⁴ In this sense, we might describe her practice as a Benjaminian one of '*apokastasis* in the sense that every past victim, every attempt at emancipation, however humble and "minor", will be rescued from oblivion and "mentioned in dispatches", that is to say recognised, honoured and remembered'.¹⁶⁵

Andrea Bowers's drawings are partisan images, involved in a process of counter-representation. Bowers has spoken of the way in which she has seen her work as existing as part of often inadequate public record.¹⁶⁶ Mentioned in this case in relation to a work made in response to contemporary events, the same impetus is clearly discernible in the ways in which she has used historical material. They affirm the possibility of collective political subjectivity as they situate contemporary activism in a radical tradition that repudiates the narrowing of political horizons. Her work shares with practices of radical historiography an understanding that 'regardless of their unorthodoxy, untimeliness and obscurity the conflicts of the past were constitutive of this present'.¹⁶⁷ In both cases work 'draws the radical past into our time, refusing the temporality of defeat—the closure of narrative endings'.¹⁶⁸ As

¹⁶³ Mitchell, 'Four Fundamental Concepts,' 22.

¹⁶⁴ See n. 83 in this chapter.

¹⁶⁵ Michael Löwy cited in Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 460.

¹⁶⁶ These comments were made in relation to *#sweetjane*, a 2014 exhibition about an infamous rape case in Steubenville, Ohio, and the social media-driven activism (led by Anonymous) that brought the rapists to trial. Patricia Maloney, 'Interview with Andrea Bowers,' *Art Practical*, 26 March, 2014, accessed 11 September, 2016, <http://www.artpractical.com/column/bad-at-sports-interview-with-andrea-bowers/>.

¹⁶⁷ Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*, 17.

¹⁶⁸ Edwards, 'Commons and Crowds,' 436. As Thompson writes, 'Our only criterion of judgement should not be whether or not a man's actions are justified in the light of subsequent evolution. After all, we are not at the end of social evolution ourselves.' E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1991), 12.

such, when she revisits the histories of political movements, she does so in a spirit comparable to that which Day discerns in footage of a demonstration in Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*, not of "resignation" nor "defeat," but rather a reminder of how human subjects are fundamentally transformed in and through the processes of resistance'.¹⁶⁹

Roberts suggests that 'the idea that political practice lies in the production of a counter-symbolic archive' is in some respects 'historically otiose' without a coherent 'working-class movement to underwrite this counter-symbolic process and connect its disparate motivations and energies'.¹⁷⁰ I would suggest that works such as Bowers's describe efforts to articulate a political collective subjectivity through the disparate acts of resistance that characterise our current situation.

In Bowers's work, the image is a tool for the exercise of political agency. Such instrumental uses are paralleled in the use of images and slogans on placards, posters, badges and other artefacts of dissent. The slogan, and also the iconographic aspects of its delivery, are appropriated by Bowers in her return to such artefacts. These artefacts are messages, in both text and image, with greater and lesser degrees of directness and ambiguity, and they are also physical documents whose condition testify to their age and use; they are both about the world of political struggle and of it. There are disparities in the way such artefacts, and other documents of dissent, are handled—they may be reproduced, or they may be re-enacted. That is, they may be depicted with attention to the physical qualities of the object (as in the drawing in figure 2.6). Or it may be the iconic content which is repurposed (as we see, for example, in figure 2.3; or the drawings of liberty from *Help the Work Along*, where there is no hint of the original contexts in which the images were encountered.) If the free repurposing of the latter draws our attention to the actions depicted, and to the processes of political subjectivation, then in the former case the materiality of the works, as labour intensive drawings, is redoubled in the emphasis on the materiality of the objects depicted, as age is worn on the image's surface.

These works are, ostensibly, formally conservative in the context of a tradition of radical art practice whose point of departure is an analysis and critique of art's

¹⁶⁹ Day, *Dialectical Passions*, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Roberts, 'Introduction,' 365.

institutions and methods of dissemination, and its attendant scepticism about object-based approaches. The strategy of figurative drawing as a means of reworking the appropriated image, characterised by a certain amount of labour-intensive detail which assiduously reproduces the original, is difficult to reconcile with such a tradition. In Bowers's drawings, themes of collectivity, participatory forms and prefiguration through exemplary gestures—themes common to 'relational' art practices—provide the subject matter for works which remain wedded to traditional forms of representation through depiction.¹⁷¹ Where Hayes adopts slogans from past protests by re-enacting them, Bowers draws the placards. Why this insistence on the iconographic?

Claire Gilman, writing about the prevalence of drawing as a means of negotiating political material - and not only that, but detailed, figurative drawing of a kind once 'dismissed as taboo and retrograde' by politically-engaged artists—has suggested that 'today, [...] in a society dominated by virtual relations, an aesthetics of immateriality no longer seems viable. [...] The increasingly global yet still fragmented world seems both more and less immediate, making some kind of purchase on the "real" indispensable'.¹⁷² Under such conditions, the radicality presumed to persist, despite changing socio-economic circumstances, in models of 'dematerialised' practice that have emerged from that tradition—forms of 'social' practice, for example—is questionable. In this sense, what is the role of the materiality, physicality and labour in these works?

Moreover, Bowers's avowed interest in forms of political activism that articulate a role for the aesthetic is at odds with a critique which, as Costello and Willsdon describe it, 'rejected the discourse of the aesthetics on the grounds that it was politically or ethically regressive'.¹⁷³ Such a critique, though it has been nuanced in recent years, has been influential in the development of dematerialised practices and informs assumptions today about what 'political art' might look like. In charting shifts in contemporary approaches, Costello and Willsdon identify a growing

¹⁷¹ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002).

¹⁷² Claire Gilman, 'Marking Politics: Drawing as Translation in Recent Art', *Art Journal* 69, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 115.

¹⁷³ Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 8.

concern for ‘the political agency of artworks and images in a larger context of representation and reception’.¹⁷⁴ They situate such practices in a realist tradition that embraces documentary, where ‘what matters is how, through the deployment of which media and what iconographies, the work addresses matters of political or ethical concern.’¹⁷⁵ The use of iconographic material is, for such works, ‘a matter of rhetoric: a concern with *how* the mode or manner in which the work treats its content, and the point of view from which it is addressed, disposes its viewers to see the world’.¹⁷⁶ How might such a tradition inform an understanding of the recourse to images, in the work of Bowers and others? These are the questions that shape the following chapter.

¹⁷⁴ Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 12.

¹⁷⁵ Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 13.

3

FERNANDO BRYCE'S MIMETIC ANALYSIS

Figure 3.1 Fernando Bryce, *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, installation view, 2004.

In light of the long and complex histories of art's engagement with the political, and the many and various modes of reciprocity devised along the way, what does it mean to be preoccupied with images of political action? With particular reference to works by Fernando Bryce, in this chapter I will begin to address the complex ways in which such images intersect with and shape processes of political identification and affiliation. Looking in particular at one of Bryce's larger series of drawings, 2004's *Revolución*, which takes the Cuban revolution as its starting point for its exploration of the revolutionary politics of the mid-twentieth century, I ask what such works might tell us about how collective political subjectivities are shaped in a negotiation with the histories of political movements; and about how art might engage with such processes, as they are mediated through artefacts and images (fig. 3.1).

Informed by an understanding of the performative potential of the image—the image understood as a process—I go on to consider the temporal and spatial syntax of such series of drawings in considerations of seriality and copying. How is the work shaped by a politics of deferral and delay? Does the anachronic approach of the work simply inscribe a certain critical distance, or do different kinds of personal investments and commitments play out here? What all the works discussed in these chapters have in common is their use of drawing, of a kind dedicated to the laborious manual reproduction of mass-produced and widely disseminated artefacts, and of photographs in particular. In addressing the work of the image then, in this chapter I consider the role of the hand in making these reproductions, and the particular relationship played out here between drawing and technological forms of image production and reproduction—asking the question, asked by Richard Shiff of painting and photography, 'Where in the use and performance of the mediums is their real difference (if there is one)?'¹

Since the 1990s Bryce, a Peruvian artist based in Berlin, has produced drawings of images and documents taken from archival source material. These are drawn in ink on paper, typically of about A4 or A3 size, and exhibited in series that vary greatly in scale but can number in the hundreds. As one commentator notes, 'although rich in information and factual detail, Bryce's work tends to focus on the pictorial, iconographic and graphic quality of the selected and copied documents', which

¹ Richard Shiff, 'Closeness,' in *Postcards on Photography: Photorealism and the Reproduction*, ed. Naomi Salaman and Ronnie Simpson (Cambridge: Cambridge Darkroom Gallery, 1998), 13.

might include newspaper articles or the front pages of long-forgotten magazines, print advertisements, correspondence or other documentation, tourist pamphlets or propaganda posters.² As such his archives, and the kinds of photographic images he finds in them, differ in an important respect from those of Bowers. Where Bowers's source material is usually from archives of activists' own documentation of events in which they have been personally involved, Bryce uses images that have been disseminated through the mass media. This brings the channels of distribution, mediation and debate into focus in his work—foregrounding the popular reception of the political event—and invites us to discern a critical distance towards his archival material.

Bryce describes his process as one of 'mimetic analysis'—I will go on to consider exactly what that might mean in this chapter.³ His first major work of this type is *Atlas Perú* (2000-01), a vast series of 494 drawings documenting the history of Peru between 1932 and 2001, a period bookended by revolts against military dictator Sánchez Cerro and the inauguration of the government of Alejandro Toledo, after a popular uprising against authoritarian president Alberto Fujimori (fig 3.2). Carlos Jiménez has suggested that three major preoccupations can be discerned in Bryce's work as it has evolved since then.⁴ Two of them are in different ways meditations upon the theme of colonial power relations during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, either through an archive of North American and European stereotypes of colonised peoples and nations (here Jiménez includes *Atlas Perú*) or of material produced by the institutions of Western powers that reflect their colonial projects and ambitions. The third major concern Jiménez discerns in Bryce's work is political upheaval and the revolutionary movements of the twentieth century. In keeping with this general characterisation, it is this latter body of work that will be my focus here.

Nonetheless, though a useful outline of Bryce's interests, it is one to which I make reference with some reservations. Most obviously, much of Bryce's source material—

² Dominic Eichler, 'Fernando Bryce,' *Frieze*, July 6, 2006, accessed July 27, 2016, <https://frieze.com/article/fernando-bryce>.

³ See, for example, Viviana Usubiaga, 'Interview with Fernando Bryce,' *LatinArt.com*, accessed July 27, 2016, <http://www.latinart.com/transcript.cfm?id=71>.

⁴ Carlos Jiménez, 'Fernando Bryce: The Untimely Copyist,' *ArtNexus* 9, no. 76 (March-May 2010): 46, accessed July 27, 2016, http://www.artnexus.com/Notice_View.aspx?DocumentID=21413.

Figure 3.2 Fernando Bryce, *Atlas Perú*, ink on paper, series of 494 drawings, installation view, 2000–2001 (detail).

particularly from his larger series of drawings—might fit thematically into more than one of these categories. Some of the political events and movements documented by Bryce were the product of anti-colonial struggles—to take an example mentioned by Jiménez, the small series *Guatemala 54* (2002), just four drawings, takes as its subject the 1954 CIA-backed coup against the country’s elected president Jacobo Árbenz, whose government fell foul of the interests of the US-owned United Fruit Company (see figure 1.4). (Indeed, the political history of Latin America is inextricable from its colonial entanglements.) Elsewhere, *Die Welt* (2008)—one of Bryce’s largest series with 195 drawings from periodicals published between 1880 and 1917—might comfortably be included in the second category, with images documenting ‘the territorial expansion of European powers and markets’, but also includes portraits of Emma Goldman, Marxist theorist Rosa Luxemburg and Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata alongside General Lothar von Trotha, military commander in what was German South-West Africa (fig. 3.3).⁵ Aside from the general caveat that Bryce’s main themes are fundamentally related and cannot be entirely disentangled, in more recent

⁵ Angelika Richter, ‘Fernando Bryce,’ Galerie Barbara Thumm press release, October 2008, accessed July 27, 2016, http://www.re-title.com/exhibitions/archive_GalerieBarbaraThumm3846.asp.

Figure 3.3 Fernando Bryce, *Die Welt*, ink on paper, series of 194 drawings, dimensions variable, 2008 (details).

Figure 3.4 Fernando Bryce, *El Mundo en Llamas*, ink on paper, series of 95 drawings, installation view, 2014 (detail).

works Bryce's preoccupations have developed in ways that do not quite fit into this schema, with series like *El Mundo en Llamas* and *Das Reich/Der Aufbau* (both 2010-11) clearly indebted to his earlier work on the colonial powers but with a specific focus on the first and second world wars (fig. 3.4). Here too, his interest in revolutionary political struggle is often apparent—2011's *Les fusillés de Châteaubriant* includes portraits of 27 French communist resistance fighters shot on the orders of the Vichy government in 1941. I would also propose that a fourth preoccupation is evident in Bryce's work—the portrait. Bryce has produced several works dedicated to individuals. Jiménez mentions the series *Trotsky* (2003) and *Walter Benjamin* (2002), both of which, as Jiménez suggests, are clearly related to Bryce's political interests (see figure 1.3). Nonetheless, since these works Bryce has continued to produce relatively small series of drawings devoted to portraits of a broader spectrum of characters, some of whom are political figures but many of whom are known primarily as literary figures or intellectuals (including *Céline/Döblin/Arlt* (2010) and *Foucault/De Certeau/Braudel* (2008)).⁶ These series can be seen as a development of a tendency first explored in larger series like *Revolución*, which sporadically coalesce in striking fashion around individual portraits of particular protagonists.

As Kodwo Eshun and Ros Gray have discussed, the legacy of the era addressed in *Revolución* is contentious: 'returning to the archives of this moment obliges contemporary thinkers to confront the accreted condescension that the present, in all its accumulated superiority, bears towards the recent yet distant pasts of Tricontinental militancy'.⁷ The aspirations forged amid a balance of international power that seems very distant from that of today have been discredited; protagonists forgotten or misrepresented; and strategies and analyses subject to—often convincing—critique. And yet, a work like *Revolución* seeks out precisely that confrontation

⁶ That is, in the former case a triptych of drawings of writers: Frenchman Louis-Ferdinand Céline, German Alfred Döblin, and Argentinian Roberto Arlt; and in the latter of French theorists Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, and Fernand Braudel. We might also include among these more recent series *Grossman/Malaparte/Jünger* (2011), another three portraits of writers: the Russian Vasily Grossman, Italian Curzio Malaparte and German Ernst Jünger. However, those particular drawings might also be considered in light of Bryce's parallel work on the first and second world wars, and not primarily understood as tributes. Another addition to the list could be the single drawing *Pasolini* (2012)—not being primarily known as a writer, his cultural significance is slightly different; but of course he did write, and is another figure whose work is inextricable from his radical politics.

⁷ Kodwo Eshun and Ros Gray, 'The Militant Image', 2. See chap. 1, n. 52.

imagined by Eshun and Gray, asking us what remains compelling about such histories, and how they might inform renewed efforts of political imagination.

REVOLUCIÓN

Revolución (2004) is a series of 219 drawings. Taking as its starting point the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship in Cuba by Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement in 1959, it documents the global revolutionary left during a 'long 1960s' that is ushered in by the Cuban revolution and closes with the election of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1970.⁸ Bryce's drawings chart the domestic and international ramifications of events in Cuba, including scenes of the emergent state's development amid attempts to forge a new revolutionary culture and its influence on liberation struggles across the world. The Cuban revolution here is a fulcrum for a consideration of contemporaneous events across Latin America, and Latin America's relationship to the wider world, as inflected by national liberation movements, anti-imperialism and the Cold War. As such, the work takes its place alongside 'the artistic turn towards research into militant cultural production' that Eshun and Gray suggest has taken place since the exhibitions 'Documenta 11' (2002) and Okwui Enwezor's 'The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994' (2001).⁹

Pages, articles, images or advertisements from newspapers, magazines and pamphlets are reproduced in whole or part, as are cinema posters and other printed ephemera. Bryce has described his initial attraction to the images produced in the wake of Cuba's revolution, encountered in the pages of these publications, and he reproduces photographs, satirical and propagandistic cartoons and the insignia of political movements, parties and associations.¹⁰ A single sparely-drawn face stares from the occasional panel, in the

⁸ On the term 'the long 1960s' and the different ways in which it is deployed, see Jon Agar, 'What Happened in the Sixties?', *British Journal for the History of Science* 41, no. 4 (December 2008): 567-600; and Simon Hall, 'Protest Movements in the 1970s: The Long 1960s,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 4 (October 2008): 655-672. Elizabeth Freeman, in her discussion of the work of artists revisiting queer and feminist political struggles, defines 'the sixties' (in a US context) as 'the period between the escalation of the Vietnam War in 1965 and the resignation of Richard Nixon in 1974.' Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds*, 14. See chap. 1, n. 43.

⁹ Eshun and Gray, 'The Militant Image,' 3.

¹⁰ See Fernando Bryce and Helena Tatay, 'Conversation', in *Fernando Bryce*, ed. Helena Tatay (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2005), 378: 'I decided to start with the Cuban Revolution because it was a very important event politically and very impressive at the level of the production of images. When I first saw the copies of *Revolución* in the library, I told myself: "There's a whole world of images to exhume here".'

Figure 3.5 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004. The drawing on the right reads, 'Comrade worker: STUDY to win the battle of the sixth grade'.

portraits of individual protagonists that punctuate the series. And yet, as might be expected from a sustained engagement with such source material, text features heavily in the final drawings. Some are crowded with the densely-packed words of a speech or essay; in others, phrases abut images in sometimes elliptical ways or serve as more or less brief captions; only a handful of the 219 drawings feature no text at all. The whole comes to constitute a potentially overwhelming compendium of historical detail that embraces the familiar and the recondite. Elizabeth Freeman has noted that the work of many artists who 'engage with historical "post-ness"' involves 'close readings of the past for the odd detail, the unintelligible or resistant moment'.¹¹ The vast range of Bryce's series means that we encounter such oddities and arcana amid images so familiar as to be almost meaningless: Bryce does not shy away from including a version of Alberto Korda's ubiquitous 1960 portrait of Che Guevara, *Guerillero Heroico*, here alongside the newspaper headlines and a poster for the 'Battle for the Sixth Grade', a workers' educational initiative (fig. 3.5). The conjunction provokes our curiosity, encouraging us to look anew at material we might otherwise

¹¹ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 14-16.

take for granted. Bryce has described his drawing as a homogenising process in which all images attain what he calls ‘an iconographic democracy’ that allows him to rework their interrelationship and submit them to his own inflections, his own ‘value judgements’, in presenting them as part of a series.¹² The iconic image of Guevara—redrawn here as one of several portraits in a series of hundreds of drawings, in an attempt to critically resituate it in the context from which it has been so definitively wrenched by its ubiquity—serves as something of a test of such efforts of homogenisation.

This process of decontextualisation plays out in the images’ submission to Bryce’s characteristic style, as each image is rendered in black ink on white paper, in a graphic manner indebted to certain illustrative forms. Bryce has commented, ‘When I think of my own work, I tend to think of the illustrations you used to get in history books. I associate it with a level of images, if you like, with the idea of illustrations or sometimes of caricature, or advertising, all ‘minor genres’.¹³ There is something of the caricature in Bryce’s lapidary and fluid line, and encountered in series across a wall there is something of the comic book too. He has spoken of art world influences who undoubtedly draw on the style of comics, including Raymond Pettibon in particular.¹⁴ These associations are in keeping with Bryce’s preoccupation with the dissemination of images in the mass media. Hillary L. Chute notes that artists like Pettibon and William Kentridge (also known for his figurative drawing) also share with contemporary cartoonists a debt to artists such as Francisco Goya and William Hogarth who, as Kentridge has said, ‘employed what many people think of as intimate and supplementary media to make significant statements, not just formally but politically’.¹⁵

Bryce has spoken of his ‘encyclopaedic’ ambitions for the work, having initially set out to address postwar Latin America and its relationship with the US—a project clearly indebted to earlier works like *Atlas Perú* and *Guatemala 54*, as well as 2002’s sardonic collections of images of Latin America produced in the mid-twentieth century for a North American audience, *South of the Border*, *Cuba* and *México*.¹⁶

¹² Bryce and Tatay, ‘Conversation’, 374.

¹³ Bryce and Tatay, ‘Conversation’, 371.

¹⁴ See Bryce and Tatay, ‘Conversation’, 371-372.

¹⁵ William Kentridge cited in Hillary L. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 28. See chap. 1, n. 105.

¹⁶ Bryce and Tatay, ‘Conversation’, 377.

Figure 3.6 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

Above: 4 January 1959: 'We will not betray the faith of our people'.

Below: 22 January 1959: 'The people say: YES!'

An encounter with archival copies of the *Revolución* newspaper led Bryce to focus on Cuba as the starting point for a work with broader scope, a ‘panorama of the sixties’.¹⁷

Revolución, Bryce’s starting point and primary source, began as a clandestine publication produced by the 26th of July Movement during the 1950s, before becoming the first official newspaper of the revolutionary Cuban state in 1959. The many drawings from its pages make up the first substantial part of Bryce’s series (see figure 3.6). And yet the presence of *Revolución* in the work serves not only as a means to document the chronology of events in Cuba but also as an allusion to the parlous fate of early revolutionary aspirations, a pivotal theme in the series. The lifespan of the newspaper provides a time frame indicative of political shifts during the period that Bryce documents. Under the auspices of editor Carlos Franqui, *Revolución* came to play a critical role in early attempts to articulate what Cuba’s nascent revolutionary culture might be. Such opportunities were hotly contested, and different and ultimately rival camps converged around *Revolución* and the Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC), the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry. Franqui made plain his desire to ‘build a force around *Revolución* that [...] would rival the influence of ICAIC’.¹⁸ Under his direction, *Revolución* became known for its support for the arts, with the short-lived weekly supplement *Lunes de Revolución* later described as ‘the most widely read literary supplement in the history of Cuban and Latin American literatures’.¹⁹ The newspaper’s eventual decline reflected a shift in political allegiances and strategies towards the end of the decade, as the exigencies of Cold War realpolitik began to eclipse the optimistic but inchoate sense of possibility of the early revolutionary movement and its diverse participants.

Franqui was a journalist, critic and poet who had been involved with the newspaper since its inception as an underground publication first in Havana and later with the

¹⁷ Bryce and Tatay, ‘Conversation’, 378.

¹⁸ Michael Chanan, *Cuban Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 124. Haphazard early bouts of expropriation and nationalisation had consolidated both organisations’ positions within the media and their access to mass audiences, with *Revolución* taking charge of a television studio and the ICAIC gaining an advertising studio and record pressing plant.

¹⁹ William Luis, ‘Exhuming *Lunes de Revolución*’, *CR: The New Centennial Review* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 254. ‘In print for two and a half years, by the final issue in November 1961 *Lunes de Revolución* had a circulation of more than 250,000, more than that of comparable international publications, including the USA’s *New York Review of Books*.’

guerrillas in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra during the revolutionary insurgency, where he also controlled Radio Rebelde transmissions. On joining the insurgents he had severed his earlier ties with the Communist party, which for much of the 1950s regarded the 26th of July Movement with suspicion and considered Castro an adventurist.²⁰ When the Movement seized power, he became antagonistic towards the involvement of Communist party members in the process of establishing the new state, seeing them as 'infiltrators into a Revolution they had done nothing to make'.²¹ These members included Alfredo Guevara, head of the ICAIC, and this animosity would become a schism in the Cuban cultural landscape as it developed in the decade after the revolution.

In the early years of the new Cuba, the revolution had not yet been characterised as a socialist struggle. The 26th of July Movement were a militant national liberation movement influenced by José Martí, hero of Cuban independence struggles against the Spanish in the 1890s. They called for social reform and mobilised opposition to a corrupt and undemocratic government, but their political aims were otherwise ill-defined.²² They had led a loose coalition of rebel forces including reformists as well as insurrectionists like the Catholic-led Revolutionary Directorate, which had grown from the University of Havana's Student Federation. Once in power, as Michael Chanan notes, 'the Revolutionary Government allowed its ideological position to remain publicly undefined'.²³ And yet the ICAIC, according to co-founder and Alfredo Guevara's successor Julio García Espinosa, had 'set out from the beginning to create a communist political awareness'.²⁴

Many of the artists and intellectuals who coalesced around the ICAIC and *Revolución* had been part of the *aficionado* movement that fostered an independent and internationally-engaged cinematic culture in the cine-clubs of the 1950s. As Michael Chanan describes it, in the face of the hostility of US-dominated distributors and state restrictions the movement gained in some respects an oppositional character, becoming

²⁰ Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 123.

²¹ Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 123.

²² As one contemporary commentator notes of Castro's 'Manifesto No. 1 of the 26th of July to the People of Cuba', August 1955: 'In effect, he did not claim to represent a political tendency so much as a more effective *aparato* to overthrow the Batista dictatorship.' Theodore Draper, 'Castroism', in *Marxism in the Modern World*, ed. Milorad M. Drachkovitch (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 195.

²³ Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 127.

²⁴ Julio García Espinosa cited in Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 124.

for its members ‘a symbol of cultural resistance and a way of forging a sense of unity in their cultural aspirations’.²⁵ Political and cultural struggles were thus already profoundly entwined in ways that would remain important in the early years of the revolutionary state. Many *aficionados* were also involved in militant political activity. And yet, ‘it was mainly a union of convenience, in which certain rifts opened up when the inevitable political divisions were brought out into the open after the victory of the Revolution’.²⁶ According to Chanan, those artists and intellectuals who had been involved in the urban political underground gravitated towards the ICAIC after the revolution, while ‘those around *Revolución* [...] tended to be politically less experienced and correspondingly more bewildered by the course of events’.²⁷ Bewildered or not, they were certainly less interested in political programmes than in ‘the revolution as an opportunity for intellectual expansion, freedom of expression and formal experimentation’.²⁸ Equally important was the desire to bring the work of the

²⁵ Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 90.

²⁶ Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 91.

²⁷ Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 124. It is worth mentioning that Chanan’s position in this book is partisan, inclined towards defence of the ICAIC and the Cuban state. This position is expressed in his defence of the ICAIC in the controversy around the *Revolución*-sponsored film *P.M.*, by Saba Cabrera Infante (brother of Guillermo Cabrera Infante, editor of *Lunes*) and Orlando Jiménez Leal. The film was refused a distribution license by the ICAIC, which deemed its impressionistic, ‘free-cinema’ style scenes of nightlife in harbourside Havana to be ‘irresponsible’. (See Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 134-5.) The outrage provoked by this apparent censorship led to a series of meetings at the national library, ‘with the participation of practically the whole intellectual and artistic community’, attended by Castro and other members of the revolutionary government (Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 138). These meetings became a wide-ranging debate about the role of culture in revolutionary Cuba, during which Castro made the speech that came to be known as ‘Words to the Intellectuals’ (see below, footnote 57). The meetings made plain the divisions between the *Lunes* camp and the revolutionary authorities, strengthening the position of the ICAIC (see below, footnote 58). At one point in his discussion of the incident, Chanan describes *P.M.*’s supporters (and those affiliated to *Lunes* more broadly) as ‘liberal apologists’ (Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 136). For a critical view of Chanan’s account (as it pertains to a later controversy in which he is critical of the film *Mauvaise Conduite* by Leal and Nestór Almendros, earlier a supporter of *P.M.*), see Paul Julian Smith, *Vision Machines: Cinema, Literature and Sexuality in Spain and Cuba, 1983-1993* (London: Verso, 1996), 65-70.

Nonetheless, the characterisation of a schism between intellectuals on the question of what might constitute revolutionary cultural work—a debate informed by the desire to distance Cuba from the failings of the USSR—is borne out in accounts from many different political positions. These debates are discussed at length elsewhere, including in Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture: The Cultural Policy of the Cuban Revolution* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015), 149-166.

²⁸ Hector Amaya, *Screening Cuba: Film Criticism as Political Performance During the Cold War* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 12.

international avant-garde to a mass audience. Franqui cited a maxim attributed to José Martí: 'Culture brings freedom'.²⁹ In a more generous assessment than Chanan's, Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt writes, 'In the immediate post-revolutionary period, those Cuban artists actively participating in a reform of the aesthetic vocabulary were encouraged in the hope that it would be possible to correct the historical error of Marxist-Leninist vanguards, which, in rejecting modern art, had reinforced the segregation between artistic and political vanguards. This end of the rhetorical spectrum was provided by *Lunes*'.³⁰ Nonetheless, according to some observers 'the evolution of the revolution toward socialism was for many people a great surprise, which created many anxieties': not least among those, like Franqui, who had supported the revolution but had antagonistic relationships with established political parties.³¹ Guillermo Cabrera Infante, editor of *Lunes*, would recall the situation bitterly in an autobiographical book written after defecting from Cuba, writing that those around *Revolución* were characterised as 'decadent, bourgeois, avant-gardiste, and the worst epithet in the Communist name-calling catalogue, cosmopolitist [*cosmopolite*]. In turn, we saw them as despicable bureaucrats, a bunch of ignoramuses with artistically reactionary ideas and no taste at all'.³² The growing mutual suspicion of both factions signalled the decline of what had been seen as an auspicious solidarity among artists and intellectuals, and would eventually be the end of the *Revolución* newspaper.³³ As Castro and the revolutionary state became more explicitly affiliated with the communist party, in part to secure the patronage of the Soviet Union in Cuba's escalating disputes with the United States, Franqui's influence waned.

This shift then, in which the politics of the revolutionary state becomes more narrowly circumscribed, is reflected across the panels that make up Bryce's *Revolución* series in

²⁹ 'Our thesis was that we had to break down the barriers that separated elite culture from mass culture. We wanted to bring the highest quality of culture to thousands of readers. We were motivated by a motto we got directly from José Martí: 'Culture brings freedom.' Carlos Franqui cited in Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 126.

³⁰ Gordon-Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 125. It is worth pointing out here that Bryce does not include images from copies of *Lunes*. Nonetheless, it is worth noting the ways in which cultural debates converged around the supplement and ultimately led to the closing of *Revolución*.

³¹ Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 123. Chanan is reporting Alfredo Guevara's opinion here.

³² Guillermo Cabrera Infante cited in Enrique García, *Cuban Cinema After the Cold War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2015), 45.

³³ See Espinosa in Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 125.

images from different sources. In the drawings of the eponymous newspaper's front pages, the optimism of the revolution's beginnings is palpable (fig. 3.6). From the very earliest days of the revolutionary government, with Castro still en route to Havana, a headline declaims the words of the newly-appointed president, Manuel Urrutia: 'We will not disappoint the faith of our people'. Below it is an image of Castro. It was, Bryce suggests, the photograph that first caught his eye, rather than the headline: 'When I see this photo of Fidel Castro here, in chiaroscuro wagging his finger, I think: 'I must have this, it's really interesting'.³⁴ From later in that first month, a photograph of the crowds in Havana is rendered in Bryce's drawing into swarming dabs of ink that on closer inspection occasionally coalesce into upturned faces. Above it, the headline: 'The people say: YES!'. Two of the earliest major projects of the revolutionary state, educational and agrarian reform, crop up in other drawings (fig. 3.7). María de la Cruz Sentmanat, a former slave who at 106 became the oldest person to learn to read and write through a year-long literacy campaign in a case much celebrated at the time, peers out from a 1961 edition of *INRA*, the magazine of the Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria.³⁵ Notwithstanding the many different sources from which the drawings are made, Bryce has a proclivity for faces, limned without extraneous detail or background in graphic forms reminiscent of the 'abridged figuration' of the political serigraphy of the period depicted.³⁶ This kind of technique is also one that Bryce shares with Bowers—although where Bowers's figures are more often than not dwarfed by the vast expanse of blank paper upon which they sit, Bryce's fill the page. Individually, draughted like all of Bryce's drawings in a stark chiaroscuro, they are striking and declarative; and yet of course they are encountered amid

³⁴ Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation', 373.

³⁵ The INRA had been established in 1959 with Che Guevara at its head, to expropriate land from large landholders and redistribute it among co-operatives, peasant labourers and the state. During 1961 around 250,000 Cubans—predominantly urban—were recruited to teach the peasant population to read. Anyone who could read and write was encouraged to volunteer as an *alfabetizador* (literacy tutor), and around 100,000 of those who did so were of school age. After two weeks' training the *alfabetizadores* would travel to farms and remote rural communities where they would work the land by day and teach at night, in a scheme developed with the aim of bringing very different parts of society into contact with one another in the hope of fostering a sense of national unity. See Gordon-Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 22-24.

³⁶ Jessica Morgan, 'Political Pop: An Introduction', Tate website, 1 September, 2015, accessed 31 July, 2016, <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/ey-exhibition-world-goes-pop/jessica-morgan-political-pop-an-introduction>. The importance of such printmaking practices in Cuban visual culture is emphasised by Dylan A.T. Miner, who notes that, 'beginning in the 1960s, posters were at the forefront of re-imagining Cuban visuality.' Dylan A.T. Miner, 'Hasta la Victoria (Deportista) Siempre: Revolution, Art, and the Representation of Sport in Cuban Visual Culture', in *The Visual in Sport*, ed. Mike Huggins and Mike O'Mahony (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 202.

Figure 3.7 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004. 'Agrarian reform continues!'; 'At 106 Maria de la Cruz learnt to read'.

two hundred other drawings. These faces punctuate the series, appearing in individual portraits as well as articles and advertisements.

And yet his interests do not lie solely in the iconographic—elsewhere he has been guided by the sentiments of a compelling headline, as he explains when describing a drawing of an article written by Euclides Vázquez and Cabrera Infante (fig. 3.8). 'I see this headline in the daily newspaper *Revolución*, "America is one and only and one and only is its destiny", what a fine idea! Who wrote the article? Guillermo Cabrera Infante. I must bring this document into the light of day!'³⁷ The drawing features no pictures; rather, it reproduces three columns of text that are cut off abruptly at the foot of the page. Mistakes in the transcription of the text are blotted out in scribbled black blocks. The article (written before the deterioration of Cabrera Infante's relationship with the government) is from a series documenting Castro's travels in April and May 1959, to the US, Canada, Uruguay and Argentina. After speaking at the 'Conference of the 21' in Buenos Aires in May 1959, held at the instigation of the Brazilian president to discuss the economic problems of Latin America, Castro finished his tour in Brazil. During a television appearance, he read from an interview with Ernest Hemingway—a long-standing visitor to Cuba with a

³⁷ Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation', 373.

Figure 3.8 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004. 'America is one and only and one and only is its destiny'.

home on the island—in which the author affirmed, 'Castro's movement awakes great hope. I believe in the Cuban people's cause'.³⁸ Hemingway appears in another drawing here, shaking hands with Castro in one of several scenes from visits by international cultural figures in the first few hopeful months after the revolution (fig. 3.9). As elsewhere, the optimism belies a change in circumstances. The drawing is of the pair's only meeting, a brief encounter at a fishing contest in May 1960. Shortly afterwards the government announced its plans to expropriate all property owned by

³⁸ For the text as read by Castro in Spanish, see Luis Báez, 'Despertar la fe de los pueblos', *Granma*, 7 May, 2014, accessed 1 August, 2016, <http://www.granma.cu/cuba/2014-05-09/despertar-la-fe-de-los-pueblos>. Hemingway's comments were originally published in an interview with Emmett Watson, in 'Sun Valley Interview', *Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 11, 1959. Part of this interview has been reproduced in an overview of the contested origin of the comments, in Wayne Fraser, "I believe in the Cuban people's cause": Hemingway's Politics in Yuri Paporov's *Hemingway en Cuba*, *Wayne & Eleanor* (blog), 12 August, 2014, accessed 1 August, 2016, <http://www.wayneandeleonor.com/i-believe-in-the-cuban-peoples-cause-hemingways-politics-in-yuri-paporovs-hemingway-en-cuba/>.

Figure 3.9 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

US citizens in Cuba, and Hemingway left. Similarly, the appearance of figures like Pablo Neruda and Jean Paul Sartre serve not only as testament to the enthusiasm and goodwill that the revolution had engendered, but as portents of the shift in mood that would see them clash with Castro's government in the years to come, beyond the ken of Bryce's series.³⁹

Bryce's initial research, done in archives and libraries, is expansive. Documents that pique Bryce's interest are photocopied or photographed and from this initial

³⁹ Neruda would fall foul of the Cuban government after meeting with Fernando Beláunde Terry, the anti-Castro president of Peru on a short trip to the country in 1966, an act seen in Cuba as a betrayal. On 31 July 1966, the Cuban state newspaper *Granma* published an open letter to Neruda, a lifelong communist, signed by more than 100 Cuban intellectuals. Several pages in length, it condemned the poet for 'his willingness to indulge the enemy, which it called a perfect example of the tepid, pro-Yankee reformism prevailing in Latin America as an alternative to Castrismo'. Adam Feinstein, *Pablo Neruda* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2004), 346.

Sartre fell out with the Cuban authorities after adding his voice to international protests against the imprisonment of dissident poet Heberto Padilla in 1971.

selection certain images are chosen to be drawn, in a process informed by the material's themes and formal properties and a desire to work towards what Bryce has called 'a kind of iconographic pattern' that plays out across a whole series.⁴⁰ In the first instance, selections are made impulsively and associatively.⁴¹ As such, the ostensibly systematic working processes to which they are subsequently submitted, with images considered thematically and genealogically, is deflected by more idiosyncratic or irreverent associations.⁴² Something like a 'relational geography' emerges here: the term is theorised by Irit Rogoff and deployed by Eshun and Gray as a 'practice of mapping the affinities, proximities and affiliations of ciné-cultures that emerged from and participated in the conflictual and connective militant politics of anti-colonial struggle and revolutionary decolonisation in the late twentieth century'.⁴³ *Revolución*, too, could be seen as a cartography of the broader 'affinities, proximities and affiliations' of the period that begins from a Latin American standpoint, and that in proceeding, as Rogoff suggests, is 'cumulative', that 'lurches sideways'; that is shaped by the affective charge of contingent encounters.⁴⁴

In its attention to the details of daily life, the series associates the prosaic and the extraordinary, the fabled and the unsung. Amid the events that would go on to loom large in the public imagination—those which viewers of the work with only a passing familiarity with the subject at hand might nonetheless be expected to recognise—are less storied episodes. Bryce has spoken of his interest in the incidental details of everyday life after the revolution, as signs of a shift in public discourse during the revolution's first decade but also as a counterpoint to the political debate.⁴⁵ And so the images of militants and the covers of state-run publications are punctuated by posters for popular films, starring Marilyn Monroe or 'Cantinflas', the Mexican comic actor Mario Moreno. Elsewhere, entertainments are an opportunity to raise

⁴⁰ Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation', 373.

⁴¹ See Eichler, 'Fernando Bryce'.

⁴² Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation', 373-374.

⁴³ Eshun and Gray, 'The Militant Image,' 2.

⁴⁴ Irit Rogoff cited in Eshun and Gray, 'The Militant Image,' 2. Where Bryce's encounters happen in archives, Rogoff describes 'chance meetings in cafés', 'shared reading groups at universities' and 'snatches of music on transistor radios', inter alia.

⁴⁵ 'I was also interested in [...] the signs from the daily cultural life of the time, that mass culture which already existed in that era'. Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation', 373.

political consciousness—at a ‘socialist dinner’ or dance organised by the Instituto Nacional de Industria Turística (INIT) (fig. 3.10). Businesses advertise ‘revolutionary offers’; smoking Cuban cigars becomes a patriotic duty. A cabaret that became notorious under the Batista regime, run by US mobsters and popular with visiting celebrities, appears here too: ‘Tropicana’ continued to operate after the revolution and crops up here in a poster for its choreographer’s eighth anniversary at the club in 1959, celebrated a few months after his production of the show *Canto a Oriente*, an homage to agrarian reform (fig. 3.11). Images cluster thematically, and accumulate in broadly chronological fashion across the series. They take on new meaning in association with those that surround them. Occasionally, an image from an advertisement serves not so much as a comical contrast to other drawings nearby as a disconcerting echo of the aspirational postures that pervade the whole series. The image of a fashion model, accompanied by the single word ‘mujeres’, sits next to a poster for the Congress of Women from All America: coinciding with the poster’s text, ‘mujeres’ becomes ‘mujeres unidas’, ‘women united’ (fig. 3.12). Individually these drawings are fragmentary, but *Revolución* is a cumulative work. En masse, these drawings form something like what Freeman calls ‘an amalgam of the incommensurate: of dominant uses in the present, of obsolete meanings sensible only as a kind of radiation from the past, of new potential, and, more simply, of different points in time as meanings accrue and are shed’.⁴⁶

Figure 3.10
Fernando
Bryce, from
Revolución,
ink on paper,
series of 219
drawings,
2004. ‘The
Lovable
Sinner’ (*Let’s
Make Love*);
‘Socialist
Dinner’.

⁴⁶ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 16-17.

Figure 3.11 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

Figure 3.12 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.
'Women'; 'United "for freedom, peace, progress, and happiness."'

Cuba's deteriorating relationship with the US and the parallel *approchement* with the USSR quickly becomes apparent in the drawings of early headlines in the revolutionary press about disputes with the US and trade agreements with the USSR.⁴⁷ In July 1960, the US government made drastic cuts to the amount of sugar it imported from Cuba in a retaliatory gesture after escalating trade disputes.⁴⁸ A headline announcing the news (and misattributing the decision to Cuban authorities with the phrase, 'Cuba strips US of its sugar quota'), is accompanied by four portraits of men, that hint at the international ramifications to come. The caption reads, 'Old tyrants, good friends of the Yankees'. Beneath, it gives their names: Duvalier, Chiang Kai-shek, Somoza and Trujillo (fig. 3.13).⁴⁹

Figure 3.13
Fernando
Bryce, from
Revolución,
ink on
paper,
series of 219
drawings,
2004. "Cuba
strips US of
its sugar
quota".

⁴⁷ The 1959 Agrarian Reform Law, which divided and redistributed land from large estates, was an early flashpoint. After unsuccessful demands for compensation for US interests affected by the law, the CIA was authorised to pursue an interventionist strategy of sabotage. Shortly afterwards, Cuba restored diplomatic relations with the USSR, suspended under Batista. See Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 364.

⁴⁸ Castro's government ordered the country's oil refineries, controlled by US corporations Esso and Standard Oil, and Anglo-Dutch Shell, to process crude oil purchased from the Soviet Union. Under pressure from the US government, they refused. Castro responded by expropriating and nationalising the refineries. In retaliation, the U.S. slashed its import of Cuban sugar, provoking Castro to nationalise most foreign-owned assets on the island, including banks and sugar mills. The USSR took on its sugar order. All of these incidents appear here in drawings from the pages of *Revolución*.

⁴⁹ Respectively, these were at the time the broadly pro-US, authoritarian leaders of Haiti; the anti-communist Republic of China based in Taiwan; Nicaragua; and the Dominican Republic. The image appears near a drawing of the front page of *Revolución* from a week later, declaring: 'The USSR will buy sugar not purchased by the US'.

Eventually, an economic embargo of Cuba was declared by the US in late 1960, in one of the last acts of Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidency.⁵⁰ All diplomatic relations with Cuba were ended and the US began to monitor travel to the island, which was restricted for its citizens. Around this time, Eisenhower ordered the creation of a counter-revolutionary army of Cuban exiles, to be funded by the CIA—whose director Allen W. Dulles appears in a drawing seated with his successor John A. McCone, and Eisenhower's, John F. Kennedy.⁵¹ The cold war, and its increasingly formative influence on the Cuban revolution's trajectory, is in evidence elsewhere, too, in reports of nuclear tests and the space race, and of course the eventual, defining missile crisis (fig. 3.14).⁵² And yet throughout this early period, the revolutionary government enjoyed enormous support. The revolutionary government's immediate priorities, including literacy and health care initiatives, improved many Cubans' quality of life and turned them against counter-revolutionaries. Indeed, the hostility from the US seemed to do much to shore up popular support (fig. 3.15).

Nonetheless, the tone of political debate had become more tense amid rumours of counter-revolutionary plots to invade. Indeed, by October 1960 Sartre had already begun to express reservations about 'an air of repressive uniformity' that he felt had set in since his first visit in the previous February.⁵³ The speech that came to be known as the 'declaration of the socialist character of the revolution' is documented in a drawing of the front page of *Revolución* on 17 April 1961, the day of the botched

⁵⁰ The economic embargo was imposed in January 1962. Eisenhower appears here in one drawing, of a front page from the earliest months of revolutionary Cuba—shortly before relationships would break down with the US—accepting a gift of cigars from a Cuban commander.

⁵¹ See Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 366. The drawing is from a photograph of the men after Dulles's resignation in the wake of the Bay of Pigs farrago. The caption describes Director of Central Intelligence John A. McCone's questionable dealings with aluminium supplier Kaiser while in office.

⁵² In the wake of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion (see below, footnote 54), the USSR stationed nuclear missiles in Cuba at Cuba's request. The US established a naval blockade in response, in an attempt to prevent weapons from reaching the island. The episode is notoriously the point at which Cold War tensions came closest to escalating into nuclear warfare. Prolonged and tense negotiations between the US and the USSR ultimately led to an agreement in which Soviet missiles were removed from Cuba in return for US assurances that the island would not be subject to any more invasions (plus the undisclosed withdrawal of US missiles stationed in Europe). The negotiations sidelined Castro and Cuban interests, and led to the subsequent deterioration of Soviet-Cuban relations.

⁵³ Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (London: Bantam Press, 1997), 483.

Figure 3.14 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004. 'The USSR detonates the super bomb'; 'CIA chief, John H. McCone [sic] (right) [...] next to Allen W. Dulles, who he replaced at the CIA and his boss and fellow millionaire John Kennedy'.

Figure 3.15 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004. 'The revolution spreads literacy; imperialism spreads destruction'.

Bay of Pigs invasion by CIA-backed Cuban exiles (fig. 3.16).⁵⁴ Undoubtedly an act of defiance by Castro in the face of US belligerence, the speech marked the first time the revolution had been publicly characterised as socialist.⁵⁵ In such highly-charged circumstances, amid the mass-mobilisation of the Cuban population into people's militias, arguments about freedom of expression, cultural production and how best to support the revolution took on renewed urgency.⁵⁶ On 30 June 1961 Castro gave the speech known as 'Words to the Intellectuals', setting out for the first time a position on the artist's role in sustaining the revolution and, in doing so, heralding closer control of cultural production.⁵⁷ It was at the same time that it was decided that *Lunes* would be closed, and its final edition appeared in November 1961.⁵⁸ Soon afterwards, the 26th of July Movement merged with the Revolutionary Directorate and Cuba's established Soviet-aligned communist party, the Popular Socialist Party, to form the Integrated Revolutionary Organisations (Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas, or ORI).

⁵⁴ 1400 counter-revolutionary paramilitaries landed at Playa Girón in the Bay of Pigs, Cuba on the night of 16 April. The batallions had been covertly funded and trained in Guatemala by CIA agents, many of whom had worked on the 1954 Guatemalan coup. The troops were largely recruited from anti-Castro Cubans who had defected to Miami. In Cuba, local revolutionary militias had been mobilised in preparation for an invasion. The counter-revolutionaries surrendered on 20 April. For more details, see Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2008), inter alia. On Castro's 'declaration of the socialist character of the revolution' see Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 324, and note 55, below.

⁵⁵ At a funeral for those killed in an air raid at the start of the attempted invasion, Castro declared, 'What the imperialists cannot forgive us is that we are making a socialist revolution under their very noses'. See Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 14. Gordon Nesbitt goes on to suggest that 'even the leadership's harshest critics were compelled to admit that the Revolution's conversion to Marxism had occurred through the struggle against US imperialism'.

⁵⁶ The most obvious example being the controversy around the censorship of the film *P.M.*: see above, footnote 27.

⁵⁷ In the speech, Castro addressed 'freedom for artistic creation' after the revolution (Castro cited in Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 162). The episode is discussed in detail in Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 161-166.

⁵⁸ See above, footnote 27, for details of the incidents leading up to the speech, which concluded a series of meetings at the national library in response to a controversy over the film *P.M.*, during which the editorial policies of *Revolución* and *Lunes de Revolución* were interrogated. During these meetings, it became clear that the *Lunes* camp were out of step with the revolutionary government, and production of the supplement was ceased shortly afterwards—although the official reason given for its closure was a 'shortage of paper' (see Luis, 'Exhuming *Lunes de Revolución*', 276.)

Figure 3.16 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

By March of the following year the ORI had become the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba, or PURSC) which, in turn, became the Communist Party of Cuba in October 1965. A winnowing and consolidation of the political leadership took place amid the internecine struggles that accompanied these developments, which begin to appear in headlines and articles (see, for example, figure 3.17, on the trial of Marcos Rodriguez Alfonso).⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Marcos Rodriguez Alfonso was a member of the Communist Party accused of directing Batista's police to four student members of the Revolutionary Directorate in hiding in Havana, on 20 April, 1957. The revolutionaries were killed as they tried to escape from their apartment. Convicted of having been a Batista informer, Rodriguez was sentenced to death by firing squad.

Rodriguez's trial, at which Castro appeared, took place from 14-19 March, 1964. It became an indictment of the Cuban communist party, and some of its most influential members. Pre-revolutionary divisions came to the fore once more: as Jorge I. Domínguez describes it, 'the process against Rodriguez became a Pandora's box of accusations, incriminations and insinuations between major figures of the Cuban government'. Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 68.

Figure 3.17 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004. 'All revolutionaries together as brothers.—Fidel'.

In 1965 *Revolución* closed. It merged with communist newspaper *Noticias de Hoy* to produce *Granma* (named after the yacht that Castro and his men used to invade Cuba in 1956), still the official newspaper of the Communist Party today. All of these titles feature in Bryce's drawings—each in different ways staging posts in the evolution of the revolution as early aspirations were tempered by the pragmatics of government.

In a schematic periodisation suggested by the work, then, 1965 is a pivotal year in the course of the revolution. 1965 is also the year that Che Guevara resigned from his government positions and left Cuba to fight for revolution abroad.⁶⁰ Guevara is the key figure in the series, a protagonist in several drawings but also a 'magnet', in Kevin

⁶⁰ He also renounced his Cuban citizenship, which had been granted in February 1959, in order to distance his subsequent guerrilla activities from Castro and the Cuban state. Peter McLaren, *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 123.

Powers's term, 'around which [Bryce's] material gathers'.⁶¹ Bryce follows Guevara as he leaves Cuba, and pursues the continental and global manifestations of the revolutionary left in the broader context of anti-colonial struggle and the Cold War. As such, the Cuban revolution becomes a point of orientation and divergence for artist and viewer in a sprawling account of the radical politics of the mid-twentieth century. Postcolonial liberation struggles are surveyed through the prism of Guevara's impact on nascent Third Worldism, and specifically the Tricontinental movement for revolutionary decolonisation, in which Cuba played an important role.⁶² Guevara appears here more than once in drawings from the pages of the *Tricontinental* journal, published in Havana by OSPAAAL since its inaugural conference (fig. 3.18).⁶³ These are among a handful in this series of drawings that include English captions: *Tricontinental* was published in Spanish, French, English and Italian. As Eshun and Gray note, 'The multilingual form of the Tricontinental journal was understood as an intervention into the languages of colonial Europe in order to forge new solidarities with Third World internationalism'.⁶⁴

Thus we see the independence struggles of other countries—of Algeria, the Congo and Vietnam in particular—play out in the Cuban press, and their main protagonists portrayed. Front pages that otherwise focus on domestic concerns frequently allude to international affairs. This is apparent in very early articles included here, with Castro's speech to the UN in September 1960 announced by the headline 'Algeria,

⁶¹ Kevin Power, 'Fernando Bryce: Thinking with History', in *Fernando Bryce*, ed. Helena Tatay (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2005), 178.

⁶² On 'Third Worldism', see Mark T. Berger, 'After the Third World? History, Destiny and the Fate of Third Worldism', *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 9-39. For more on the politics of the Third World at this time, and in particular on its relationship to the New Left in the West, see Jameson, 'Periodizing the 60s' (see chap. 1, n. 36).

The term 'tricontinental' was first coined for the Tricontinental Conference of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, during which the Organisation of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL) was inaugurated. Held in Havana in January 1966, the conference was a germinal moment in the spread of revolutionary decolonisation and, subsequently, postcolonial theory. See Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Blackwell: Oxford, 2001): 213. On the founding of OSPAAAL and the *Tricontinental* conference, see Christoph Kalter, *The Discovery of the Third World: Decolonisation and the Rise of the New Left in France, c.1950-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 266-270.

⁶³ See Eshun and Gray, 'The Militant Image', 4.

⁶⁴ Eshun and Gray, 'The Militant Image', 4.

Figure 3.18 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

China, the Congo and Cuba (fig. 3.19). By this time, Cuba's relationship with the US had already deteriorated. Expressing solidarity with the Algerian and Congolese independence campaigns, Castro reminded delegates of the colonial history Cuba and Latin America as a whole shared with Africa and Asia, denouncing imperialism and excoriating belligerent US foreign policy. By 1960, Cuba had supported the Algerian Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) in its fight for independence from France, and would go on to support the subsequent republic. As Piero Gleijeses notes, 'It was in Algeria that Cuba's involvement in Africa began. Until the overthrow of President Ben Bella in 1965, Algeria was Cuba's closest friend on the continent'.⁶⁵ Algeria was also the first beneficiary of Cuban medical missions, the earliest exports of a nascent foreign aid system that served as a material expression of anti-colonial solidarity. Ben Bella became one of the foremost advocates of pan-

⁶⁵ Piero Gleijeses, 'Cuba's First Venture in Africa: Algeria, 1961-1965', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (February 1996): 159.

African solidarity in anti-colonial struggle as well as one of Cuba's closest allies.⁶⁶ His portrait here is taken from the front page of *Revolución*, announcing his visit to Cuba in 1962. Elsewhere, there are portraits of the Congo's ill-fated Patricio Lumumba and Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh. The portrait of Frantz Fanon, with a passage from *The Wretched of the Earth* as a caption, serves as a reminder that the principles of international anti-colonial solidarity were absolutely fundamental to the kind of socialism being shaped by the Cuban revolution (fig. 3.20). Fanon's insight that independence alone could not guarantee liberation, but that 'instead, a revolution was required that would be initiated within each subject and would catalyse new and revolutionary forms of African modernity' was profoundly influential on Guevara.⁶⁷

Figure 3.19 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004. 'Points to raise at the UN: Algeria, China, Congo and Cuba'.

⁶⁶ See, for example the description of his speech at the founding conference of the Organisation of African Unity, in Addis Ababa in 1963. Gleijeses, 'Cuba's First Venture in Africa', 170.

⁶⁷ Eshun and Gray, 'The Militant Image', 8. On Fanon's influence on Guevara, see Michael Löwy, *The Marxism of Che Guevara: Philosophy, Economics, Revolutionary Warfare* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 73.

Figure 3.20 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

Castro's attendance at the UN was not only marked by Cuban defiance of US foreign policy, but also by the revolutionary government's solidarity with African-American political movements. The Cuban delegation, affronted by disdainful treatment from the staff of the delegates' hotel, decamped to Harlem's Hotel Theresa, in defiance of segregationist conventions.⁶⁸ A centre of the black community's social life, Hotel Theresa was also a base for many African-American activists. Drawings here show the delegation's reception by enthusiastic crowds outside the hotel, where Castro received visits from Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and India's Jawaharlal Nehru, as well as black activists including Malcolm X, the subject of another of Bryce's portraits in this series (fig. 3.21). And so we also see in these drawings stories of contemporary black liberation struggles in the US, as well as student revolt, both played out in the shadow of popular resistance to the war in Vietnam. As one commentator has described it, 'Castro's decision to relocate his contingent to the heart of black New York [...] presaged key pillars of Cuban foreign policy over the course of the next half-century: the explicit conflation of Cuban sovereignty with worldwide liberation struggles, particularly in Africa, and the strategic leveraging of U.S. moral hypocrisy in service of revolutionary ideology'.⁶⁹

Figure 3.21 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

⁶⁸ See Cynthia A Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 21.

⁶⁹ Steven Cohen, 'When Castro Came to Harlem', *New Republic*, March 21, 2016, accessed 15 August, 2016, <https://newrepublic.com/article/131793/castro-came-harlem>.

At the end of 1964, Che Guevara addressed the UN General Assembly. The occasion is documented by Bryce in a drawing of his arrival, flanked by an aide and a US police officer. Beneath the image, Bryce transcribes a passage from Guevara's speech in a long caption of tightly-packed, lopsided letters that cascade down the lower third of the page in a dense block until they slip off the bottom edge (fig. 3.22).⁷⁰ For those too impatient or hyperopic to inspect the tiny lettering, the heading is clear enough: 'Colonialism is Doomed'. The speech was a declaration of intent. Guevara's trip to New York provides more evidence of the mutual respect between Cuban revolutionaries and US radicals: Guevara denounced the US government's treatment of its own black and Latin American population in his UN speech, and met with associates of Malcolm X during his visit.⁷¹ These affiliations are reiterated in a drawing of the cover of a 1967 international edition of *Granma*. In an interview (printed in English), H. Rap Brown, the chairman of civil rights organisation the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, decries the Vietnam War. Bryce transcribes his declaration that 'we, the Negro revolutionaries, feel united with the Vietnamese

⁷⁰ It seems likely that the drawing has not been copied in its entirety from a single source, but that the caption, with a heading and explanatory subtitle, has been found elsewhere and included beneath the image by Bryce—though it is difficult to know for certain. (In other drawings, it is more obvious that the caption has been found with the image.) The ostensible fidelity of Bryce's work notwithstanding, the possibility that texts and images from different sources might be combined within a single drawing is implicit throughout. In this the individual drawings (somewhat ambiguously) perpetuate the fragmentary, recombinant logic of the series as a whole.

⁷¹ See Anderson, *Che Guevara*, 618. The speech is published in full in Ernesto Guevara, *The Che Guevara Reader*, ed. David Deutschmann (North Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2007), 325-329. Guevara addresses the domestic politics of the US in the following passage: 'Those who kill their own children and discriminate daily against them because of the colour of their skin; those who let the murderers of blacks remain free, protecting them, and furthermore punishing the black population because they demand their legitimate rights as free men—how can those who do this consider themselves guardians of freedom? We understand that today the Assembly is not in a position to ask for explanations of these acts. It must be clearly established, however, that the government of the United States is not the champion of freedom, but rather the perpetrator of exploitation and oppression against the peoples of the world and against a large part of its own population.'

people'.⁷² (fig. 3.23) The war in Vietnam recurs throughout the series in a group of drawings that includes the image of a 1965 protest, where the Washington Monument cleaves the blank page above a sea of amorphous heads. Elsewhere, ranged alongside US General Westmoreland who stares from the cover of a 1965 edition of *Newsweek*, are nameless Vietnamese guerillas—all the more striking for the complete absence of accompanying text ubiquitous in the rest of *Revolución*. They distil the 'guerrilla imaginary' that Eshun and Gray argue was shaped by 'the newly formulated homology between the revolutionary struggle of Third World nations against the American military industrialist empire and the struggle of "urban guerrillas" located within the metropole of the "principle enemy"' (figs. 3.24-3.25).⁷³ The reverberations continue to spread: the student movement for whom Vietnam and US foreign policy more generally were such a vexed issue comes to our attention in the headline 'La rebelion de los estudiantes', from the cover of an edition of the Cuban magazine *Revolución y Cultura (R-C)*.

After the UN General Assembly, Guevara travelled to Algeria. From there, a world tour that would take in the People's Republic of China, North Korea, the United Arab Republic and several African countries—a trajectory alluded to sporadically in these drawings—took him back to Algeria for a conference of the Organisation of Afro-Asian Solidarity, where he reiterated his calls for a united anti-imperialist front.⁷⁴ Arguing that the 'development of countries now starting out on the road to liberation should be paid for by the socialist countries', he took socialist nations to task for failing to support 'underdeveloped countries' in countering imperialism and

⁷² The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was a civil rights organisation founded in 1960. Towards the end of the decade it became aligned with the black power movement and the protests against the Vietnam War, adopting more militant tactics. In 1969 its name was changed to the Student National Coordinating Committee in recognition of this shift in approach.

Brown was a controversial figure at the time of the interview, having recently been arrested for inciting a riot at a civil rights rally in Cambridge, Maryland, with combative rhetoric. He went on to become the Black Panthers' Minister of Justice during a brief alliance between the party and the SNCC.

⁷³ Eshun and Gray, 'The Militant Image', 6.

⁷⁴ Guevara visited Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Dahomey (now Benin), Congo-Brazzaville and Tanzania as well as Ireland and Czechoslovakia.

Figure 3.22 (L); Figure 3.23 (R) Both Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

Figure 3.24 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

Figure 3.25 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

for perpetuating its exploitative trade deals.⁷⁵ The speech signalled Guevara's own shift in sympathies away from the USSR and towards China (causing some disquiet among the Cuban government). The growing rivalry between the USSR and China is implicit in *Revolución*, alluded to in drawings that document arguments among the Latin American left on questions of strategy—for example, in the appearance of a 1963 article by Luis Corvalán, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, which defends an orthodox, Soviet-approved determinism against Che Guevara's vanguardist, broadly Maoist voluntarism.⁷⁶ Corvalán was in part responding to an article published by Guevara in Cuba and subsequently included in the English language magazine of the Chinese Communist authorities, the *Peking Review*.⁷⁷ A

⁷⁵ From Bryce's transcription of Guevara's speech. For the full text of the speech (in a different translation) see Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader*, 340-349.

⁷⁶ Guevara advocated a voluntarist approach, in which armed struggle would actively foment revolution—in contrast to the longstanding orthodoxy that called for revolutionaries to wait for more auspicious conditions to evolve. Corvalán expressed the view that 'adventurism' should be avoided. These different approaches broadly characterise the divisions between Maoist and Soviet communism at the time. See Draper, 'Castroism', 217.

⁷⁷ 'Guerilla Warfare: A Means', published January 10, 1964. As of 1979 the magazine has been known as the *Beijing Review*. A different translation of the article is included in Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader*, 70-84.

later edition of the *Peking Review* crops up in this series of drawings: its headlines make plain the tensions between the USSR and Mao's China (fig. 3.26). The Maoist influence on the New Left in the West, via Guevara, is apparent in drawings of the masthead of French newspaper *La Cause du Peuple*, flanked by the Chairman in profile and a hammer and sickle; and by the inclusion of what Bryce calls 'one of the first Western Maoist texts', by Charles Bettelheim, in a German edition by the Munich publishers Trikont (fig. 3.27).⁷⁸

Figure 3.26 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

Figure 3.27 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

⁷⁸ Bryce cited in Power, 'Fernando Bryce', 184. The 'mass line' of Bettelheim's title, 'Massenlinie und Revolutionäre Partei', is a populist method of political organisation developed by Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party during the Chinese Revolution (1949), based on wide-ranging popular consultation and engagement.

Figure 3.28 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

At the heart of this web of alliances and aspirations were the ambitions for Latin American solidarity that gave Bryce his initial impetus in beginning the series.⁷⁹ Sebastián Vidal, comparing it to other works by Bryce that take as their subject the colonial powers, has written that by contrast *Revolución* ‘involves a continental map seen from the standpoint of the desire and the utopia of the peoples’.⁸⁰ Parallel revolutionary movements across Latin America looked to Cuba for inspiration and practical support; many guerillas trained in Cuba.⁸¹ These multifarious continental

⁷⁹ Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt notes that ‘one consequence of the Tricontinental Conference was the formation of the Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS), which hosted a conference in Havana [...] from 31 July to 10 August 1967’. Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 222. Such an organisation would, it was hoped, offset the influence of other continental bodies dominated by the US, such as the Organization of American States (OAS). See Gordon Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture*, 61. The OAS also crops up in a cartoon reproduced by Bryce as part of *Revolución*, in which Mexico—which resisted US calls for Cuba’s expulsion from the OAS in 1962 and was the only Latin American state to maintain full diplomatic relations with Cuba—is represented as a cactus responsible for several thorns in Uncle Sam’s behind.

⁸⁰ Sebastián Vidal Valenzuela, ‘The Inked Archive’, *Arte Al Límite* 61 (July-August 2013): 106, accessed August 20, 2016, https://www.artelimito.com/featured_item/revista-no-61/.

⁸¹ See Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 42-44.

insurgencies are the final major subject addressed in *Revolución*. CIA involvement in Latin America, including the 1964 overthrow of Bolivia's Paz Estenssoro by a CIA-backed military coup, mentioned in a *Hoy* article here, is a recurrent theme. *Revolución* is dotted with anti-US propaganda in the form of political cartoons that take aim at CIA sabotage, US military intervention, and the corporate monopolies that sought protection in such measures (fig. 3.28). The travails of embattled left-wing presidents, from Brazil's João Goulart to Chile's Allende play out across the pages of newspapers and magazines. Allende's portrait appears nearby, its caption taken from his first speech to the Chilean parliament after his election as president, given in May 1971, in which he sets out his vision for 'the first socialist society built according to a democratic, pluralistic and libertarian model' (fig. 3.29).⁸²

Figure 3.29 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

⁸² This is one of the drawings that Bryce refers to as 'modest homages', describing Allende as 'an admirable person in my view'. Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation', 378.

Figure 3.30 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

Long articles in English and Spanish describe US intervention in the Dominican Republic and—in a particularly striking drawing in which jagged slabs congealed into bodies, banners and shadows almost collapse into shards of black and white—Sandinista protests in Nicaragua (fig. 3.30). And then there are the many drawings that represent particular political movements, with insignia (like the clenched fist inside a gearwheel of the Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño-Movimiento Pro-Independencia, from Puerto Rico) or portraits of individual guerrillas. A stark portrait of Camilo Torres, a priest and proponent of liberation theology who fought with Colombia's Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army—ELN), is accompanied by the brief caption: 'Fell in combat. Feb. 1966' (fig. 3.31). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Bryce's previous work in *Atlas Perú*, events in Peru are particularly prominent. And so we see drawings of the insignia and protagonists of Peruvian guerrilla movements like the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Movement—MIR); the Peruvian ELN; and of the leader of the

Figure 3.31 (L); Figure 3.32 (R) Both Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

indigenous peasant uprisings, Hugo Blanco (fig. 3.32).⁸³ One of the most striking drawings in the entire series is of Peruvian Juan Pablo Chang Navarro-Lévano and Che Guevara in Bolivia, where both were to die, killed by Bolivian forces with CIA backing (fig. 3.33). It is one of the few drawings dedicated to a single photograph that fills the whole page. There are no lengthy captions to offset it (a line at the bottom of the page gives brief details), and unlike the portraits in the series the figures' background is left intact.

⁸³ Other Peruvian figures depicted in the series include socialist activist and journalist José Carlos Mariátegui, active in Peru and Italy during the 1920s; and General Juan Velasco Alvarado, left-wing President of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces of Peru from 1968-1975.

Figure 3.33 Fernando Bryce, from *Revolución*, ink on paper, series of 219 drawings, 2004.

We are all, Svetlana Boym suggests, ‘nostalgic for a time when we were not nostalgic’.⁸⁴ Alasdair Bonnett argues that the role of nostalgia in left politics and the ‘radical imagination’ is perpetually ignored.⁸⁵ Disparaging what he identifies as a preoccupation endemic among postcolonial theorists with the militant past of anti-colonialism, he cites Sarika Chandra and Neil Larsen’s suggestion that ‘it seems almost as if postcolonial theory was fated to discover Third Worldist [...] national liberation doctrine just when its last flickerings of political and social viability were about to be extinguished’—and, what is more, in its posthumous condition ‘seeks à la *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, to “make its ghost walk about again”’.⁸⁶ Aside from a scornful comparison of the circumstances that gave rise to anti-colonial radicalism (and Fanon’s in particular) and the very different, ‘quiet campuses from which post-colonial studies has emerged’, Bonnett’s criticisms, also directed at the contemporary left more broadly, are not of nostalgia per se, but of what he argues is a failure on the part of post-colonial theory to address the loss and yearning that not only shapes its current situation but has, he suggests, been a formative influence throughout the history of the left.⁸⁷ Indeed, he calls for a less stymied embrace of nostalgia—which, he observes, ‘denotes the existence of a complex and interconnected set of emotional relationships with the past’.⁸⁸

In some respects, Bonnett’s interests here are not so far removed from those of Freeman who, in considering how queer performativity has been theorised, worries that ‘whatever looks newer or more-radical-than-thou has more purchase over prior signs, and that whatever seems to generate continuity seems better left behind’.⁸⁹ To disdain precedent in this way —‘to reduce all embodied performances to the status of copies without originals’—is, Freeman continues, ‘to ignore the interesting threat

⁸⁴ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 355.

⁸⁵ Alastair Bonnett, *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia* (London: Continuum, 2010), 1.

⁸⁶ Sarika Chandra and Neil Larsen cited in Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 97.

⁸⁷ Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 98.

⁸⁸ Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 44.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Freeman, ‘Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations,’ *New Literary History* 31, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 729.

that the genuine pastness of the past sometimes makes to the political present'.⁹⁰ And yet Bonnett's lack of insight into the mutually constitutive dynamics of temporal subjectivity and historical consciousness means he neglects how influential postcolonial historians have been, as Carolyn Dinshaw comments, in the 'refusal of linear historicism', and thinking about 'multiple temporalities in the present' for a productive account of how influences intersect and shape one another in practical, embodied terms.⁹¹

These works acknowledge complex emotional relationships, and the perennial co-constitution of past and present in any exercise of political imagination. Undeniably, yearning plays a part in these images. These drawings are in a certain sense memorials to moments of collective political engagement, appearing after a prolonged period when received wisdom has deemed the contemporary prospects for political change remote, and the opportunities for such collective action have been pervasively undermined—its affective charge co-opted into market-friendly forms of communality.⁹² Arguably, then, this work is to some extent nostalgic for a period when the future did not seem quite so definitively foreclosed. And yet nostalgia alone cannot account for the affective resonances of Bryce's drawings—or indeed other works that look to histories of political militancy—which are speculative too, reworking images in a critical process which foregrounds a need to address our contemporary relationship to competing models of political action.

This too, then, is a question of attachments. For Freeman the question of the 'bind'—a word, she points out, used 'to suggest both a problem and an attachment—is less about group identity than about time. How can we know for certain that something is securely done with?'⁹³ Freeman describes the work of artists who return to queer

⁹⁰ Elizabeth Freeman, 'Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations,' 729.

⁹¹ Carolyn Dinshaw in Carolyn Dinshaw et al., 'Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13, no. 2-3 (2007): 178.

⁹² I make this point not only in reference to the marginalisation of particular political forms and positions but also to the idea that the the affective yearnings that such political identities went some way towards satisfying have been superseded by the market. Dean, following Giorgio Agamben, suggests that ersatz spectacles of mass participation dispossess us of what Agamben calls the 'very possibility of a common good'. Agamben cited in Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 151 (see chap. 1, n. 20).

⁹³ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 62. See chap. 1, n. 43.

histories in search of the excess that is not recuperated by capital, as the market usurps politics as the arbiter of social and economic relations and channels our ‘aspirations for common being’.⁹⁴ Writing in terms that address the gulf noted by Bonnett between the militant ‘in the trenches of the anti-colonial national liberation struggles’ and her belated contemporary sympathiser, she points out that ‘these artists exist in a moment unavailable to the soldier-speaker, in which their history seems to be already written’.⁹⁵ The products of a political sensibility forged amid the ‘the mass-mediated detritus of “the sixties”,’ and the longstanding and often frustrating efforts to find new kinds of political action that might be meaningful today, such artists—among whom we might generationally count Bryce—negotiate the competing narratives and representations that constitute the contemporary ‘excess’ of histories described by Verwoert.⁹⁶ This gives rise, Freeman suggests, to a desire ‘to arrive at a different modality for living historically, or putting the past into meaningful and transformative relation with the present. Pure nostalgia for another revolutionary moment, their works seem to argue, will not do. But nor will its opposite, a purely futural orientation that depends on forgetting the past’.⁹⁷ Instead, she makes a Benjaminian argument for ‘mining the present for signs of undetonated energy from past revolutions’.⁹⁸

It is this kind of undetonated energy that Bryce looks for in the histories of postcolonial struggle in Latin America, and its global reverberations. Such ambitions are about about not allowing oneself to be dispossessed of the legacies of protest and political activism—of capital’s ‘castoffs, and the episodes it wishes us to forget’.⁹⁹ To that extent, it is about holding on; but it is also about knowing when to let go. A dialectical play of binding and unbinding is manifested in the capacity of the image, as Blake Stimson describes it, to ‘serve equally two pressing and contradictory concerns: to both remember and let go of a failed political program [...] in the name

⁹⁴ Dean, *The Communist Horizon*, 151.

⁹⁵ Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 98; Freeman, *Time Binds*, xv.

⁹⁶ See chap. 1, n. 45.

⁹⁷ Freeman, *Time Binds*, xvi.

⁹⁸ Freeman, *Time Binds*, xvi. This is part of a broader argument of Freeman’s about how such methods are intrinsic to the queerness of the artists she discusses.

⁹⁹ Freeman, *Time Binds*, xvi.

of the possibility for other, more viable investments'; such artworks, he suggests, might provide 'a refuge from political cynicism for an age in which such refuge is unavailable'.¹⁰⁰

ON SERIALITY

For Stimson, it is in serial form that the image most fully expresses such a temporising, Janus-headed relationship to past political investments. Stimson discusses Bernd and Hilda Becher's ongoing project to photograph industrial architectural forms in terms that bear comparison with Bryce's work, arguing that 'the Bechers have taken up a specific past—the heroic age of industrial modernity—and rearticulated it with a new and different force in the present. They have [...] cathected a politically and morally charged myth of the past to contemporary events'.¹⁰¹ He is referring here to Anson Rabinbach's writings on historical method, informed by the experiences of postwar Germans coming to terms with Germany's wartime past, and particularly his observation that the task of the historian is 'not to moralise about remembering and forgetting', but 'to identify the ways that certain metaphoric pasts can be cathected to contemporary events'.¹⁰²

Moreover, Stimson argues that the Bechers take up the past in order to probe the processes of political identification and affiliation, gauging the possibilities and limits of collective subjecthood. Stimson situates the emergence of the Bechers' work, alongside others that he takes to be exemplary of a photographic essay form of the period, in a politically liminal postwar moment in which new forms of political subjectivity were being renegotiated, 'en route from the residual shared passions of the citizen to the emergent and increasingly isolated self-interests of the consumer, [...] or from the engineered neurosis of mass politics to the manufactured hysteria of mass culture'.¹⁰³ Photography, as a vehicle for political identification, 'en route from

¹⁰⁰ Blake Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 155. See chap. 1, n. 116.

¹⁰¹ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 144.

¹⁰² Anson Rabinbach cited in Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 144.

¹⁰³ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 3-4. The other two works discussed by Stimson are Edward Steichen's exhibition *The Family of Man* (1955) and Robert Frank's book *The Americans* (1958).

Vertov, say, to Warhol'.¹⁰⁴ Reason, it was widely felt, had proven ineffectual in curbing the political passions fuelled by nationalism to such calamitous ends in the recent past. And yet, Stimson argues, this was a brief interregnum in which the attempt to define a form of political subjectivity that would not depend upon the mobilisation of such destructive passions had not yet been ceded to the force of self-interest and the market's capacity to serve it. Rather, the possibility was still entertained that passions might be channelled 'into alternative forms of political belonging'.¹⁰⁵ And, moreover, that this might be a project to which photography would contribute, in ways 'aesthetic or affective or embodied' as well as philosophical. In what follows I will consider the importance Stimson places on the serial form in putting the image to work in this way, and the implications it might bear for a reading of Bryce's work.

Photography, Stimson suggests, is inherently serial, deflecting the attention from the individual picture towards 'an increased valuation of the mechanical reproducibility of all pictures'.¹⁰⁶ This inherent relationality is amplified in specific practices of navigating photographs. To this proposition I would nonetheless add that these drawings, produced as they are in response to photographs and the mechanically-reproduced artefacts of mass media, are also conspicuously marked by a condition of reproducibility. Their manifest status as copies also deflects attention, not only between individual pictures but also back to the possible 'originals' behind them (in ways that will be explored in more detail in the following section), and make them more akin in certain respects to practices of photography than to drawing of the kind typically addressed by established discourses that dwell on the details of expressive mark-making.

Stimson's discussion of seriality centres on the specific possibilities of the photographic essay as an 'established genre of linking photographs together'.¹⁰⁷ The essay, Stimson suggests, 'feels its way subjectively toward understanding about its object of investigation'; it is not systematic (in the manner of science) and it does not aspire (as art might do) to a universalising mode of direct expressiveness that would

¹⁰⁴ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 4.

¹⁰⁵ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 3-4.

¹⁰⁶ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 27.

¹⁰⁷ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 30.

bypass mediated experience.¹⁰⁸ Rather, it plays out in the gap between concept and affect. This liminality is its defining characteristic, Stimson argues, and is the impetus for its unfolding, as described by Adorno, ‘not systematically but rather as a characteristic of an intention groping its way’.¹⁰⁹

The essay, Stimson notes following Adorno, ‘becomes true only “in its progress”’; the elements of the essay ‘crystallise as a configuration through their motion’.¹¹⁰ This movement is fundamental to our experience of images encountered in series, which as we make a path between them draw our attention to the possible relationships we might discern therein, as much as the detail of particular scenes or depictions. This seems particularly true of those series, like *Revolución* and Bryce’s other works, which are not strictly sequential and in which the narrative ties between particular images are not made explicit but elaborated more allusively. In impelling the viewer onward, serial forms precipitate the flux between stasis and movement that Mitchell identifies at the heart of the work of the image. Rebounding between the desire for the stabilised and fixed—the fixation induced by desire—and the drive to repetition, reproduction and mobility, Mitchell suggests that the image fundamentally plays out in a dialectic of binding and unbinding.¹¹¹ With this in mind, we might speculate that there is a fundamental restlessness at play in images of all kinds that is exploited and amplified in serial forms. In it, we recognise what Mitchell calls the image’s irresolvable, constitutive ‘Freudian *fort-da* game of appearance and disappearance, the endless shuttling of the image between presence and absence’.¹¹²

This, then, would be our starting point for a consideration of the affinities between photography and drawing in the work of Bryce and his contemporaries discussed

¹⁰⁸ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 32.

¹⁰⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, ‘The Essay as Form’, in Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 16.

¹¹⁰ Adorno cited in Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 33.

¹¹¹ See W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 74.

¹¹² Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 68. John Berger, too, imagines such a game when he describes drawing: ‘My hunch is that drawing is a manual activity whose aim is to abolish the principle of Disappearance. (Or—to put it another way—to turn appearances and disappearances into a game that is more serious than life.)’ John Berger, *Berger on Drawing* (Aghabullogue: Occasional Press, 2012), 109-110.

here. Drawing and photography are, after all, both arts of fixing shadows.¹¹³ The myth of Butades reminds us that drawing is at its inception a mnemotechnics—a woman (Butades’s daughter) draws the outline of the shadow cast on the wall by her lover, before he leaves. As important as it undoubtedly is to attend to the specificities of different forms and practices of image-making in describing the work of the image (I have drawn on the work of many who do so here), in the place of attempts to draw hard and fast distinctions an understanding of these affinities might more productively elucidate the performative dynamic of the image in the world.

The game that Mitchell identifies in the image, veering between fixity and mobility, is amplified in drawing, with its bounding line—the term, and the pun, is William Blake’s—‘the drawn line that leaps across a boundary at the same time that it defines it, producing a “living form”’.¹¹⁴ While the originary act of skiagraphy fixes the image of a lover in an attempt to capture his fleeting presence, Mitchell suggests that it ‘is as much about “unbinding” the bonds of love, letting the young man depart’.¹¹⁵ Catherine de Zegher makes the same Freudian analogy as Mitchell when she suggests, in conversation with artist Avis Newman, that ‘drawing is simultaneously a casting out and a retrieving’ that re-enacts the child’s primal separation from the mother. It is, of course, shot through with desire: ‘drawing itself, the dragging or pulling of the drawing instrument, is the performance of a desire. Drawing draws us on. Desire just *is*, quite literally, drawing, or *a* drawing—a pulling or attracting force, and the trace of this force in a picture’.¹¹⁶

Stillness and motion coexist then, within the individual image as well as across a series of images. If the essayistic groping of a viewer’s itinerant passages through *Revolución* embodies the restlessness at play in the dialectic described by Mitchell, it is offset by the stasis of what Stimson calls ‘the spatialised time of the photographic

¹¹³ Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 66. See also Thomas Zummer, ‘A Matter of Shadows: Thomas Zummer and Kate Macfarlane in conversation at Drawing Room, 14 July 2016,’ in *Double Take: Drawing and Photography Research Papers*, ed. Kate Macfarlane (London: Drawing Room, 2016), 27.

¹¹⁴ Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 63.

¹¹⁵ Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 67.

¹¹⁶ Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 59.

series'.¹¹⁷ He insists on the importance of the synchronicity of the images encountered in the photographic essay, and resists any conflation of the form with a prehistory of film that would see it usurped by film's diachronic flow. One is trammelled by the inexorable temporality of film: 'film, in short, limits the performative unfolding made available in the photographic essay by its mechanisation of the unfolding itself'.¹¹⁸ What Gilles Deleuze called 'spatialised duration' is a property of other kinds of serial images, too.¹¹⁹ Writing about the most famous of sequential arts, comics, Chute notes that 'cartoonists cede the pace of consumption to the individual viewer'.¹²⁰ With drawings of traumatic experiences in mind, she suggests that such freedom is 'an issue of ethical significance'.¹²¹ She too makes the distinction from film which, she suggests, in determining more comprehensively the parameters of a viewer's encounter with images, may be manipulative or overwhelming, evading scrutiny or coercively confrontational.¹²² She cites cartoonist (and author of Holocaust memoir, *Maus*), Art Spiegelman: cinema 'straps the audience to a chair and hurtles you through time'.¹²³

'Things calm down with the drawing', Bryce has remarked.¹²⁴ The comment suggests that drawing is, for the artist at least, a means of reinscribing a space and time for critical reflection amid an onslaught of information and images. The physical act of drawing itself intervenes in the 'mechanisation of the unfolding' of particular images,

¹¹⁷ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 41.

¹¹⁸ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 37. Interestingly, accounts of the effects of digital technologies on film and how it is encountered, like Laura Mulvey's *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, explore how new possibilities to pause, slow down or speed up, skip through and re-watch scenes mean that the continuity of film decomposes, and the stilled frame once again becomes a focus of attention. In effect, they describe film's restoration to the condition of something like a photo essay. Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion, 2006).

¹¹⁹ Deleuze, cited in Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 39.

¹²⁰ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 22.

¹²¹ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 22.

¹²² Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 22.

¹²³ Spiegelman cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 22.

¹²⁴ Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation', 374.

in ways I will go on to consider in the following chapter.¹²⁵ And viewers attain a similar freedom in the particular ‘spatialised time’ of drawing: John Berger suggests that a drawing ‘is static because it encompasses time’.¹²⁶ In its condensation of the time of looking and the perceptibly accreted time of its own making it ‘proposes the simultaneity of a multitude of moments’.¹²⁷ Encountered in series, the space for reflection shaped by the drawings can, as Chute suggests of the panels in comics, ‘slow time and thicken it through the rhythms it establishes’.¹²⁸ As what Bryce calls ‘a more or less narrative body’ is shaped from the accumulated images, with its own emphases and suggestive collocations, the viewer of the series is nonetheless at liberty to decide for herself how and where her attention is directed.¹²⁹ In presenting his drawings as series, then, Bryce opens up what Stimson calls an ‘analytical, atemporal space’.¹³⁰

Stimson emphasises the recursive movements allowed by the photographic essay, that disrupt the relentless onward flow of discursive development. This recursivity is shared by other serial forms: Michael Taussig discerns a similar dynamic at work in fieldwork notebooks, with their ‘property of combining these distinct types of time, the forward propulsion of day-succeeding-day chronology, combined with the sudden back-looping of connections that come about with reading and rereading the diary entries’.¹³¹ Speculating about the role of drawings in such documentary habits,

¹²⁵ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 37.

¹²⁶ Berger, *Berger on Drawing*, 70. In fact he sets this up as a distinction: ‘A photograph is static because it has stopped time. A drawing or painting is static because it encompasses time.’ Though I find the description of drawing compelling, I disagree with the characterisation of photography for reasons that I hope are already apparent and that I will be explored in more detail in the following chapter. In short, such comparisons often rely on a hackneyed characterisation of photography that overlooks the extent to which photographs too should be understood as ongoing, unfolding (and embodied) processes.

¹²⁷ Berger, *Berger on Drawing*, 71. This happens not only in the marks that amass on the page, but also in what is taken away—see, for example, Kentridge’s comment that ‘erasure becomes a kind of pentimento, an element of layering as you get in painting, but it is more ghostly in drawing [...] it gives you a sense of the process of both making and thinking’. Kentridge cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 36.

¹²⁸ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 37.

¹²⁹ Bryce and Tatay, ‘Conversation’, 374.

¹³⁰ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 37.

¹³¹ Michael Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 50. See chap. 1, n. 106.

Taussig asks, 'Are they the pauses, the occasional moments of still life where the writing hesitates between documentation and meditation?'¹³² Such a moment of hesitation would seem to be a fitting description of the analytical space that Stimson argues is created by serial images.

Though Stimson describes the analytical space created by serial images as 'atemporal', I would suggest that the experience of Bryce's work is better described as heterochronic: as 'a place of all times that is itself outside of time,' in Foucault's original description.¹³³ In navigating a route through *Revolución*, one does not experience a suspended relationship to temporality so much as a proliferation of possible relationships, simultaneously present. The obvious archival character of Bryce's practice calls to mind Foucault's description of 'the project of organising [...] a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place', realised most obviously in museums and libraries.¹³⁴

Stimson's use of the term does, though, suggest the extent to which he effectively understands such spaces as suspensions. Taussig, too, speaks of 'pauses'.¹³⁵ In fact, this 'space' for analysis is not really a space at all, but rather a liminal condition, one Stimson suggests is proper to the historical period of transition he discusses.¹³⁶ Does that transitional period bear comparison to our own? Lauren Berlant talks about the 'impasse of the present'.¹³⁷ What happens in the shift of emphasis from pause to impasse? To ask the question is to begin to grapple with what Freeman has called a 'temporal politics of deconstruction'.¹³⁸

¹³² Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 52.

¹³³ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 37; Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,' *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 26.

¹³⁴ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces,' 26.

¹³⁵ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 52.

¹³⁶ See Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 18-19; 22-24.

¹³⁷ Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 16.

¹³⁸ Freeman, *Time Binds*, xvi. Freeman adds that this politics is to be 'thought as an antirepresentational privileging of delay, detour, and deferral'.

Challenging its prosaic associations with out-and-out deadlock or paralysis, Berlant suggests that the impasse is 'decompositional'.¹³⁹ To understand the impasse of the present, she argues, is 'to see what is halting, stuttering, and aching about being in the middle of detaching from a waning fantasy of the good life'.¹⁴⁰ There is something to be said here about the way that Bryce's serial works, with the potential for recursive movement they afford, formally articulate that halting, stuttering way of proceeding; and in doing so throw into relief the polemical, declarative nature of its source material. Any process of reconsideration and reconfiguration must entail an unbinding, the decompositional impetus described by Stimson as a necessary counterpart to the renewing of attachments and commitments. Berlant's description calls to our attention the way in which such a dynamic might play out in the work of the artists discussed here. Chute describes the 'gutter', the space between frames in comic strips, as 'spaces of pause' that come to represent the constitutive outside of the narrative—as a mark of the erasure that 'stipples' the drawings.¹⁴¹ I would argue that a comparable space opens up in the gap between images in a serial work such as *Revolución*. A sense of undecidability emerges in these aporetic interruptions where, as Chute notes, 'readers project causality from frame to frame'.¹⁴² Bryce's series can be situated alongside other formal strategies of unmooring: the excisions that characterise the drawn compositions of both Bowers and Bryce, freeing the image into a space of indeterminacy.

The impasse 'marks a delay that demands activity. The activity can produce impacts and events, but one does not know where they are leading'.¹⁴³ And yet such a delay represents an opportunity as well as a risk; the possibilities afforded by the extended present to 'prevaricate, inventing possibilities for moving through and with time, encountering pasts, speculating futures, and interpenetrating the two in ways that counter the common sense of the present tense'.¹⁴⁴ The idea bears comparison with Hayes's account of the 'arresting' image of political action, and the anastrophic

¹³⁹ Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 199.

¹⁴⁰ Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 263.

¹⁴¹ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 17.

¹⁴² Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 16.

¹⁴³ Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 199.

¹⁴⁴ Freeman, *Time Binds*, xv.

complications of experience it engenders. For Hayes, a photograph does not straightforwardly follow the event but exists in a more complex set of causal negotiations with it: this is what makes it politically valuable. She writes, ‘the relationships between photographs and events, actions and expectations, documents and projections are formed through the complex cooperation of imagined and actualised experiences (past, present and future) and practices of record making’.¹⁴⁵ As such, a photograph cannot be simply of the past, a token of loss or a vehicle of nostalgia. To understand it as such is, moreover, to deny the possibility of our own political agency ‘as bodies/subjects with experience(s) of the past, present and future at once. And thus as bodies with knowledge, imagination, desire, and claim, individual and collective, of and toward a range of unpredictable and productively confusing future possibilities’.¹⁴⁶

Taussig alludes to the generative capacity of historical images that Hayes identifies, when he suggests that the juxtaposition of two different points in time ‘opens onto new worlds’: he asks, ‘Is that the privileged moment where words are likely to give way to images?’¹⁴⁷ It is in the back-and-forth between images—the ‘pivot’, to use Stimson’s term—that meaning is made and new political imaginaries are forged.¹⁴⁸ This, then, is the motion of serial images: ‘a motion that is never *in* the moving subject but in the relay itself, in the space between two ‘nows,’ one appearing and one disappearing.’¹⁴⁹ It is in this movement that *Revolución* plays out, across its cumulative, aggregating form. The essay, Stimson argues of his favoured cumulative form, is a ‘third term’, working ‘between fact and symbol, between comprehension and intuition, between objective understanding and subjective realisation’.¹⁵⁰ Though Stimson does not explicitly say as much, the idea is clearly indebted to Roland Barthes’s ‘third meaning’, that which is obstinately present in the image and yet

¹⁴⁵ Hayes, ‘Certain Resemblances’, 96.

¹⁴⁶ Hayes, ‘Certain Resemblances’, 98.

¹⁴⁷ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 52.

¹⁴⁸ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 58.

¹⁴⁹ Rosalind Krauss, describing Kentridge’s drawings for projection, cited in Chute Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 281.

¹⁵⁰ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 32.

exceeds both the denotational and the symbolic.¹⁵¹ Generative and yet unpredictable, it is an experience that makes itself physically felt: like Hayes, Barthes describes being ‘held’ by the image’.¹⁵²

The third meaning, Barthes writes, ‘compels an interrogative reading’.¹⁵³ At once decompositional and generative, it works against the ‘pure, upright, secant, legal perpendicular of the narrative’; indeed, ‘it seems to open the field of meaning totally’.¹⁵⁴ As Taussig puts it, ‘Third “meaning” is not really a meaning at all, but a gap or a hole or hermeneutic trap *that interpretation itself causes* while refusing to give up the struggle’.¹⁵⁵ And, notably, it is in the serial image, as what Chute calls ‘a form that opens up the field of meaning through its dual inscription and mobilisation of time’, that it emerges.¹⁵⁶ Barthes’s essay is about film stills, which in a footnote he compares to other arts that pair stasis and movement—‘the photo-novel and the comic-strip’, alongside the related ‘pictogram’, encountered in forms of ‘historically and culturally heteroclite productions: ethnographic pictograms, stained glass windows, Carpaccio’s *Legend of Saint Ursula, images d’Epinal*’.¹⁵⁷

The fundamental impetus of the serial form may then be this obdurate indeterminacy at its heart, an opacity that compels the viewer and impels him or her onwards to other images in an unfolding process of engagement. It is this impulsion, both decompositional and recompositional, that propels a ‘cascade of images’ of the kind

¹⁵¹ Roland Barthes, ‘The Third Meaning’, in *Image Music Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 52-53.

¹⁵² Barthes, ‘The Third Meaning,’ 53.

¹⁵³ Barthes, ‘The Third Meaning,’ 53.

¹⁵⁴ Barthes, ‘The Third Meaning,’ 55.

¹⁵⁵ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 6.

¹⁵⁶ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 21.

¹⁵⁷ Barthes, ‘The Third Meaning,’ 66. By ‘pictogram’ Barthes means, in his terms, “‘anecdotalised” images, obtuse meanings placed in a diegetic space’. Barthes, ‘The Third Meaning,’ 66. *The Legend of Saint Ursula* is a cycle of large, episodic paintings on canvas recounting the life of Saint Ursula, created in the 1490s for the Scuola di Sant’Orsola in Venice. The phrase *images d’Epinal* is proverbial in French, synonymous with the sentimentality and naive depictions of the popular, brightly-coloured religious or historical scenes of Épinal prints.

described by Bruno Latour in his writings on ‘iconoclash’.¹⁵⁸ Latour’s notion of the iconoclash describes the ongoing re-use of images, in a ‘cycle of fascination, repulsion, destruction, atonement.’¹⁵⁹ Arguing for a ‘productive cascade of re-representation’, he suggests that the real danger attributed by iconoclasts to images in fact lies in ‘freeze-framing, that is, extracting an image out of the flow, and becoming fascinated by it, as if it were sufficient, as if all movement had stopped’.¹⁶⁰

There are, then, a series of tensions set up in the serial image: between concept and affect, between stasis and movement, and between part and whole. Bryce plays on the tension between part and whole by working with erasure and excision, as Bowers does, though not always in as pronounced a fashion.¹⁶¹ As is apparent in Bowers’s work, the fragments that make up individual drawings are rendered emphatic, and, brought together, are apt to coincide in shifting and indeterminate ways. These tensions are redoubled across the sometimes vast series of Bryce’s work. The to and fro of dissociation and collision is amplified, as the individually pruned and partial images are set into play against their neighbours in an ‘anatomy lesson’ on the relationship of part to whole.¹⁶²

These drawings play out less on an individual basis, then, than ‘by means of the network’ in which they are situated.¹⁶³ In this way the formal and thematic sympathy discernible in such anatomy lessons, discussed earlier in relation to Bowers’s drawings, play out somewhat differently in Bryce’s series. The exploration in these drawings of the variable and unpredictable ways in which part might relate to whole gives shape to the complex temporality at play in these images. These are images that inhabit what Taussig calls ‘the recursive time of rereading’; such images, he writes, ‘are historical, in a peculiar way. Being recursive, they flow with time yet also arrest

¹⁵⁸ Bruno Latour, ‘What is Iconoclash?’, 32. See chap. 1, n. 141.

¹⁵⁹ Latour, ‘What is Iconoclash?’, 17.

¹⁶⁰ Latour, ‘What is Iconoclash?’, 27.

¹⁶¹ Most notably, Bryce does not offset drawings on the page with vast blanknesses, as Bowers does. Bowers also occasionally cuts into bodies, as she removes the space occupied by other bodies with which they are in contact, as she does in the *Non-Violent Civil Disobedience* drawings. See figs. 2.12; 2.15.

¹⁶² R. H. Fuchs on the Bechers, cited in Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 139.

¹⁶³ R. H. Fuchs cited in Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 139.

it.’¹⁶⁴ But, as we have already seen in Bowers’s work, such drawings are also metaphorically able to articulate something about the experience of collectivity in their scrutiny of the relationship between the individual and the collective. For Stimson, this is also a corollary of seriality: serial photography inscribes ‘the lived experience of social form’.¹⁶⁵ Its synchrony and its analytical, recursive dynamic invites us to think about reworking relationships, and asks us: ‘*how to experience the other anew?*’¹⁶⁶ In addressing that question, the work of the Bechers and their contemporaries sought to articulate ‘new relationships to collective identity, new solutions in response to the old collectivisms’.¹⁶⁷ The implications of such claims for a work such as *Revolución* are striking.

Understanding a work like *Revolución*, then, means grasping the event of the image’s reception. Stimson argues that the essay as a form is a ‘performance of subjectivity [...] developed in relation to the world it investigates’.¹⁶⁸ There is a notable affinity here between this characterisation and Berger’s description of the act of drawing: ‘A drawing is an autobiographical record of one’s discovery of an event—seen, remembered or imagined’.¹⁶⁹ That is not to say that such performances are solipsistic. On the contrary, Stimson describes a coming into being where subject and object are mutually constitutive: in navigating serial works that sprawl across walls, the viewer models ‘an embodied relationship to the world, a mode of being in, or, perhaps better, a mode of being with the world more than it is a mode of representing it’.¹⁷⁰

This too calls to mind one of Taussig’s descriptions of drawing, the particular emphasis of which nuances the previous invocation of the autobiographical: drawing,

¹⁶⁴ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 53.

¹⁶⁵ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 170.

¹⁶⁶ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 8 (italics author’s own).

¹⁶⁷ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 26. Elsewhere, Stimson argues that the Bechers and their contemporaries ‘worked the affect of belonging: they sought to develop and refine the emotional experience of relating or connecting to a group’. Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 7.

¹⁶⁸ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 32.

¹⁶⁹ Berger, *Berger on Drawing*, 3.

¹⁷⁰ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 167.

he writes, is ‘like a conversation with the thing drawn’.¹⁷¹ It is a recurrent theme in much writing about drawing, this almost material reciprocity between drawer and drawn, which will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter. It is just such a reciprocity that informs Stella Bruzzi’s description of how a documentary emerges in ‘the collision between apparatus and subject’.¹⁷² The physical imperative to move between images is paramount for Stimson in bringing this relational awareness into being: it is a corporeality present in the act of drawing, too.

Berlant describes the impasse as ‘a stretch of time in which one moves around with a sense that the world is at one intensely present and enigmatic, such that the activity of living demands both a wandering absorptive awareness and a hypervigilance that collects material that might help to clarify things’.¹⁷³ Within what Claire Gilman calls the ‘peculiarly conservative procedure’ of these works there is an acquisitive impulse that could be characterised as a kind of vigilance, and a perhaps compulsive need to seek out some kind of insight from the political images of the past.¹⁷⁴ Taussig describes the ‘recursive movements of afterthought’ that shape his interactions with fieldwork notebooks as ‘the result of what Walter Benjamin claims to be the collector’s deepest desire—to renew the old world’.¹⁷⁵ It may be that there are affinities to be traced between the obsessive traits of the collector and those of the copyist.

‘MIMETIC ANALYSIS’: ON COPYING

Stimson discerns in seriality ‘an elastic liminal bearing that bounds between a cool, mechanical, quasi-disembodied objectivity, on the one hand, and [...] a hot, subjective comportment that speaks of its own history and desire in its bearing toward the world, on the other’.¹⁷⁶ This tension between the subjective and objective

¹⁷¹ The comment is made in a discussion of Berger’s writing on drawing. *I Swear I Saw This*, Taussig, 22.

¹⁷² Bruzzi cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 17.

¹⁷³ Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Claire Gilman, ‘Drawn from Photography’ in *Drawn from Photography*, ed. Claire Gilman and Lynne Tillman (New York: Drawing Center, 2011), 17.

¹⁷⁵ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 51.

¹⁷⁶ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 140.

shapes these works in their most fundamental condition as hand-drawn copies of photographs. Bryce's practice of mimetic analysis—the selection and copying by hand of swathes of documents in order to reconfigure their interrelationship—is, according to one commentator, a 'conceptual mechanism' that operates according to 'strict co-ordinates'.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, Bryce has even described his drawing as akin to a very slow fax machine.¹⁷⁸ To align one's method of depiction with a mechanical procedure in order to minimise the trace of the hand is to deflect attention from the specificity of the image's material supports in favour of what Richard Shiff calls 'visual effects seemingly independent of whatever tactile, material substance the particular medium possesses'.¹⁷⁹ This is then, arguably a striving for dematerialisation—a 'liberation' of sorts, as Bryce describes it, freeing the image 'from its original material condition and the institutional order where it is inscribed'.¹⁸⁰ Of course, the extent to which this is possible is arguable: as Shiff points out, 'for every luminous, dematerialised surface of representation there will be some other that causes the first to seem stubbornly physical, its tactile residue or material flaws being revealed by the comparison'.¹⁸¹ And so we see analogue photographs and newsprint cuttings take on a new weight in contemporary artworks, as artists accustomed to digital media return to archives full of scraps of paper whose obstinate physical presence and material condition demand attention and resources, and cannot be ignored. Likewise, as drawings Bryce's works—though they might stylistically be compared to certain popular and widely-disseminated forms like comic strips or news illustration—are irrevocably associated with the labour of the hand that makes them.

Shiff mentions Marshall McLuhan's conviction that 'modern painting approached the telegraphic: its purpose was to communicate a message as efficiently as

¹⁷⁷ Carlo Trivelli, 'Como un lentísimo fax,' *Arte Nuevo* (blog), 15 October, 2006, accessed 3 September, 2016, <http://arte-nuevo.blogspot.co.uk/2006/10/como-un-lentsimo-fax-entrevista.html>.

¹⁷⁸ See Bryce, interviewed in Trivelli, 'Como un lentísimo fax'.

¹⁷⁹ Richard Shiff, 'Closeness,' 29.

¹⁸⁰ Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation,' 375. Elsewhere, Bryce has commented that 'one is under the impression that through the mimetic process the original is being "put in relief", there is a sense of transformation. And on that basis, interpretations can be pursued'. Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation,' 374.

¹⁸¹ Richard Shiff, 'Closeness,' 29.

possible'.¹⁸² He describes the belief that 'any technique that might be conceived as a move towards dematerialisation, such as Seurat's screen of dots, is likely to channel communication ever more efficiently by minimising physical conflicts between touch and vision'.¹⁸³ McLuhan found in the systematic pointillist experiments of Georges Seurat evidence of this desire to 'silence, void or neutralise the sensory evidence of its own manufacture' (despite, as Shiff notes, the significant body of art-historical opinion that would draw precisely the opposite conclusions, finding in the painting of Seurat and his impressionist contemporaries an emphasis on materiality that foregrounds 'the physical, existential act of its making', and a resistance to mechanisation and standardisation).¹⁸⁴ Bryce's work is a good example of this paradoxical labour which both effaces the hand in striving for a certain kind of uniformity and also involves a huge amount of physical effort. Though his drawings are not photo-realist in the way Bowers's are, the process of standardisation to which he submits the images he has selected to be drawn is itself a para-mechanical method. Individual photographs are modified in Photoshop (desaturated, the contrast adjusted), before being printed. The scale is adjusted with a photocopier, to fit the size of paper to be used in the drawings; the outline is then traced using a lightbox, before the drawing with ink begins. His draughtsmanship could be seen to aspire to the telegraphic in the sense given by McLuhan, with an emphasis on drawing as a process of homogenisation that disposes with extraneous detail. This much might be in keeping with its references to a tradition of political cartooning and protest graphics that sacrifices detail for emphatic brevity. And yet, given the labour-intensiveness of any such attempt to avoid the trace of the hand, it is therefore a paradoxical dematerialisation: a contradictory play of detachment and investment.

These are drawings as rote translations, without the qualities of spontaneity, expressivity or creativity often attributed to and associated with drawing. As Susan Sontag puts it, 'ordinary language fixes the difference between handmade images like

¹⁸² Richard Shiff, 'Closeness,' 17.

¹⁸³ Richard Shiff, 'Closeness,' 29.

¹⁸⁴ Richard Shiff, 'Closeness,' 17. Seurat was influenced by photographic technologies in his attempts to develop a quasi-mechanical approach that could theoretically be reproduced by anyone, although as Shiff notes, 'the response to Seurat's style changes along with changing standards and expectations as to how a machine image should look'. Richard Shiff, 'Closeness,' 16.

Goya's and photographs by the convention that artists 'make' drawings and paintings while photographers 'take' photographs'.¹⁸⁵ Aside from the obvious inadequacy of this formula as an account of the photographic act, one might add the observation that in the case of the drawings I discuss, the image is taken as much as it is made—this is their character as appropriations. Gilman goes so far as to suggest that 'this is drawing reduced to its most basic application, a kind of anybody-can-do-it approach that is high on effort but not necessarily on imagination'.¹⁸⁶ Undeniably a certain care is taken in these drawings to make plain their status as appropriations—their second-hand nature is immediately apparent.¹⁸⁷ The analogy of translation is Gilman's, and is deployed to describe a process of straightforward transcription.¹⁸⁸ And yet, as James Elkins writes in a correspondence with Berger, drawing 'does not simply transcribe something in the world'.¹⁸⁹ In fact—much like translation itself—it is inexact, laden with personal investments in nuance and emphasis. The most assiduous efforts to efface the hand and automate its productions are intrinsically idiosyncratic gestures. Drawing from a model, like translation, is a generative act of close reading. What is the relationship here between the hand and the technics of reproduction in these drawings?

It is a question that broaches the 'problem of reference' that arises where drawing is deployed as a documentary practice, as it is here.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, Gilman links what she describes as a recent 'resurgence' in drawing (of which Bowers and Bryce are part) to 'a more general "documentary turn" in recent art': drawing, she concludes, 'has

¹⁸⁵ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 41. See chap. 1, note 153.

¹⁸⁶ Gilman, 'Drawn from Photography', 18.

¹⁸⁷ This is most evident in a drawing like Bowers's *Young Abortion Rights Activist, San Francisco Bay Area, 1966* (Photo Lent from the Archives of Patricia Maginnis) (fig. 2.6), which reproduces the physical detail of the photograph that is its source. But it is not necessary that the details of the sources as material artefacts be reproduced so assiduously to make this point. In Bowers, the image's status as an appropriation may also be made apparent in the lengthy, detailed titles that lay bare its history; in Bryce the same work is done by the signifying details of the publications from which images are taken.

¹⁸⁸ Claire Gilman, 'Marking Politics', 115. See chap. 2, n. 172.

¹⁸⁹ James Elkins in Berger, *Berger on Drawing*, 112.

¹⁹⁰ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 20.

rediscovered its original function of bringing the world into view'.¹⁹¹ Such practices demand an expanded definition of a field that has habitually been associated with forms of technical reproduction and dissemination. As such, the notion of a 'hand-drawn' document is a development of longstanding attempts within documentary to complicate traditional ideas about objectivity which, as Chute notes, is 'a fully historical, nineteenth-century category, [...] understood to be the removal of constraints such as the "personal"'.¹⁹²

As Latour argues, 'the more the human hand can be seen as having worked on an image, the weaker is the image's claim to offer truth'.¹⁹³ It is an observation that he brings to bear on both theological and scientific modes of knowledge. He sets his notion of iconoclasm against this ambivalence towards mediation—and the desire for immediacy of knowledge that it betrays. The iconoclasm, he explains, is 'what happens when there is *uncertainty* about the exact role of the hand at work in the production of a mediator'.¹⁹⁴ Chute asks, 'why, after the rise and reign of photography, do people yet understand pen and paper to be among the best instruments of witness?'¹⁹⁵ The answer offered by Latour presupposes a very different idea of what objectivity means: 'the more instruments, the more mediation, the better the grasp of reality [...] the more human-made images are generated, the more objectivity will be collected'.¹⁹⁶ To grasp this is to come to terms with what Rebecca Schneider calls 'the curious inadequacies of the copy, and what inadequacy gets right about our faulty steps backward, and forward, and to the side'.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, to embrace the hand-drawn

¹⁹¹ Claire Gilman, 'Marking Politics: Drawing as Translation in Recent Art,' *Art Journal* 69, no. 3 (2010): 115.

¹⁹² In pursuing this observation, Chute makes reference to the work of Daston and Galison. She also cites André Bazin's 1945 comment: 'All art is founded on human agency, but in photography alone can we celebrate its absence'. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 20. The phrase 'hand-drawn' document is also Chute's: Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 7.

¹⁹³ Latour, 'What is Iconoclasm?', 7.

¹⁹⁴ Latour, 'What is Iconoclasm?', 20.

¹⁹⁵ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 2.

¹⁹⁶ Latour, 'What is Iconoclasm?', 22.

¹⁹⁷ Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 6. See chap. 1, note 82.

document, and the forms of knowledge to which it gives rise, is, as Stimson writes, ‘to experience subjectivity as contiguity and continuity with the world of objects’.¹⁹⁸

In 2002’s *Visión de la Pintura Occidental (Vision of Western Painting)*, Bryce presented 39 photographs alongside a series of 93 drawings. The photographs were of prints from the collection of the now-defunct Museo de Reproducciones Pictóricas (Museum of Pictorial Reproductions—MRP) at the National University of San Marcos in Lima. In what Gustavo Buntinx has described as ‘an extravagance of European paternalism’, between 1951 and 1997 the MRP collected facsimiles of works by European artists.¹⁹⁹ From Giotto to Picasso, these were displayed in UNESCO-sponsored travelling exhibitions designed to ‘place the works of the masters of painting within reach of the entire world’, touring remote villages by bus until the 1980s.²⁰⁰ Alongside these, Bryce’s drawings reproduced museum correspondence and inventories, with details of benefactors including Nelson Rockefeller, the Spanish Embassy and the Vatican, in what he has described as ‘a kind of sequence of monuments to bureaucracy.’²⁰¹ The only of Bryce’s series to include photographs, in a recent retrospective in Lima Bryce exhibited the MRP’s ‘original’ off-set reproductions instead of the photographs, alongside printed copies of his drawings.²⁰² The work takes its name from an exhibition instigated by the director of the Peruvian Air Force Academy in the 1960s with the aim of introducing the Academy’s professors and students to ‘modern and avant-garde paintings’.²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 27.

¹⁹⁹ Gustavo Buntinx, ‘Communities of Sense/Communities of Sentiment: Globalization and the Museum Void in an Extreme Periphery’, in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, ed. Ivan Karp, Corinne A. Kratz, Lynn Szwaaja and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 224.

²⁰⁰ Buntinx, ‘Communities of Sense’, 224. UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, an agency of the United Nations established in 1945 to support international cultural, scientific and educational initiatives.

²⁰¹ Eichler, ‘Fernando Bryce’. On benefactors to the MRP, see also Bryce and Tatay, ‘Conversation’, 382.

²⁰² *Fernando Bryce: Dibujando la historia moderna (Fernando Bryce: Drawing Modern History)*, held at the Centro Fundación Telefónica/Museo de Art de Lima, Lima, Peru, 28 October 2011–5 February 2012.

²⁰³ Carlos Jiménez, ‘Fernando Bryce: The Untimely Copyist’, *ArtNexus* 9, no. 76, (March-May 2010): 46, accessed 27 July, 2016, http://www.artnexus.com/Notice_View.aspx?DocumentID=21413.

For Buntinx, the existence of the MRP is indicative of ‘the syndrome of marginal occidentality’ in Latin America, something he argues is particularly apparent in the ‘ultraperipheral’ Andean nations.²⁰⁴ That is, the museum comes to be emblematic of the Peruvian bourgeoisie’s affiliation to a fantasmatic global ‘West’. A particular kind of subjectivity emerges in this exchange which estranges as it unifies, ‘imposing a Western canon offered to the Third World as a superior model, even in its devalued existence as a copy’.²⁰⁵ The local, popular and indigenous are denigrated in favour of a tenuous affiliation to the European traditions of the metropole, in which one is inevitably consigned to a peripheral and subordinate role. Bereft of physical resources but nonetheless charged with significance, the museum becomes ‘a compensatory fantasy fetishistically obtained by the ritualisation of substitutes and fragments’.²⁰⁶ (Buntinx points out that the establishment of the MRP preceded that of Peru’s own Museum of Art, ‘broadly defined to encompass three thousand years of Peruvian culture’, by a decade.²⁰⁷) The museum’s capacity to decontextualise that which it frames in its ostensibly neutral space—what Svetlana Alpers has called the ‘museum effect’—sustains a fantasy of contiguity, ‘a fiction of racial and cultural continuity, even of a continuity of sensibility, [...] between the centre and its provinces which are blurred thus’.²⁰⁸ It is in this context that Jiménez argues that *Visión de la Pintura Occidental* makes explicit an aspect of Bryce’s interest in the copy that informs subsequent works in more implicit ways: the link between ‘his interest in the manual copying of documents’ and ‘the territory of contemporary Latin American culture, always menaced by the fear of having its achievements disqualified as mere copies of

²⁰⁴ Buntinx, ‘Communities of Sense’, 224.

²⁰⁵ Gustavo Buntinx, ‘A Museum of the (Neo)-Colonial Gaze: Concerning *A Vision of Painting in the West* and Other Moments in the Work of Fernando Bryce’, in *Fernando Bryce*, ed. Helena Tatay (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2005), 210-211.

²⁰⁶ Buntinx, ‘Communities of Sense’, 224.

²⁰⁷ Buntinx, ‘Communities of Sense’, 219. Buntinx also points out in his account of Peru’s ‘grand museum void’ that Lima remained at the time of writing, perhaps alone among Latin American capitals, without a museum of modern or contemporary art, despite the longstanding but abortive efforts of the Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo (IAC). (See Buntinx, ‘Communities of Sense’, 219-220.) The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC) finally opened in 2013.

²⁰⁸ Buntinx, ‘A Museum of the (Neo)-Colonial Gaze’, 208.

models or paradigms generated in Western metropolitan centres'.²⁰⁹ The copy comes to have very particular implications when it intervenes in a situation in which 'domination by culture, by "definition," by claims to originality and authenticity have functioned in tandem with military and economic supremacy'.²¹⁰

This play of likenesses, this mimetic impulsion, becomes a threat to the model itself as it accrues parodic qualities—since, as Buntinx notes, 'there is but a minimal space between mimesis and poor copy'.²¹¹ Holding in tension the distanced criticality of the mechanically-reproduced, archival artefact and the 'embodied praxis and episteme' of drawing by hand, Bryce calls into question the very epistemic hierarchies

Figure 3.34 Fernando Bryce, from *Walter Benjamin*, ink on paper, series of 10 drawings, each 32 x 24 cm, 2004.

²⁰⁹ Jiménez adds that this is 'a disqualification upon which both local nationalists and foreign critics, militant in their defence of the primacy of the Metropolis, tended to coincide.' Jiménez, 'Fernando Bryce', 46.

²¹⁰ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 12 (see chap. 1, note 83).

²¹¹ Buntinx, 'A Museum of the (Neo)-Colonial Gaze', 213. In this work there is of course a pleasing inversion as paintings of old masters are presented as mechanically-produced reproductions, while the artefacts of bureaucracy are manually reproduced and invested with the reverence that affords; an inversion that is complicated further in the alternate configuration presented in Lima.

that underpin that patrimony.²¹² And yet, Bryce's project—and his use of copying as a strategy—is not primarily a parodic one. The complex temporality and tangle of emotional investments that plays out in the vast sprawl of a series like *Revolución* precludes it, as Freeman suggests when she writes that 'disruptive anachronisms [...] pivot what would otherwise be simple parody into a montage of publicly intelligible subject-positions lost and gained'.²¹³

What *Revolución* and *Visión de la Pintura Occidental* have in common is Bryce's attention to the iconography of cultural reproduction. The performative impact of acts of copying is made evident in these histories. Produced in the same year as the *Walter Benjamin* series (in which, as Bryce has acknowledged, the quotations included as captions could be understood as an expression of his methodology) *Visión de la Pintura Occidental* foregrounds a preoccupation that would characterise Bryce's subsequent work in broaching the charged question of the status of the reproduction.²¹⁴ As such, the work is akin to those 'metapictures' mentioned at the end of the second chapter, reflecting on the nature of copies as such and on his works in particular.²¹⁵ The contested implications of the act of manual copying that is the cornerstone of Bryce's practice, and indeed is central to all the works under consideration here, are here inflected with the charged histories of colonial patrimony. These drawings make it plain that, as Chute writes, 'drawing is not just mimetic: it is its own artefact, substance, thing, phenomenology'.²¹⁶

ARCHIVES AND REPERTOIRES

For Miriam Basilio, Bryce's description of his working process as one of 'mimetic analysis' is indicative of a 'performative aspect of his project [that] might be

²¹² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 17.

²¹³ Freeman, 'Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations,' 733.

²¹⁴ See Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation,' 381. Tatay mentions in particular the Benjaminian idea, expressed in the captions, of 'bringing the cultural object from the past into the present as an object of knowledge'. Bryce describes it, half-ironically, as an expression of his 'dogma'. Bryce and Tatay, 'Conversation,' 381. See figure 3.34.

²¹⁵ W.J.T. Mitchell, 'Four Fundamental Concepts of Image Science,' in *Under Pressure: Pictures, Subjects, and the New Spirit of Capitalism*, ed. Daniel Birnbaum and Isabelle Graw (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2008), 21. See chap. 2, n. 158.

²¹⁶ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 27.

understood through Diana Taylor’s formulation of embodied actions, “reiterative acts” and “ways of knowing” through which one can recuperate historical memories which have been suppressed or defined by hegemonic groups’.²¹⁷ Taylor identifies a rift that she argues lies ‘not between the written and spoken word, but between the archive of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral repertoire of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)’.²¹⁸ Might we add drawing to the list of embodied practice and knowledge? Though both Bowers and Bryce undoubtedly work with and add to the stock of ‘supposedly enduring materials’ in the world, it seems clear that for both of them drawing is also an arduous, insistent act of embodiment, and a means to interrogate the very question of material endurance. If the affinities already tracked in Bowers’s work between the physical acts of drawing, protest and dance have already established a continuum of physical experience within which her work can be positioned, so such considerations might be brought to bear on Bryce’s work, too.

The implications of such a distinction for understanding these works will be considered in more detail in the following chapter. For now, it is clear that Bryce’s work manifests contested political histories in specific, embodied ways not only in the compulsive work of the artist’s hand, but also in the physical and analytical circulation between drawings that it impels. This circulation, this exploratory and reflective recursivity, plays on affective resonances and shapes the renewed understanding of images that emerges: as Taylor argues, ‘embodied and performed acts generate, record and transmit knowledge’.²¹⁹ It also, as Stimson suggests, establishes a certain sociality in the ongoing, shifting reciprocity between viewers and images. Bryce’s works play out in the encounter that they produce—and for this reason, too, we might understand them to be part of a performative repertoire, for ‘the repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by “being there,” being a part of the transmission’.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Diana Taylor, cited in Miriam Basilio, ‘Fernando Bryce: Drawing, Mimetic Analysis and the Archive,’ *Arte al Día Internacional*, no. 125 (November 2008), accessed 4 September, 2016, http://www.artaldia.com/International/Contents/Artists/Fernando_Bryce.

²¹⁸ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.

²¹⁹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

²²⁰ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20.

Both repertoire and archive are mediated sources of information and ways of knowing, operating within and shaping ‘specific systems of re-presentation’.²²¹ They are inherently heterochronic: they exist, Taylor writes, ‘in a constant state of againness’.²²² It is this state of ‘againness’ that, as we have seen, shapes the process of political subjectification articulated by these drawings. The archive and the repertoire are correlative (and not mutually exclusive) modes of transmission for ‘communal memories, histories, and values from one group/generation to the next’.²²³ They shape the collective memory that, as Sontag noted, ‘is not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important, and this is the story about how it happened’.²²⁴ And the ways these connections are drawn insists on a specific, embodied history, too—where the danger might be that too vast and amorphous a purview might lose sight of that concrete aspect and portray a sense of politics on a scale in which local intervention is not possible: as Sontag writes, ‘all politics, like all of history, is concrete’.²²⁵

Chute calls the hybrid form of comics ‘textuality that takes the body seriously’.²²⁶ Writing is ubiquitous in these drawings, too, as it is in the work of the other artists I discuss. Words make an appearance in the hand-drawn approximations of slogans scrawled on cardboard placards or stitched onto banners, or of text printed on posters or documents. Bowers, Bryce, Plender and Reeve have all produced drawings in which handwriting on notes and documents found in archives has been assiduously retraced: Bryce does so, for example, when he reproduces documents, like

²²¹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

²²² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

²²³ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

²²⁴ Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 76.

²²⁵ Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* 71.

²²⁶ Chute, *Graphic Women*, 4. See chap. 1, n. 145.

Walter Benjamin's pass for the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris (see figure 3.34).²²⁷ In some of his series (like *Visión de la Pintura Occidental*), he reproduces vast tracts of typewritten documents by hand. Almost all of Bryce's images are accompanied by captions. Of course there are clear parallels between the hand-drawn and the hand-written, as Jiménez observes when he writes that Bryce 'invokes the figure of the medieval copyist', his labours 'anachronistic, arbitrary, and eccentric'.²²⁸ He suggests that such labours represent an attempt to 'revert [the] degradation of hand writing in the age of its full technical reproducibility'; in this sense, as Taylor notes, 'writing has paradoxically come to stand in for and against embodiment'.²²⁹ And while she does acknowledge the need to 'rethink writing and embodiment from the vantage point of the epistemic changes brought on by digital technologies', nonetheless she insists that important differences persist.²³⁰

What is the status of the words included in these drawings? As Tim Ingold asks, 'Where does drawing end and writing begin?'²³¹ To begin to answer that question, we would have to have some idea of the difference between them, beyond their mutual 'handedness', in the term borrowed by Chute from Arthur Danto to describe how both are put to work in comics, to present 'a unity of marks that evoke and create a

²²⁷ Among examples from Bowers's work, we could include drawings from the 2009 exhibition *An Eloquent Woman*, for which she worked with an archive of Emma Goldman's papers. Bowers made drawings of love letters written by Goldman between 1908 and 1917, redacting part of the letter to leave only certain phrases. See, for example, Andrea Bowers, *Excerpts From Emma Goldman's Love Letters: 'The realization of my wildest hopes as to what I might do in propaganda'*, graphite on paper, 39 x 31.5cm, 2009.

Plender and Reeve include a drawing of a handwritten note, in which suffragette Mary Richardson attests to an act of iconoclasm, in a chapbook they produce, discussed in the next chapter (see figure 4. 12).

²²⁸ Jiménez, 'Fernando Bryce', 45.

²²⁹ Jiménez, 'Fernando Bryce', 49; Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16. Chute cites Rosalind Krauss's description of a renewed interest in drawing in the years just before the appearance of the work I discuss here: Krauss suggests that the 'joint presence of Pettibon and Kentridge within the art practice of the 1990s demonstrates... [t]he upsurge of the autographic, the handwrought, in an age of mechanisation and technologising of the image via either photography or digital imaging'. Rosalind Krauss, cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 25.

²³⁰ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16.

²³¹ Tim Ingold, *Lines*, 120. See chap. 2, n. 28.

world'.²³² In practice, it is not an easy distinction to make. In his work on the line, Ingold reviews a series of distinctions that are often made between writing and drawing: writing is a notation; it is a technology; and it is linear; drawing is none of these (drawing, according to this taxonomy, is an art).²³³ Writing in its ideographic aspect, as a 'trace of a manual gesture', shares a genealogy with drawing—but they do not share an epistemology.²³⁴

In fact, Ingold makes it clear that none of these distinctions is entirely satisfactory, concluding that 'writing is itself a modality of drawing'.²³⁵ Most strikingly, he argues that the straitened epistemology attributed to writing—that which we refer to by the term 'linearity', denoting an abstracted and univocal form of knowledge—is in his analysis more precisely understood to emerge from a break in 'the intimate link between the manual gesture and the inscriptive trace'.²³⁶ The abstracted, unsituated epistemologies that emerge in the wake of such a break—and that are implicated, as Taylor describes, in colonial histories of coercion and control—thus arise from a practice of making 'point-to-point connections'—'joining the dots'.²³⁷ The suggestion raises the possibility that embodied practices—among which we might count some, if not all, forms of writing—are well-suited to articulating the anachronous, constellated histories demanded by Benjamin of a materialist historiography.²³⁸

Certainly, in the terms of the distinctions considered by Ingold, the words in these works occupy an equivocal relationship to both writing and drawing. Bryce, like the

²³² Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 71 (It is worth mentioning, however, that this too is a loaded term to use in discussing images which have such a complex relationship to their own mediated nature: Danto sets 'handedness' against intellect in a discussion of Duchamp's readymades that reinforces a dichotomy 'between art and craft'. Arthur C. Danto, 'The Bride and the Bottle Rack', in Arthur Danto, *The Madonna of the Future: Essays in a Pluralistic Art World* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 388.

²³³ Ingold, *Lines*, 120.

²³⁴ Ingold, *Lines*, 120.

²³⁵ Ingold, *Lines*, 147.

²³⁶ Ingold, *Lines*, 3.

²³⁷ Ingold, *Lines*, 3.

²³⁸ Benjamin Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', 255. See chap. 1, n. 93.

other artists discussed here, does not simply write out the text of a document in his own hand: he makes some kind of effort to reproduce the line of the original. Tracing the lineaments of a written document, following the contours of a typeset font or of someone's own hand, is not simply writing: the figures are not traced in that way as a function of their purpose as notation. Its linearity is offset and undermined as it is repurposed (think of Bryce's copies of newspaper articles, where the columns of text fall abruptly off the bottom edge of the page; or of the disjointed encounters with words and phrases that the viewer experiences, moving between the different drawings of a series like *Revolución*.) As writing, it bears out Ingold's contention that 'the hand that writes does not cease to draw. It can therefore move quite freely, and without interruption, in and out of writing'.²³⁹ As drawing, it engages with all the ambiguities of the act of copying, troubling any distinction between technology and art with the paradoxical play of detachment and personal investment that copying entails.

HOLDING OPERATIONS

If in Bowers's drawings we see the event broached via a kind of anachronistic process of identification, Bryce's emphasis is upon the process of mediation by which the event comes to be understood. His works are 'copies of aura-less but exportable copies'—the phrase is used by Dominic Eichler to describe the photographs of the MRP's reproductions included in *Visión de la Pintura Occidental*, but it is an accurate description of Bryce's drawings generally, indeed of his ongoing project.²⁴⁰ As Basilio puts it, 'this focus on the mediated aspects of images is something both the 'Pictures Generation' and artists like Bryce share'.²⁴¹ To some extent, Bryce's project can be seen as, foremost, a critical one—of a piece with earlier, deconstructive practices of appropriation. Bryce's work shares with Bowers an interest in occluded histories. And

²³⁹ Ingold, *Lines*, 124-125. Ingold goes on to explain, with a reference to the work of scribes that is interesting in light of Jiménez's comparison, 'I believe that in retrojecting our contemporary understanding of writing as verbal composition on to the scribal practices of earlier times [...] we fail to recognise the extent to which the very art of writing, at least until it was ousted by typography, lay in the drawing of lines. For writers of the past a feeling or observation would be *described* in the movement of a gesture and *inscribed* in the trace it yields. Ingold, *Lines*, 128.

²⁴⁰ Eichler, 'Fernando Bryce'.

²⁴¹ Basilio, 'Fernando Bryce'.

yet there is, on top of this, the complex relationship to the model that is characteristic of colonial mimesis, caught between tribute and parody and revealing something about the model as a result. Irony and parody are undoubtedly elements at play in Bryce's sometimes sardonic work—but their importance can be overstated. In an interview with Kevin Power, Bryce commented that in *Revolución* more than any other is one in which 'there is a certain complicity on the part of the author in relation to many of the political contents'.²⁴² Power subsequently writes that 'the cool presentation conceals the emotional commitment' behind these images—I would argue that that much is evident when one considers the nature of the viewer's encounter with his works.²⁴³

Returning to the overlooked or discredited histories of political militancy in a meaningful renegotiation with their contemporary implications is, as Eshun and Gray, note, fraught with difficulties. And yet Bryce and others continue to return to such political flashpoints, led, as Bryce has said, by the desire to 'in some way force a contemporary gaze on events from a past to which we are connected though many genealogical lines, within a pattern of power that, in my opinion, remains substantially the same to this day'.²⁴⁴ For this reason, Bryce's project must be understood as more than simply a question of institutional critique, with 'the urge for debunking, for the too quick attribution of the naive belief in others' that Latour discerns in the 'critical spirit'.²⁴⁵ There is, simply, more at stake.

I have suggested here that Berlant's 'impasse', describing a liminal time of political remaking, may bear comparison to the heterochronic 'spatialised duration' of Bryce's vast series, which in some ways has the characteristics of a pause.²⁴⁶ Berlant argues that the delay represented by this state of impasse 'enables us to develop gestures of composure, of mannerly transaction, of being-with in the world as well as of rejection, refusal, detachment, psychosis, and all kinds of radical negation'.²⁴⁷ In some

²⁴² Power, 'Fernando Bryce', 182.

²⁴³ Power, 'Fernando Bryce', 179.

²⁴⁴ Jiménez, 'Fernando Bryce', 47.

²⁴⁵ Latour, 'What is Iconoclasm?', 25.

²⁴⁶ Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 16; Deleuze, cited in Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 39.

²⁴⁷ Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 199.

respects this description calls to mind the kind of ‘holding operation’ that Roberts suggested can be provided by art, ‘in conditions of political retreat’.²⁴⁸ In such circumstances, the impasse serves a crucial function. As Berlant explains elsewhere, ‘it may be that, for many now, living in an impasse would be an aspiration, as the traditional infrastructures for reproducing life—at work, in intimacy, politically—are crumbling at a threatening pace. The holding pattern implied in “impasse” suggests a temporary housing’.²⁴⁹

And so, works like *Revolución* do not just engage their audiences at the level of historiography—although they undeniably serve as a reminder of why such contested histories matter; they also create a space for the exercise of social imagination and the testing of collective subjectivities. The work plays out in a process both mimetic and analytical that can only happen dialectically across a series of images, that are engaged in ways that are affective and embodied. We might therefore think of Bryce’s works as, in the terms of Stimson’s discussion of serial images, ‘a series of interrelated propositions or gestures in the manner that an argument or person realises itself in the world, in interactive performance’.²⁵⁰ In the following chapter, I will look more closely at the implications of such an understanding of drawing as part of a repertoire of embodied practices, for works that explicitly engage politically-charged historical material.

²⁴⁸ Roberts, ‘Introduction’, 354 (see chap 1., n. 66).

²⁴⁹ Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 4-5.

²⁵⁰ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 34.

4

HAPTIC HISTORIES OLIVIA PLENDER AND HESTER REEVE

Figure 4.1 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, installation view, 2010

Since 2010 Olivia Plender has been making work about suffragettes, whose campaigns for female suffrage in the UK at the start of the twentieth century were flashpoints in a far-reaching struggle for the emancipation of women. In that year, she and collaborator Hester Reeve were commissioned to work with the archives of the Women's Library in London, a project that led to a series of works in which Plender and Reeve revisit episodes from a history of the suffragettes that departs in often unexpected ways from familiar platitudes about the movement. What is shared across the different works produced by Reeve and Plender at this time is an attentiveness to the politics of visibility, guided—in the title of a chapbook produced as part of the collaboration—by the figure of 'the suffragette as militant artist'.¹ It is this work that will be the focus of this final chapter.

In common with other artworks I have discussed, Plender and Reeve's work was shaped by the difficulties of piecing together the extant fragments of histories deemed insignificant by canonical historiography, and is informed by an understanding of the political implications of such quasi-archaeological efforts. These works serve as a critical counterpoint to widely-accepted histories of the suffragettes, whose reputation as a single-issue campaign belies the scope and sophistication of its activism: Plender recalls that when she and Reeve began to work with the archive at the Women's Library, 'we realised then that there is an incredible gap between the mainstream historical representation of the movement (as it exists in the media and what we were taught at school), and the complexity that we saw in the archival materials, letters, photos and so on'.² In these collaborations, the histories at stake are manifold, encompassing the legacies of unrecognised female artists, the possible relationships between art-making and political activism, and our contemporary relationship to political militancy in general, as well as to the women's suffrage movement

¹ Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist: Suffragette Artists & Suffragette Attacks on Art*, chapbook, 2010.

² Plender interviewed in Elena Bordignon, 'Olivia Plender, Many Maids Make Much Noise —ar/ge kunst Bolzano,' *ATP Diary*, January 20, 2016, accessed 18 August, 2016, <http://atpdiary.com/olivia-plender-ar-ge-kunst-bolzano/>.

in particular.³

Plender and Reeve's collaborations, like their individual work, incorporate drawing as one among many different approaches and forms. In what follows, I am interested in what relationship such practices of drawing have to other, performance-based approaches. How do these drawings sit alongside other works, and how might that inform our understanding of them? Thinking of these works, might we describe the drawings that Plender and Reeve have produced in terms of the liminal position they occupy between what Taylor calls the 'performativ' and the visual?⁴

Picking up on a possibility raised in the last chapter, my contention here is that the practices of drawing from documentary sources that I have been discussing might productively be considered part of what Taylor describes as a 'repertoire' of embodied practices.⁵ Any such claim would have to be made in terms of an account that understands the image as a process—it is this idea that I will pursue in more detail in what follows. And so I will consider how Plender and Reeve's drawings might be understood as embodied practices that give shape to situated knowledge, alert to the materiality of its interventions in the world. How do these works, understood as performative acts of documentary, engage a politicised mode of bearing witness? How might thinking of these works in such terms make it possible to consider the kinds of political agency available to them?

³ These themes are pursued further in more recent work of Plender's that continues to track the genealogies of sexual politics broached here. See, for example, the solo exhibition *Many Maids Make Much Noise* (2015/2016). With a shift of focus to the breadth of thinking around gender that emerged from the suffragette movement, one of the exhibition's major themes is the magazine *Urania*, produced by suffragettes Esther Roper and Eva Gore-Booth with Thomas Baty between 1915 and 1940. Dedicated to a future that heralded the disappearance of sexual difference, each issue collected press cuttings documenting incidents of gender-nonconformity from around the world. Discussing the exhibition, Plender has spoken of her desire to 'highlight hidden aspects of a movement that has gone down in history as consisting of mainly (upper) middle class women who fought peacefully for the right to vote, when in fact it was much more: a movement in which women and men, of all sexual orientations were fighting together, sometimes violently, against political, economic and cultural conditions of the time'. From Allegra Baggio Corradi, 'Many Maids Make Much Noise: Olivia Plender ad ar/ge kunst', *franzmagazine*, 13 January, 2016, accessed 28 September, 2016, <http://franzmagazine.com/2016/01/13/many-maids-make-much-noise-olivia-plender-ad-ar-ge-kunst/>.

⁴ On the term 'performativ', see chap. 1, n. 128.

⁵ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*. See chap. 1, n. 83.

In what follows I will consider how Azoulay's work on the 'event of photography' might be used to inform such an understanding.⁶ Azoulay's ontology of photography instates the photographic event—and not the printed artefact—as the foundational form through which meaning is produced. In seeking to rehabilitate the image as a 'privileged site for the generation of a civil discourse', Azoulay prioritises a verb rather than a noun, a distinction often made in descriptions of the practice of drawing.⁷ It parallels the shift of focus called for by Taylor, 'from written to embodied culture, from the discursive to the performatic'.⁸

Azoulay describes her account of photography as 'an ontology bound to the manner in which human beings exist—look, talk, act—with one another and *with objects*'.⁹ The final emphasis situates her work in terms that recur throughout the discussions interrogated here about the performative work of images, of a certain reciprocal relationship between subject and object. This is something I will consider in more detail at the end of this chapter, picking up on the idea of 'presence' that emerges in accounts of the image's involvement in acts of bearing witness, and in what Azoulay describes as the work of 'reconstruction'.¹⁰ How is this inflected by discussions about the materiality of the image, in its 'thingness', as Hito Steyerl describes it?¹¹ And how might such discussions inform a renewed understanding of the work of the image, provoking a shift from the idea of representation, towards thinking about the image as presentation? What implications might such a shift have for the task of counter-representation, as it has been understood thus far?

THE SUFFRAGETTE AS MILITANT ARTIST

Plender and Reeve work collaboratively under the revived banner of the Emily Davison Lodge. Originally established by Davison's fellow suffragette Mary Leigh in memory

⁶ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 26. See chap. 1, n. 15.

⁷ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 26. On the distinction between attending to drawing as an activity rather than an artefact see, for example, Emma Cocker, 'The Restless Line, *Drawing*', in *Hyperdrawing: Beyond the Lines of Contemporary Art*, ed. Russell Marshall & Phil Sawdon, London: I. B. Tauris (2012).

⁸ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16.

⁹ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 18 (italics author's own).

¹⁰ See Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (London: Zone Books, 2008).

¹¹ Hito Steyerl, 'A Thing Like You and Me,' *E-flux journal* no. 15 (April 2010), accessed 28 September, 2016, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/a-thing-like-you-and-me/>.

of her friend, who was fatally injured at the 1913 Epsom Derby, the Lodge sought ‘to perpetuate the memory of a gallant woman by gathering together women of progressive thought and aspiration with the purpose of working for the progress of women according to the needs of the hour’.¹² Guided by that ambition, Plender and Reeve re-inaugurated the long-defunct Lodge, and established Emily Davison Day on June 4th, the day of the suffragette’s collision with the king’s horse leading to her death shortly afterwards. The first Emily Davison Day was observed by Reeve at the Epsom Derby in period costume 97 years after Davison’s injury.¹³ As well as producing the chapbook, which I will go on to discuss in more detail shortly, Plender and Reeve also stage their own research process in a series of photographs that purport to document the inaugural meeting of the restored Lodge, with the artists in situ at the Women’s Library archive, reading Hannah Arendt and drawing (figs. 4.2-4.3). They sit among cardboard placards with handwritten slogans, some in the shape of an artist’s palette threaded with ribbons, like those brandished by suffragettes in a drawing in the chapbook. In one photograph, Plender writes the date of Emily Davison Day on the floor in an echo of another chapbook drawing, of an anonymous suffragette chalking the date of a WSPU meeting onto the pavement (fig. 4.4). For the 2010 exhibition at the Women’s Library, these photographs were exhibited alongside a video, *The Argument of the Broken Window Pane*, and the chapbook itself, *The Suffragette as Militant Artist: Suffragette Artists & Suffragette Attacks on Art* (figs. 4.1 and 4.5). Drawings—an important aspect of both artists’ practice—feature heavily in the chapbook, as they do in a subsequent exhibition at Tate Britain in 2013, that presented Sylvia Pankhurst’s paintings alongside work from the *Working Table of the Emily Davison Lodge*, and served as something of a culmination of the collaboration.

¹²As cited (without source) in the chapbook: Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*. Some accounts, including the artists’ own in the chapbook, also mention Edith New as a co-founder. According to the chapbook notes, the Lodge is thought to have become defunct in the 1940s.

Elizabeth Crawford writes that ‘both the Suffragettes of the WSPU and the Emily Davison Club were based at 144 High Holborn, the headquarters of the Women’s Freedom League. [...] The Emily Davison Club, with associated café, was still in existence in 1940’. Elizabeth Crawford, ‘Emily Wilding Davison: Perpetuating The Memory’, *Untold Lives* (blog), 7 June, 2013, accessed 28 September, 2016, <http://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/2013/06/emily-wilding-davison-perpetuating-the-memory.html>. See also Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866–1928* (London: Routledge, 1999), 120; 340.

¹³ Davison was trying to pin suffragette flags onto the king’s horse when the accident happened. She died in hospital some days later.

Figure 4.2 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Re-Inaugural Meeting of The Emily Davison Lodge, 2010*, photographic documentation, 2010.

Figure 4.3 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Re-Inaugural Meeting of The Emily Davison Lodge, 2010*, photographic documentation, installation view, 2010.

In what follows I am particularly interested in the role of drawings within these works, informed by the themes raised throughout Plender and Reeve's collaboration and the relationships that might be discerned between the different kinds of approaches and forms that the artists incorporate.

Figure 4.4 (above) The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Re-inaugural Meeting of The Emily Davison Lodge, 2010*, photographic documentation, 2010; (below) The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

Figure 4.5 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded by Emmeline Pankhurst (with her daughters Sylvia and Christabel) in response to the growing sense that there was a need for a militant alternative to the constitutional campaigns advocated by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. The term 'suffragette' was coined for the militant suffragists by the *Daily Mail* newspaper and quickly entered common usage: as Lisa Tickner has written, 'The WSPU embraced it, despite the disparaging diminutive. Their motto was Deeds not Words, and they were dismissive of the missionary methods of the established societies and of the constitutional movement generally'.¹⁴ Plender and Reeve give a sense of what militancy meant for the WSPU in notes that accompany the drawings of photographs and other artefacts in the chapbook, pointing out that Emmeline Pankhurst described the suffragettes as 'guerrillists'.¹⁵ Suffragette rhetoric was martial: 'We are in the position of recruiting sergeants: we want more soldiers... Swarm into the ranks of the militant army. All come and fight, and who is going to

¹⁴ Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988), 8.

¹⁵ See the chapbook: Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*.

stand against us?’¹⁶ Cheryl R. Jorgensen-Earp points out that the scale and nature of the suffragettes’ militancy might well be surprising to those accustomed to the accounts of historians who dwell on the colourful or comical incident, or alternatively on the self-sacrifice of the hunger strikes—incidents that are more easily recuperated into a narrative of female victimhood, or at least essential harmlessness.¹⁷ She mentions George Dangerfield’s ‘description of “small bands of women” with their bedraggled “little purple bannerettes”’; the paternalistic condescension apparent on the part of such historians, with their inveterate recourse to diminutives, belies the true nature of what Jorgensen-Earp calls a thirty-three month ‘terrorist campaign’, limited, she explains, ‘only by restrictions against physically harming anyone (except themselves)’.¹⁸ Emmeline Pankhurst declaimed that ‘there is something that governments care far more for than human life, and that is the security of property, and so it is through property that we shall strike the enemy’.¹⁹ The WSPU directed a campaign to vandalise ‘the secret idol of property’ and sabotaged communications networks: letter boxes were destroyed, along with the mail inside them; railway stations were bombed; telegraph lines were severed.²⁰ Sites of bourgeois propriety were disturbed by vandalism and arson, from Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George’s new home to racecourses. Attacks were carried out where the opportunity

¹⁶ Emmeline Pankhurst cited in Cheryl R. Jorgensen-Earp, *The Transfiguring Sword: The Just War of the Women’s Social and Political Union* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 91.

¹⁷ Jorgensen-Earp, *The Transfiguring Sword*, 5.

¹⁸ George Dangerfield cited in Jorgensen-Earp, *The Transfiguring Sword*, 5; 2. Jorgensen-Earp goes on to ask the question, ‘Why is it important to see WSPU violence in terms of terrorism?’ She suggests, ‘it is not to prove that women are as, or more, violent than men but to see the suffragettes as they saw themselves and to characterise properly the nature and extent of their militancy’. Jorgensen-Earp, *The Transfiguring Sword*, 5. Regardless of whether we accept Jorgensen-Earp’s thesis that the militancy of the suffragettes is best understood as terroristic—the term itself is, of course, mobilised according to political need and therefore not unconditionally helpful—it is clear that the ambition of properly understanding the extent and implications of their militant methods is important. Jorgensen-Earp’s insistence on this point has something in common with the emphasis placed by Reeve and Plender on the suffragette’s militancy, for similar reasons.

¹⁹ Emmeline Pankhurst, in a speech delivered at the Royal Albert Hall on 17 October, 1912, cited in Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion, 1996). The speech is included as ‘I Incite This Meeting to Rebellion’ in *Vintage Book of Historical Feminism*, Miriam Schneir ed. (London: Vintage, 2012), Kindle edition.

²⁰ Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘I Incite This Meeting to Rebellion’.

for public spectacle was at its greatest—the windows of private businesses and churches were broken, and slogans were gouged into golf courses; and in sites where the values of a civilisation were given visible form—the Orchid House at Kew Gardens was vandalised, as were many works of art on public display.²¹

The legacy of the WSPU's militant methods has been contentious—the value of the organisation's militancy in eventually attaining its demands often denigrated, its approach deemed ineffectual or indeed actively harmful to the cause. In addressing that legacy, Plender and Reeve's work poses questions about our contemporary relationship to political militancy. Not least of these is the question of the politics of visibility in which such methods seek to intervene. Jorgensen-Earp cites Schmid and Graaf's axiom: 'Violence, to become terroristic, requires witnesses'.²² The issue of visibility is to the fore in the stories of the tactics that are narrated by these works, from the destructive—vandalism and sabotage; to the creative—the pageantry of public display, and what (as Plender and Reeve note) has been called the first 'corporate identity' developed by a campaigning organisation.²³ And it is there, too, at the heart of the largely untold story of the role played by artists in the movement. In demanding the visibility that was not afforded them, the WSPU's actions were prefigurative: 'The women found themselves defying both convention and the law. In this defiance, and the consequent hardships, they enacted their freedom and experienced the elation which went with it. The goal was experienced in the means, and this identification gave their sacrifice its strangely attractive power'.²⁴

Plender and Reeve's video, *The Argument of the Broken Window Pane*, takes its title from an aphorism of Emmeline Pankhurst's: 'The argument of the broken window pane is the most valuable argument in modern politics'.²⁵ Its starting point is the

²¹ Jorgensen-Earp, "The Transfiguring Sword", 25-26.

²² Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf cited in Jorgensen-Earp, "The Transfiguring Sword", 5.

²³ See the comment in the chapbook. The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*. See also Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 60.

²⁴ George Lakey, discussing the American suffrage movement, cited in Jorgensen-Earp, "The Transfiguring Sword", 10.

²⁵ The comment is cited, among other places, in George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Serif, 2012), 147. Dangerfield reports that it was said at a speech given by Pankhurst at a dinner for released prisoners, on 16th February, 1912, although it is sometimes attributed to Pankhurst's testimony during the 1912 Conspiracy Trial.

story of what has come to be known as the 1912 Conspiracy Trial, during which the suffragettes drew unprecedented—and often sympathetic—public attention.²⁶ Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and Frederick and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence were charged with conspiring to organise mass window-breaking protests on 21 November 1911 and 4 March 1912. Christabel Pankhurst escaped to Paris, but the others were arrested on 5 March 1912, pleading not guilty in court. Extensively covered by the press, the criminal trial reached a far greater audience than the suffragettes' own publications could, and became a platform from which to make a case for the politically-motivated nature of their acts: as Laura E. Nym Mayhall has noted, the defendants and the suffragettes in general were 'represented seriously, as political actors in pursuit of an ideal'.²⁷ The suffragettes mobilised international political opinion: 'appeals to the prime minister in support of the defendants' claim to be political prisoners were made by Jean Jaurès, Romain Rolland, Madame Curie, Edward Bernstein, Victor Adler, Upton Sinclair, and more than one hundred British members of Parliament'.²⁸ Pankhurst's eloquence confounded widespread prejudices about female irrationality. It also, Nym Mayhall writes, 'allowed the leaders of the WSPU to narrate militancy's defence'.²⁹ Their use of violence paled in comparison to the violence of the state, they argued: they had made the decision to attack property only after being subject to police aggression, to arrest and imprisonment and to the intransigence of the government. In Plender and Reeve's video, actors in the characters of the judge and the defendants read from the trial report, before a discussion with the artists that probes their personal responses to the stories recounted, and broaches the question of their own opinions of the movement's militancy. In a gesture that makes plain how important the idea of rectifying a distorted or otherwise deficient public record is to these collaborative works, it was initially conceived of as a casting tape for a feature film that was yet to be made, in an omission the artists took to be testament to a certain public indifference.³⁰

²⁶ See Laura E. Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain, 1860-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 78-79.

²⁷ Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 79.

²⁸ Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 81.

²⁹ Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 80.

³⁰ A feature film about the movement now exists, of course: 2015's *Suffragette* was directed by Sarah Gavron and written by Abi Morgan.

This question of the forgotten or unremembered persists in the pages of the chapbook, which includes an index of hitherto largely undocumented ‘suffragette attacks on art’—‘the first comprehensive listing’, the artists write.³¹ A collection of 18 drawings with accompanying notes, the images in *The Suffragette as Militant Artist* serve as a meditation on the possible intersections of art and politics, and testify to the role of art and artists in the activities of the WSPU. Broadly, this happens in depictions of four kinds: of the artefacts and ephemera that testify to the visual identity forged by the WSPU (badges and posters, for example); of the suffragettes’ pageantry and talent for public spectacle; of suffragette artists at work; and of attacks on artworks.

Figure 4.6 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

³¹ See Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*.

And so the chapbook, in common with Bryce's series, includes drawings from photographs, documents, artefacts and insignia, like the WSPU badge and Holloway brooch (given to released prisoners) (fig. 4.6). Both were designed by Sylvia Pankhurst, a driving force in establishing the movement's visual identity (both were also displayed in the subsequent Tate Britain retrospective). An artist trained at the Manchester Municipal School of Art and the Royal College of Art, the symbolism of Pankhurst's designs for the WSPU's promotional material formed part of a well-worn iconography of suffragette values: martial, pure in spirit and God-fearing. These values were most notably distilled in the venerated figure of Joan of Arc, famously referred to by Christabel Pankhurst as 'the patron saint' of the WSPU and a complex figure whose martial and religious connotations are indicative of the intersection of

Figure 4.7 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

the reactionary and the radical at work in the senior Pankhurst's political rhetoric.³² This iconography crops up here, in a drawing of Marjorie Annan-Bryce dressed as Joan of Arc as the mounted 'colour-bearer' leading the 1911 Women's Coronation Procession (fig. 4.7). Staged for the coronation of George V, the four-mile pageant was 'the largest and most successful of the Edwardian Suffrage Processions', involving at least 40,000 suffragettes in costume, moving through central London from the Embankment to the Royal Albert Hall.³³ The parades, pageants and tableaux designed by the artists of the WSPU make for a striking parallel with the second-wave feminist strategies commemorated in Bowers's work.

The WSPU badge, with its 'angel of freedom' motif, is one of two drawings in colour here. The other is the banner of the The Artists' Suffrage League, founded by Mary Lowndes to 'further the cause of women's enfranchisement by the work and professional help of artists' (fig. 4.8).³⁴ Artists played a significant role in the WSPU and in the women's suffrage movement more generally, and the figure of the artist-suffragette is of particular interest to Plender and Reeve. In the chapbook, they cite Tickner:

Suffragists were interested in the woman artist because she was a type of skilled and independent woman, with attributes of autonomy, creativity and professional competence, which were still unconventional by contemporary criteria. But she was also of interest because the question of women's cultural creativity was constantly raised by their opponents as a reason for denying them the vote.³⁵

³² Christabel Pankhurst cited in Nym Mayhall, 85. Jorgensen-Earp writes that Emmeline Pankhurst 'was the past mistress of utilising conservative discourse to advance a radical cause', in Jorgensen-Earp, "*The Transfiguring Sword*", 9. On suffragette iconography and Joan of Arc (who was beatified around this time, in April 1909), see Nym Mayhall 85-90. Jorgensen-Earp has described Joan of Arc's position at the intersection of militancy and piety in a suffragette iconography of the movement as a 'just war'. Jorgensen-Earp, "*The Transfiguring Sword*", 86-110, in particular 97-98. Jorgensen-Earp refers to the cover of an issue of *Votes for Women*, where an armoured, mounted Joan of Arc figure holds the WSPU shield and carries a medieval standard with the words 'Prisoners of War'. Below is a phrase attributed to Buddha: 'We wage war, O disciples; therefore we are called warriors. Wherefore, Lord, do we wage war? For lofty virtue, for high endeavour, for sublime wisdom; Therefore are we called warriors'. Jorgensen-Earp, "*The Transfiguring Sword*", 90-91.

³³ Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, 87.

³⁴ See Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 16-20.

³⁵ Tickner continues: "How many times," as Mary Lowndes [artist] asked in *The Common Cause*, 'have women been reminded—in season and out of season, in conversation, by platform speakers, in print—that their sex has produced no Michael Angelo, and that Raphael was a man?' Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 14. Cited in Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*.

Figure 4.8 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010. (Colour image from pdf edition of chapbook; black and white image of printed edition of chapbook. See note 55.)

The publication contains ‘A Checklist of Suffragette Artists’, attributed to Tickner. Works by several of the women mentioned appeared in drawings here—Lowndes’s banner, a poster by Dora Meeson Coates (fig. 4.9). Sculptor Marion Wallace Dunlop is pictured with the stamp she made to print a declaration in violet ink on the walls of St. Stephen’s Hall in the House of Commons, in June 1909 (fig. 4.10).³⁶ Sylvia Pankhurst appears in a studio, as do two students, Dorothy Johnstone and Anne Finley. (fig. 4.11). In the brief space of a few pages, a picture builds of the sheer volume and breadth of work done at this time by female artists, despite, as Reeve has commented, ‘the fact that the art school doors were not entirely fully open to them and that prices of artworks were devalued by gender’.³⁷ Plender and Reeve draw

Figure 4.9 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

³⁶ The declaration was an extract from the 1689 Bill of Rights: ‘Women’s Deputation. June 29. Bill of Rights—It is the right of the subjects to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitionings are illegal’. See Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 104.

³⁷ Hester Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, ‘The Suffragette as a Militant Artist’ (Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Lecture, Wortley Hall, Sheffield, 15 August 2014), accessed 28 September, 2016, <http://sylvia pankhurst.gn.apc.org/2014%20lecture%20for%20website.pdf>.

Figure 4.10 (above) The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010 (two-panel drawing).

Figure 4.11 (below) The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

attention to ignored generations of female artists, and the character of their political engagement. In particular, the contentious role of the institutional gatekeepers of cultural patrimony looms large in these works.

If Plender and Reeve seek, throughout these works, to re-assert (or in fact assert for the first time) the public profile of many female artists, confronting their perennial exclusion from the canon, the chapbook also documents the suffragettes' own confrontation with those cultural institutions. And so the series of attacks on publicly-exhibited artworks is another important theme here, pieced together in drawings from the documents that were amassed in the aftermath of the attacks. Early on in the chapbook, several pages are given to a table that indexes such attacks, mostly during 1913 and 1914 but with one precursor in 1894. The index is bookended by drawings that relate to particular incidents. The most famous of these, Mary Richardson's attack with a butcher's knife on Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* (*The Toilet of Venus*) in the National Gallery, crops up three times. Richardson leaves court

Figure 4.12 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), two drawings from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

Figure 4.13 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

in a scene drawn from a photograph, followed here by a copy of her handwritten statement to the WSPU: the drawing retraces the fluid line of Richardson's hand as she declares, 'I have tried to destroy the picture of the most beautiful woman in mythological history as a protest against the Government for destroying Mrs Pankhurst who is the most beautiful character in modern history' (fig. 4.12). Velázquez's painting is the subject of a drawing here, too: but unlike other artists who have returned to the story of the incident, Plender and Reeve do not present us with the slashes of Richardson's butcher knife across Venus's torso.³⁸ Instead, it is pictured intact, opposite a drawing of the defaced portrait of Thomas Carlyle (slashed by Annie Hunt a few months after Richardson's attack)—the paintings thus depicted 'pre-Mary Richardson' and 'post-Annie Hunt', in the phrase used by Plender and Reeve in the notes (fig. 4.13).³⁹

The chapbook opens with a Home Office 'wanted' poster, featuring the mugshots of Evelyn Manesta and Lillian Forrester, ostensibly still 'at large' after damaging thirteen paintings in Manchester Art Gallery (fig. 4.14). In fact, we are told in the accompanying notes, the poster was produced when they were already imprisoned, as a deterrent to other potential vandals. Plender and Reeve's notes make reference to Manesta's grimace, an act of defiance in the face of prison authorities. The story of Manesta's photograph lays bare the violent imposition of visibility that is the inverse of the lack of recognition with which women contended as citizens and artists. The Home Office monitored suffragette activity closely, distributing photographs and descriptions widely. In response, suffragettes adopted evasive tactics: hiding, moving, pulling faces—rendering any subsequent photographs useless in identifying them. Prison authorities were obliged to invest in new, expensive equipment that would enable some of the earliest experiments in covert surveillance, from a distance, and suffragette prisoners were photographed unaware in the exercise yard. In this way photographs like the one we see of Forrester were obtained: full-length, looking directly at the camera, oblivious. But the image of Manesta is quite different: cropped at the shoulders, her face is twisted slightly away, her eyes closed, her jaw clenched. Covert tactics had evidently proved futile on this occasion: prison guards had had to

³⁸ Richardson's exploits have been taken up by other artists, including Kate Davis, who produced a series of seven digital prints, *Curtain I-VII*, based on the image of the slashed painting (2011); and Carla Zaccagnini, in the artist's book *Elements of Beauty* (2012). It was also referred to in the 2013/14 Tate Britain exhibition *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm*.

³⁹ Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*.

Figure 4.14 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*, chapbook, 2010.

physically restrain Manesta before they could successfully take her photograph. The image on the mugshot had been doctored to remove the arm of the prison guard standing behind her, stretching across her throat and pulling her across to face the camera, and his hand at her left shoulder. As one commentator notes of the subsequent, doctored mugshot, ‘the picture is far more likely to result in a mistaken identification than a correct one’, its purpose undermined.⁴⁰ And yet, in the act of

⁴⁰ Bill Brown, ‘Evelyn Manesta and the Resistance to “Modern” Photographic Surveillance’, *Not Bored*, 23 October, 2003, accessed 28 September, 2016, <http://www.notbored.org/suffragettes.html>. Brown also speculates that ‘to make the trick work, the boys at the lab had to hide their own traces, and so they “tightened” the picture by stretching it vertically. The effect makes Evelyn’s face look thinner and thus older; she looks taller and thinner, even a bit like a young man. Her identity is escaping from the prison of the photograph’.

doctoring, ‘the police were able to restore what Evelyn Manesta's refusal to be photographed had disturbed: the asymmetrical power relations and clear distinctions between those who are visible (inmates) and those who are hidden (prison wardens and spies)’.⁴¹

Any act of iconoclasm distils a series of beliefs about the image destroyed. As such, the attacks on artworks documented by Plender and Reeve understandably remain a compelling aspect of the WSPU's militancy, not least in the context of an attempt by contemporary artists to understand the relationship between art-making and political activism. As Rowena Fowler notes, the paintings and sculptures become surrogates of female subjugation and male authority.⁴² They also serve as symbols of the ways that material goods were privileged above human bodies: as Reeve observes, ‘artworks placed in such exalted positions function also as signifiers of the values and power relations of the era that honours them’.⁴³ To hold an artwork to account for that fact, as Reeve observes, ‘interferes with the supposed neutrality and purity of the painting’.⁴⁴ Understood in the terms of Bruno Latour's taxonomy of iconoclasts, the WSPU actions might appear to be exemplars of an approach that seeks to destroy ‘the false attachments to idols of all sorts and shapes’.⁴⁵ But the iconoclasm of the suffragettes is not a product of this kind of iconophobia. Rather, it can be seen—in the breadth of aesthetic engagement that is brought to light in Plender and Reeve's work—as a model of the ‘iconoclash’ that arises from an awareness that ‘defacement and “refacement” [are] necessarily coeval’, and that, as such, the act of defacement unleashes new representations in its wake.⁴⁶ As such, it provides a model for the work of the artists who come after them and address their stories. Reeve and Plender's attentiveness to such acts of iconoclasm might be understood as something like the practice of ‘critical idolatry’ called for by W. J. T. Mitchell, ‘that recognised every act of disfiguration or defacement as itself an act of creative destruction for

⁴¹ Brown, ‘Evelyn Manesta’.

⁴² Rowena Fowler, ‘Why Did Suffragettes Attack Works of Art?’, *Journal of Women's History* 2, no. 3 (Winter 1991): 109.

⁴³ Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, ‘The Suffragette as a Militant Artist’.

⁴⁴ Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, ‘The Suffragette as Militant Artist’.

⁴⁵ Latour, ‘What is Iconoclash?’, 27. See chap. 1, n. 141.

⁴⁶ Latour, ‘What is Iconoclash?’, 17.

which we must take responsibility'.⁴⁷ Reeve has commented that 'today we have no problem seeing the "artistry" in this "happening"—which is not to aestheticise suffragette actions and rob them of their political power, but to honour the ingenuity of the act and to challenge where the moral power of art lay—in an object or a human action?'⁴⁸ Drawings like those of Reeve and Plender, returning to historical incidents in an engagement with the images they have left behind, arise precisely out of that shift in understanding—one that acknowledges the forms of relationality that an object, or image, distils.

The materiality of the drawings is obvious: across the chapbook's digitally-printed pages we see a mix of watercolour or ink washes, pencil and scratchy ink pen; in some, the shadows of the creased and waterlogged pages of the original drawings are visible. But the particular materials used to produce the drawings are not given in the notes—these are not treated as individual artworks. Instead, as we see in Bryce's series, drawing is adopted here as a means of reproduction that parallels other, less time-consuming alternatives, albeit for more pragmatic reasons: Reeve mentions that drawing from archival materials was a way of evading copyright charges.⁴⁹ As Hillary L. Chute observes about graphic narratives, with which we might compare a work like the chapbook, 'even as they deliberately place stress on official histories and traditional modes of transmitting history, [they are] deeply invested in their own accuracy and historicity'.⁵⁰ Of course, copyright was only an issue because these drawings were meant for publication, and—individually and as a series—these drawings are indebted to popular forms of graphic narrative. Plender's work in particular has a long-standing relationship to comics. Indeed, several earlier works of Plender's took the form of comic books, which she has suggested fostered a filmic approach and were the precursors to subsequent work in different media: 'I was using a cinematic visual language on the page, exploring narrative, *mise-en-scène* and how words and images relate to each

⁴⁷ W. J. T. Mitchell cited in Costello and Willson, *The Life and Death of Images*, 18. See chap. 1, n. 14.

⁴⁸ Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, 'The Suffragette as Militant Artist'.

⁴⁹ Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, 'The Suffragette as Militant Artist'.

⁵⁰ Chute, *Graphic Women*, 3. See chap 1, n. 145. Indeed, in some senses this accuracy and historicity is better served by drawing: Reeve notes, 'An added bonus is that the process allows you to pick up on the tinier details in the photograph that you might otherwise miss just because you will be staring into a picture for over 4 hours or so'. Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, 'The Suffragette as Militant Artist'.

other'.⁵¹ Her early work *The Masterpiece* (2002–2006) took the form of a series of self-published comic books, a sprawling narrative told in drawings from film stills. More recently, they have been followed by a graphic novel, *The Stellar Key to the Summerland* (2008). Apart from the complex narrative temporalities permitted by comics, Plender has spoken of the communicative potential of the familiar imagery and the 'basic repertoire of signs and symbols' of comics.⁵² She has described the early influence of Öyvind Fahlström on her work in these terms, commenting that 'he used comic book imagery, because he wanted to make artwork that everyone could understand'.⁵³ She also mentions Fahlström's interest in the 'alternative distribution network' that comics make possible, an interest that informed her earlier works with the form and that Plender and Reeve share.⁵⁴ The form of the chapbook, easily reproduced and disseminated, serves a similar purpose. It has been distributed online as well as in printed form—in print, the drawings are reproduced in black and white, at a fairly low resolution, on plain white paper bound with a plain, sparsely-lettered card cover.⁵⁵ It is clear that these informal, networked methods of distribution and communication inform other works, too, as part of an enquiry into the multifarious methods adopted by the WSPU to develop and sustain a public platform. On a website produced by the artists to promote Emily Davison Day, which Reeve has described as 'electronic pamphleteering', the visitor to the site clicks through the home page, a drawing of angels flanked by decorative curlicues and vines and the line from a psalm, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy'—in reference to what Tickner calls the 'dilute Pre-Raphaelite allegory, derived from Walter Crane' of Sylvia Pankhurst's murals for the WSPU's Prince's Skating Rink Exhibition of 1909, which bore the same legend (fig. 4.15).⁵⁶ The silhouette appears of a circular placard

⁵¹ Plender interviewed by Jessica Lack, 'Artist Olivia Plender on how she draws,' *Guardian*, 19 September, 2009, accessed 28 September 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/sep/19/guide-to-drawing-olivia-plender>.

⁵² Plender interviewed in Lack, 'Artist Olivia Plender'.

⁵³ Plender interviewed in Lack, 'Artist Olivia Plender'.

⁵⁴ Plender interviewed in Lack, 'Artist Olivia Plender'.

⁵⁵ The chapbook can be downloaded as a pdf at [shura.shu.ac.uk/6834/22/Reeve_Suffragette_as_Militant_Artist_2010_\(6\).pdf](http://shura.shu.ac.uk/6834/22/Reeve_Suffragette_as_Militant_Artist_2010_(6).pdf). The images of individual drawings used here are taken from the pdf, where the reproductions are of a higher resolution. Two of the drawings (and a photograph) are in colour in this version—they are reproduced as such here, with an image of the version in the printed chapbook for comparison (fig. 4.8).

⁵⁶ Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 28; Reeve refers to the murals in Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, 'The Suffragette as Militant Artist'.

Figure 4.15 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *emilydavisonday.co.uk*, website, 2010 (screenshot of home page).

bearing the words ‘*Celebrate EMILY DAVISON DAY JUNE 4th*’; on clicking through once more a photograph of Davison appears; with a final click a pdf is automatically downloaded—pressed into your hand, metaphorically. The pdf is of a poster, a woodcut of the same roundel urging us to celebrate Emily Davison Day (fig. 4.16). In itself it is a reference to the work of the Suffrage Atelier where, we are told in Reeve and Plender’s notes, women could be trained ‘in cartoon imagery and wood cut technique (the most direct and economically efficient means of producing propaganda)’.⁵⁷ (It is the women of the Suffrage Atelier who brandish placards in the shape of palettes in figure 1.5.)

And yet there may be more at stake in the recurrence of comics as a point of reference in these works. Chute argues that ‘comics [...] was a bastion of figurative drawing during a period governed by the sanctities of abstraction’.⁵⁸ This affinity for figuration, she suggests, was motivated by ‘the need to connect with history through

⁵⁷ See the notes in the chapbook: Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*. A tumblr address (that seems to now be defunct) is also included on the poster—another popular, grassroots form of information dissemination.

⁵⁸ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 105. See chap. 1, n. 105.

encountering and refracting its own set of symbols'.⁵⁹ She refers to the controversial move to figuration on the part of Philip Guston, who began to make work about Vietnam and Nixon, as well as underground cartoonists including Spiegelman —'creating sets of images, images of seething historical detritus, at a similar moment as a mode of bearing witness to the modern world'.⁶⁰

Figure 4.16 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *Emily Davison Day*, pdf of woodcut handbill, 2010.

⁵⁹ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 107.

⁶⁰ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 107-8.

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Plender and Reeve's desire to bear witness to the occluded histories of suffragette activism leads them to demand recognition on behalf of forgotten artists; it also leads them to insist upon the suffragettes' militancy, its extent and its importance in establishing the women as political agents, in contradiction of a popular historical record that would diminish its significance in the ultimately successful achievement of their aims.⁶¹ Such diverse acts of counter-representation beg the question of the relationship between the suffragettes' proclivity (and talent) for spectacle and publicity—their call for 'Agitation by Symbol'—and their avowed militancy and martial rhetoric.⁶² Plender and Reeve's works shed light on the continuum between these sensibilities, drawing explicit links between the aesthetic and affective dimensions of political agitation and between art-making as it is more narrowly understood.⁶³ The WSPU provides abundant examples for making such a case: Plender and Reeve's drawings make it clear just how significant the involvement of artists was in the movement. Foremost among them is the figure of Sylvia Pankhurst, a pivotal figure in this and subsequent work about the suffragettes. Plender notes that Pankhurst 'is usually seen as having abandoned art for political action'; such an analysis, she points out, is beholden to what she calls 'the conservative notion of art as a sphere separate from politics'.⁶⁴ This point about art's factitious autonomy is reiterated in an observation made by Tickner, that 'the art/propaganda divide is itself a kind of propaganda for art: it secures the category of art as something complex, humane and ideologically pure, through the operation of an alternative category of

⁶¹ By, for example, emphasising their role as long-suffering victims of state brutality, and subsequently as grateful recipients of its beneficence, in crediting women's war efforts rather than political campaigns when appraising their success. See Jorgensen-Earp, "The Transfiguring Sword", 5.

⁶² The phrase was coined by Mary Lowndes in *The Common Cause* (a suffragette newspaper), and is cited in the chapbook: Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*.

⁶³ Plender comments in a recent interview that 'this kind of activity by artists, along with work more recognisable within traditional definitions of art—such as Sylvia Pankhurst's *Women Workers of England* series of paintings from 1907 which document women's working conditions—present clear examples of how art can play a role within political movements'. In Elena Bordignon, 'Olivia Plender'.

⁶⁴ Plender interviewed in Elena Bordignon, 'Olivia Plender'.

propaganda as that which is crude, institutional and partisan'.⁶⁵ Plender concludes: 'I would rather argue that she substituted one form of representation for another'.⁶⁶ A brief comparison with Plender's other work makes it clear that this is a longstanding preoccupation: among the movements whose histories have informed her work we could include Modern Spiritualism, and its ties with radical political causes in American and working-class British communities; and the Kibbo Kift Kindred, a long-forgotten Arcadian movement formed in Britain in the 1920s, mutating into a political movement called 'The Green Shirts' after the financial upheavals of the 1930s.⁶⁷ In 2008, Plender curated an exhibition, *TINA*, that revisited Margaret Thatcher's mantra, 'There Is No Alternative', from a historical perspective—just as a turn in economic events meant that picking up that gauntlet might not be the doomed endeavour it once seemed.⁶⁸ Such works, as the title of the exhibition suggests, are part of a self-conscious effort of political imagination. Like Bowers, Reeve and Plender are attentive to the role of the aesthetic in the histories of collective political action that they interrogate, discerning in it the possibility of a more nuanced idea of the possible relationships between art and political action, and consequently the kind of political agency available to the work of art. Here, the 'aesthetic' is understood to be, as Costello and Willsdon put it, 'not primarily an issue of judgement or beauty, but a matter of rhetoric: a concern with *how* the mode or manner in which the work treats its content, and the point of view from which it is addressed, disposes its viewers to see the world'.⁶⁹ In this it forms part of a broad engagement with relationships of power as expressed in conditions of visibility, articulated via an interrogation of images situated within and constituted in unpredictable ways by a network of participants. Chute has spoken of how female-

⁶⁵ Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, xi.

⁶⁶ Plender interviewed in Elena Bordinon, 'Olivia Plender'.

⁶⁷ See, for example, 2009's *Machine Shall be the Slave of Man, but We Will Not Slave for the Machine*, involving drawing, performance and dioramas; the video *Bring Back Robin Hood* (2008); the comic book *Stellar Key to the Summerland* (2007); lecture performances, such as *In Search of the New Republic* (2006), a walking tour of Spiritualist sights in Kensington, London; and installation *The Medium and Daybreak* (2005). This was a museological style reconstruction of a contemporary Spiritualist chapel from the North of England.

⁶⁸ *TINA* took place at the Drawing Room Gallery, London, from 9 October–30 November 2008. Exhibiting artists included Petra Bauer, Pablo Bronstein, Melanie Gilligan, Goldin+Senneby, Anja Kirschner and Ciprian Muresan.

⁶⁹ Costello and Willsdon, *The Life and Death of Images*, 13.

authored comics 'return to events to literally re-view them, and in so doing, they productively point to the female subject as both an object of looking and a creator of looking and sight'.⁷⁰ In Plender and Reeve's work we see women renegotiating the particular forms of visibility that they have been accorded: these renegotiations are claims to political subjecthood, and in turn we see the act of re-viewing performed as an expression of political agency.

Chute cites Lynn Huffer: 'how can the other reappear at the site of her inscriptional effacement?'⁷¹ In these works by Plender and Reeve, such reappearances are effected in various ways. They happen in the performative re-inauguration of a defunct institution that comes to stand for the work of remembrance, solidarity and collaboration, as well as staking a claim to the space needed for such work. They are realised by the performing bodies that take on the roles of defendants or judge at a criminal trial, or that physically return to the Epsom Derby on the anniversary of Emily Wilding Davison's fatal accident. They take shape in the objects that present us with the tangible manifestation of women's effaced labours, as the artefacts of the suffragettes' work are put on public display, from promotional tea-sets to oil paintings. And, finally, these histories are 'materialised' in drawings: on display or in a publication designed to be widely disseminated, the drawings are themselves the artefacts of an embodied relationship to the stories they tell.⁷² In each instance the artworks, ostensibly quite different in approach, can be seen to 'engage presence in active and important ways'.⁷³

Writing about the particularities of comics as hand-drawn documentary acts, Chute describes 'a form of counterinscription': such graphic narratives, she suggests, 'materially retrace inscriptional effacement; they repeat and reconstruct in order to counteract'.⁷⁴ Plender makes it clear that she also sees her work in these terms: 'Much of the work that I do as an artist is somehow both a part of and reflects on the

⁷⁰ Chute, *Graphic Women*, 2.

⁷¹ Chute, *Graphic Women*, 3.

⁷² Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 25. Chute adopts the idea of 'materialising' history in drawing from a comment by Art Spiegelman on repicturing past events.

⁷³ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 34.

⁷⁴ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 4. For Chute's comments on how invisibility is enforced, see chap. 1, n. 140.

struggle over how history is written [...] we wanted to make a feminist intervention in the canon of art history and also to open up a dialogue about the lack of representation of female artists, in both the historical and contemporary collection and exhibitions'.⁷⁵ Chute's observations emphasise the material and corporeal dimensions brought by the practices of drawing she discusses to the kinds of counter-representation advocated by radical historiographers like Iles and Roberts.⁷⁶

Chute adds a question of her own to Huffer's: 'what does it mean for an author to *literally* reappear—in the form of a legible, drawn body on the page—at the site of her inscriptional effacement?'⁷⁷ This reappearance—this counterinscription—is, Chute argues, an act of bearing witness. Chute is primarily concerned in this instance with works that are explicitly autobiographical in a way that these are not; and yet—as I have explored in the second chapter—I would suggest that the personal investment of the artists in these works means that they can be understood as more than works of non-canonical and idiosyncratic historiography. That is, they also recount the artists' personal relationship to the processes of political subjectification—a personal effort of political imagination that speaks to its contemporary context. It is because of this imbrication of the autobiographical and historiographical that these works can be understood as testimonial forms.

As Hallas and Guerin observe, 'within the context of bearing witness, material images do not merely depict the historical world, they participate in its transformation'.⁷⁸ As acts of bearing witness to overlooked political histories and their persisting value—as performative engagements in politicised acts of historiography—these drawings are embodied, relational and therefore processual, intervening in the world in material and unpredictable ways. As such, as suggested in the last chapter, they might productively be understood in the terms of Taylor's distinction as part of the 'repertoire of embodied practice/knowledge', and not (just) the archive—despite their character as 'supposedly enduring materials', on a par with

⁷⁵ Plender interviewed in Elena Bordignon, 'Olivia Plender'.

⁷⁶ Iles and Roberts, *All Knees and Elbows*. See chap. 1, n. 54.

⁷⁷ Chute, *Graphic Women*, 3.

⁷⁸ Guerin and Hallas, 'Introduction,' 4. See chap. 1, n. 137.

‘texts, documents, buildings, bones’.⁷⁹ Interrogating a specific kind of mediated embodiment as a means of passing on ‘communal memories, histories, and values’, Taylor’s work suggests a productive way of understanding the practices of drawing I address.⁸⁰

Taylor writes that ‘the repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by “being there,” being a part of the transmission’.⁸¹ It is the emphatically situated nature of this knowledge—in ways specific to the different participants that shape it, which may mean the artist, the subject, the spectator, or in some senses all of them—that [contributes] to the political, affective, and mnemonic power of the repertoire’.⁸² The image, of course, has long been understood in terms of what Hallas and Guerin call its ‘phenomenological capacity to bring the event into iconic presence’— ‘particularly apt’, as they put it, ‘in bringing into a form of presence that which is absent’.⁸³ This is then, in some senses a paradoxically elusive materiality. Hallas and Guerin draw on Hans Belting’s notion of ‘iconic presence’ to describe the particular, contradictory character of the image, which draws us into a relationship with a form of presence which is in fact a ‘visible absence’: ‘Images live from the paradox that they perform *the presence of an absence* or vice versa’.⁸⁴ And, as we have seen, this dialectic of absence and presence—the dynamic which animates the image—is amplified in drawing.⁸⁵ As Chute puts it, ‘against a valorisation of absence and aporia, graphic narrative asserts the value of presence, however complex and contingent’.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.

⁸⁰ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

⁸¹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 25.

⁸² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 25.

⁸³ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 12.

⁸⁴ Hans Belting cited in Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 10.

⁸⁵ See the discussion in chapter 3, and especially chap. 3, n. 113.

⁸⁶ Chute, *Graphic Women*, 2.

It is this presence of the image that gives it the capacity to ‘mediate the intersubjective relations that ground the act of bearing witness’.⁸⁷ The act of bearing witness, Hallas and Guerin point out, ‘demands a certain habeas corpus’.⁸⁸ Drawing makes the *corpus* at stake in the image explicit, uniting ‘the haptic and the visual’, as Chute observes.⁸⁹ There is, then a fundamental affinity between drawing and the forms of the repertoire, through which ‘embodied memory’ is enacted: ‘performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing’.⁹⁰ It is something Taussig acknowledges with reference to Berger, who ‘lumps together drawing, singing and dance—our corporeal gang’.⁹¹ For Chute, it is not only the proliferation of temporalities or the complications of linear development that make comics a particularly apt form of witness; it is also ‘its immediacy-provoking insistent positioning of the body, whether reflexively through the mark itself or through the location of bodies in time and space on the page’.⁹² We can see something very similar happening in these works. Chute cites Elaine Scarry, when she speculates that the marks that constitute a drawing ‘might most accurately be perceived as a “making sentient of the external world,” as themselves “a materialisation of perception”’.⁹³

For Taussig, ‘being drawn to draw [...] is what makes the difference between *seeing* and *witnessing*’.⁹⁴ ‘To *witness*’, he writes elsewhere in an acknowledgement of the idiosyncratic personal investments of the process, ‘as opposed to *see*, is to be

⁸⁷ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 12. This notion of presence is not dependent on any notion of documentary evidence, as Hallas and Guerin point out: ‘Since this understanding of the ‘life’ of the image in witnessing detaches the image from a singular imperative to produce documentary proof, it pertains to a wide range of images, not only photographically-based ones. Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 12.

⁸⁸ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 14.

⁸⁹ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 71. Taussig describes ‘the *kinaesthetic* sense in drawing’. Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 23. See chap. 1, n. 106.

⁹⁰ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20.

⁹¹ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 72.

⁹² Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 70.

⁹³ Elaine Scarry cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 25.

⁹⁴ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 79.

implicated in a process of judgement...'⁹⁵ But more than this, the act of witnessing in this way—being corporeally implicated in the drawing—confounds a simple distinction between witness and witnessed: 'The staid and stable act of perception separating a subject, like a lookout tower, from an object, like a specimen, founders. The *who am I?* and the *what is that?* gets messed up because the field implicating observer and observed has suddenly become a zone of trench warfare'.⁹⁶ It is a process that testifies to the ways experience is shaped imaginatively and materially, in 'the complex cooperation of imagined and actualised experiences (past, present and future) and practices of record making' that Hayes describes.⁹⁷ As such, drawing—and especially drawing that emerges in an explicit engagement with acts of documentation and with photography in particular, as those discussed here do—is able to articulate an understanding of how images contribute to the shaping of political subjects.

To paraphrase a question asked by Taylor about performance: 'Is drawing always and only about embodiment? Or does it call into question the very contours of the body, challenging traditional notions of embodiment?'⁹⁸ I would suggest that these drawings, in their play of attachment and detachment, do just that. The understanding of the embodied, material practice of drawing that I am interested in developing here is not one that privileges a purported immediacy or authenticity of expression in contrast to more obviously detached and mediated forms of representation (and especially photography). Rather, as discussed in detail in the last chapter, it is one that emerges through the different processes of mediation that intervene between 'drawer' and 'drawn'. Insisting upon the importance of drawing's corporeality to any understanding of these works means coming to an understanding of a discursive, dialectical embodiment. It is a contradictory form of embodiment, technologically and materially situated. These works exist in relation to photography and other documents, enlisting what Chute describes as 'drawing's desire to compensate for and connect to lost bodies'.⁹⁹ Indeed, I would contend that they can

⁹⁵ Taussig, M., *I Swear I Saw This* 71.

⁹⁶ Taussig, M., *I Swear I Saw This* 71

⁹⁷ Hayes, 'Certain Resemblances', 96. See chap. 1, n. 134.

⁹⁸ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 4.

⁹⁹ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 88.

only be understood as acts of political imagination, and as specific forms of intervention in the processes of political subjectification, in terms of those relationships. What is more, the understanding of embodiment at stake in these drawings is categorically not a solipsistic experience of the individuated or isolated body, but is fundamentally relational. Hallas and Guerin write that ‘the image is only witnessing when it is involved in the contingent and ephemeral dynamics of the intersubjective relationship between subject, spectator and producer of the image’.¹⁰⁰ Drawings like those that Plender and Reeve gather in their chapbook, reworked from photographs, can be understood to be part of Azoulay’s ‘event of photography’, perpetuating the intersubjective relationships which such events establish.¹⁰¹

THE EVENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY

In her work on ‘the practical gaze’, Azoulay develops a notion of photography which reinscribes the spectator as a participant in an indeterminate process unfolding across a series of encounters that coalesce around the two distinct mediating presences of the camera and the photograph (she calls these the ‘two different modalities of eventness’).¹⁰² Understood in these terms, the photograph itself is an contingent artefact of the photographic event and by no means its culmination—rather, it is a staging point in a process perpetually open to renegotiation and, as a result, temporally complex. ‘The event of photography’, Azoulay writes, ‘is subject to a unique form of temporality—it is made up of an infinite series of encounters’.¹⁰³ Azoulay’s use of the term *énoncé* to describe the photographic ‘statement’ emphasises its relational character: as she explains, it is constituted of four elements, ‘addresser, addressee, referent, and meaning’.¹⁰⁴ This is what Azoulay calls a political ontology of photography—‘an ontology of the many, operating in public, in motion’; the different encounters between these participants in the event of photography might perpetuate an originary event along parallel and divergent trajectories. As such, a photographic image is not simply an inert form of documentation—photographic *énoncés* are not

¹⁰⁰ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 17.

¹⁰¹ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 26.

¹⁰² Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 92; *Civil Imagination*, 26.

¹⁰³ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 26.

¹⁰⁴ Azoulay *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 23; 135.

constative—but are, as she puts it elsewhere, ‘a participant in the event that can be seen through them’.¹⁰⁵ This is something like what Stimson describes as ‘a mode of being with the world’—a situation in which the photograph cannot be said to be a token of a moment definitively past, but instead speaks to a more chronologically complicated understanding of how ‘presentness’ is negotiated.¹⁰⁶ As Azoulay points out, ‘The multiplicity of events with which we are concerned as well as the separateness of their unfolding render linear sequentiality between the event surrounding the camera on the one hand, and the event surrounding the photograph on the other, into merely one possible relation between them’.¹⁰⁷

Sontag writes that ‘photographs objectify: they turn an event or a person into something that can be possessed’.¹⁰⁸ Azoulay’s is an account of photography that fundamentally challenges such characterisations: understood in these terms, the photograph cannot be said to be static, its meaning stable and easily appropriated. On the contrary, it is implicated in a process that is continually in flux, its meaning contested. What is more, the intrinsically relational character of the event of photography means it is inherently resistant to control and coercion: it ‘contests fundamental categories of the sovereign power and [...] refuses to incarnate the spectator position set by the archives of relating to these images as documents of past events’.¹⁰⁹ In this understanding that any stability imposed upon the meaning of such images is not only artificial but fundamentally coercive, the affinity of Azoulay’s ontology of photography with Taylor’s emphasis on the repertoire of embodied practices becomes apparent.

The image, then, is a point of departure as much as it is an end-point of a sort; and as such it bears ‘the potential for permanent renewal’.¹¹⁰ For Azoulay, to revisit an image

¹⁰⁵ Ariella Azoulay, ‘Regime-made Disaster: On the Possibility of Nongovernmental Viewing,’ in *The Visual Cultures of Nongovernmental Politics*, ed. Yates McKee and Meg McLagan (New York: Zone Books, 2012), 40.

¹⁰⁶ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 167. See chap. 1, n. 116.

¹⁰⁷ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 26.

¹⁰⁸ Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 72. See chap. 1, n. 153.

¹⁰⁹ Ariella Azoulay, *Different Ways Not to Say Deportation* (Vancouver: Fillip Editions, 2012), 4.

¹¹⁰ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 27.

from the past is to reopen a dialogue, resituating the photograph within the ongoing series of decisions and circumstances that led to its appearance—and making plain the continuing ramifications of those decisions. It is a work of reconstruction that she argues is a kind of ‘civic skill’.¹¹¹ In the exercise of this skill—in taking on this task of reconstruction—‘the notion of a closure is overthrown thanks to the agency of the spectator’.¹¹² This account of the spectator’s agency bears some comparison with what Hallas and Guerin identify as ‘secondary’ or ‘retrospective’ witnessing, which ‘is in fact primary to the collective cultural memory of traumatic historical events’.¹¹³ It is a product of the same processes which Hallas and Guerin identify when they write that ‘the intersubjective relations generated by the presence of the image opens up a space for a witness who did not directly observe or participate in the traumatic historical event’.¹¹⁴ And yet, Levin suggests that Azoulay’s understanding of the photographic image ‘exceeds the status of testimony or evidence by calling for action on the part of the viewer’.¹¹⁵ She cites Azoulay: ‘a photograph is an énoncé within the pragmatics of obligation’.¹¹⁶

The act of reconstruction, Azoulay writes, ‘is carried out from a civil perspective seeking to suspend and counter the effects of the regime in the archive’.¹¹⁷ There are clearly parallels between the work of counter-inscription, as described by Chute, and the work of reconstruction. Indeed, if Chute’s ‘counter-inscription’ remains subject to the same criticisms as counter-representation, notwithstanding its shift of emphasis

¹¹¹ Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 14. For Azoulay, the political is a question of plurality, a by product of simply being together; consequently the ‘civil’ comes to stand for a certain intention. See Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 106-107.

¹¹² Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 27.

¹¹³ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 12. Again, in this essay Guerin and Hallas give an overview of accounts of the idea of witness as developed in response to traumatic events: it is my contention throughout this project that the insights gained in such accounts can inform a more general understanding of how knowledge of historical events is shared.

¹¹⁴ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 12. The idea of retrospective witnessing also seems to be something like what Hayes is describing when she writes about an ‘affective space of witnessing—witnessing what I also know to be an event I have not witnessed’. Hayes, ‘Certain Resemblances,’ 90.

¹¹⁵ Levin, *The Performative Force of Photography*, 329. See chap. 1, n. 103.

¹¹⁶ Azoulay cited in Levin, *The Performative Force of Photography*, 329.

¹¹⁷ Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 4.

to the material and embodied (that is, that it might remain reliant upon discredited accounts of the project of representation and what Steyerl called its ‘ambivalent [...] politics of truth’, prey to the same misguided faith in the possibility of creating a new, more complete or more authentic artefact), then Azoulay’s idea of reconstruction might be more useful.¹¹⁸ ‘Reconstruction’ takes as its starting point an inherited, flawed and incomplete artefact. Azoulay notes the indeterminacy inherent in the work of unbinding that, as described in the last chapter, is necessary in any effort to confront what she calls ‘the violence that transformed history into a *fait accompli*’: ‘It generates what Walter Benjamin called ‘the incompleteness of history’.¹¹⁹ Such incompleteness—such a resistance to the foreclosure of events—is of course, of critical importance to the exercise of political imagination. In emphasising the ongoing, indeterminate and dialogical character of the work to be done, the work of reconstruction cannot be as straightforwardly characterised as a reaction—it is an act of elaboration as well as negation. As such, it is ‘the creation of knowledge *de novo*’—‘not the communication of a truth that is already known, but its actual production through this performative act’.¹²⁰

Plender and Reeve’s drawings can be seen to be interventions of this kind: in them we see an interrogation of conditions of visibility and citizenship, and the relationship between those terms. As such, they contribute to the development of an understanding of how conditions of visibility might be reconstituted performatively and relationally, in a rejection and circumvention of the coercive surveillance of the state—through the acts of mutual recognition that shape the work of reconstruction. Like the other artists discussed in these chapters, their position is the liminal one of the documentarian; they share the position of spectator with their own audiences, whose encounters with the documented event they mediate and reshape in turn. They perpetuate the event of photography in what Taylor calls an ‘act of transfer’ that works ‘through doubling, replication, and proliferation rather than through *surrogation*’: they do not replace the photograph, but add to it.¹²¹ Such proliferation, as Latour discusses, is bound up in a particular kind of truth claim: the only way to

¹¹⁸ Steyerl, ‘Documentarism as Politics of Truth’. See chap. 1, n. 69.

¹¹⁹ Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 4.

¹²⁰ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 11.

¹²¹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 46 (italics author’s own).

access truth, objectivity, and sanctity,' he writes in his description of 'iconoclash,' is to move fast from one image to another, not to dream the impossible dream of jumping to a non-existing original'.¹²² In doing so, it is attentive to the contingencies and variety of historical detail.¹²³ Of course, their starting point is work already done by the Women's Library, whose archive is itself a kind of counter-archive, a work of reconstruction which the artists take up and continue. In its very existence, the Women's Library and its archive seek to 'suspend and counter the effects of the regime'; as such, these works are testament to how 'materials from the archive shape embodied practice in innumerable ways, yet never totally dictate embodiment'.¹²⁴

These drawings distil a practice of active viewing of the kind called for by Azoulay when she writes that 'one needs to stop looking at the photograph and instead start watching it'—and in doing so invite us to continue that practice.¹²⁵ *Contra* Barthes, who writes that the photograph is '*without a future* (this is its pathos, its melancholy); in it, no protensity', Azoulay emphasises the fundamental, unpredictable openness amid which the photograph takes shape, and which it, in turn, perpetuates.¹²⁶ The idea of 'watching' photographs presumes a certain duration, and unfolding: it 'entails dimensions of time and movement that need to be reinscribed in the interpretation

¹²² Latour, 'What is Iconoclash?', 7. See chap. 1, n. 141. He continues, 'Contrary to Plato's resemblance chain, they don't even try to move from the copy to the prototype'. Latour, 'What is Iconoclash?', 7.

¹²³ By contrast, Taylor suggests, 'The model of surrogation forgets its antecedents [...] by emphasising seemingly uninterrupted stability over what might be read as rupture, the recognisable one over the particularities of the many'. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 46.

¹²⁴ Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 4; Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21. See chap. 1, n. 157 on the 'constant state of interaction' that exists between the archive and the repertoire of embodied forms. Taylor suggests that the archive and the repertoire work 'in tandem and [...] alongside other systems of transmission'. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21. She warns against defaulting to a reductive binary in thinking throughout the relationship between these different 'systems of transmission': 'The relationship between the archive and repertoire, as I see it, is certainly not sequential [...] Nor is it true versus false, mediated versus unmediated, primordial versus modern. Nor is it a binary. Other systems of transmission—like the digital—complicate any simple binary formulation'. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

¹²⁵ Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 14.

¹²⁶ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 2000), 90.

of the still photographic image'.¹²⁷ As we have seen, this protensive quality is one that Mitchell in fact claims for all pictures, understood 'as assemblages, constructed collectivities [...] of image and support, virtual and actual signifiers, and a situation of beholding'.¹²⁸ Azoulay establishes the protensity of photography, precisely by acknowledging this situation of beholding as an ongoing opportunity for a practice of active viewing. Understanding photography in these terms, Barthes's assertion, that 'Motionless, the Photograph flows back from presentation to retention', is no longer convincing.¹²⁹

There are affinities between the act of reconstruction, the civic duty of the citizenry of photography in Azoulay's terms, and what Taussig calls the 'laborious seeing' of drawing: 'eye and memory are painstakingly exercised, or at least exercised in new ways'.¹³⁰ Drawing itself is a familiar model for this kind of active viewing, as a process that—as we have already encountered in Berger's descriptions—entails a certain discursivity.¹³¹ What Siún Hanrahan calls 'the sustained "presence to" of drawing [...] holds the possibility of hearing back, not as a promise of immediacy but as the possibility of such commitment revealing the object of attention as it is in itself'.¹³² This discursivity gives drawing what Berger has called its 'quality of *becoming* rather than *being*'.¹³³ (It is perhaps also one reason why William Kentridge has said, 'I see drawing as inherently animated'.)¹³⁴ It is just such a quality of becoming that is emphasised in Azoulay's ontology of photography: a process akin to Marsha Meskimmon's description of '*drawing* as a materialising force, rather than a

¹²⁷ Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 14.

¹²⁸ Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* 68.

¹²⁹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 90.

¹³⁰ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 89.

¹³¹ See chap. 3, n. 171; Taussig discusses Berger's observation that drawing is 'like a conversation with the thing drawn'. Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 22.

¹³² Siún Hanrahan, 'Acts of Hubris', in *Hyperdrawing: Beyond the Lines of Contemporary Art*, eds. Russell Marshall & Phil Sawdon, London: I. B. Tauris (2012), xxvii.

¹³³ Berger cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 21.

¹³⁴ William Kentridge cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 16.

material'.¹³⁵ Meskimmon emphasises drawing's performativity, as it 'makes us, as participants, reiterate and re-perform ourselves as we encounter and engage it'.¹³⁶ It demands the active involvement of its audience, as Chute points out.

Chute describes the way that viewers 'project causality' in the breaks between images in comics, given form in the frames that structure the page and the 'gutters' between.¹³⁷ It is also here, in the tension between overt acts of framing, where images are discretely apportioned and separated by empty space, that decisions taken to include or exclude information are made explicit. These acts of framing and spacing find a parallel in the spatial syntax of series of drawings, as described in the last chapter—to which we might compare those in Reeve and Plender's chapbook, which adopts the sequential form of an easily reproduced and distributed publication. The breaks between the images are certainly important in signalling the decisions made in the making of documentary images.¹³⁸ But equally important to this emphasis on their constructed nature is the simple fact of them having been *cheiropoieta*, handmade, unlike the unassailable sacred images described by Latour.¹³⁹ Drawing from documentary sources 'calls overt attention to the crafting of histories and historiographies'.¹⁴⁰ As such, these works solicit the viewer to engage critically with the event of the image's making—and potential remaking.

Drawing—a kind of drawing that self-consciously takes on the ambivalent category of the handmade document—would therefore seem to be an apt means of participating in the photographic event, that complex and ongoing form of witnessing. Indeed, as a model for active viewing, it is one to which Azoulay has

¹³⁵ Marsha Meskimmon, 'Elaborate Marks: Gender° | Time° | Drawing,' in *Hyperdrawing: Beyond the Lines of Contemporary Art*, eds. Russell Marshall & Phil Sawdon (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), xxi.

¹³⁶ Meskimmon, 'Elaborate Marks: Gender° | Time° | Drawing,' xxiv.

¹³⁷ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 16.

¹³⁸ Such breaks are also conspicuously amplified in some drawings of Bowers and Bryce by ellipses in the drawings themselves, although this is less notable in Plender and Reeve's drawings.

¹³⁹ 'As is well known from art historians and theologians, many sacred icons that have been celebrated and worshipped are called *acheiropoiete*; that is, *not* made by any human hand.' Latour, 'What is Iconoclasm?', 7.

¹⁴⁰ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 2.

herself had recourse, when confronted with the limits of the photograph's visibility. Refused permission for a recent project to exhibit photographs of displaced Palestinians from the Red Cross's archive alongside her own critical captions, Azoulay drew the images instead. The resulting drawings, *Unshowable Photographs*, were exhibited in in the 2012 Paris triennial, the Enwezor-curated *Intense Proximity*, and published under the title *Different Ways Not to Say Deportation*.¹⁴¹ Most of the pencil sketches are accompanied by a short commentary followed by a series of questions before, finally, the official archival caption and accession number.

What the project makes clear is that the photographic event, and the form of agency it enables via the work of reconstruction, persists even when photographs might be inaccessible or unshowable. Indeed, Azoulay suggests that the event of photography takes place in relation to the camera or to the photograph—or to the camera or photograph's hypothetical existence. Because the photographic event is relational, the physical mediation of the photographic apparatus or the photograph itself might not be necessary; regardless of whether a photograph was actually taken at a given point, it would suffice that the participants of the photographic event—the elements of the photographic *énoncé*—might assume their respective roles in the interrogation and reconfiguration of the visible, shaped by 'the real or imagined presence of a camera'.¹⁴² As Azoulay makes clear, this might involve incorporating oral testimony. Azoulay suggests that there are two ways that reconstruction might proceed: in the first case, by being alert to the marginal and easily-overlooked details of a photograph that might undermine easy assumptions about the story being told in the image—'a bracketing of figures that will help me to emphasise and construct a visual object that, at first glance, seems not to exist in the photographs'.¹⁴³ Alternatively, it will entail supplementing the purportedly evidentiary image with that which it occludes in 'a refusal to recognise the category of "authentic documentation" as the sole criterion for determining the borders of the visual reservoir and through an acknowledgment of the role of textual elements in organising the plane of the

¹⁴¹ *La Triennale: Intense Proximity*, exhibition curated by Okwui Enwezor, April-August 2012; Azoulay, *Different Ways*.

¹⁴² Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 1. As Azoulay writes, 'My assumption is that the presumed presence of a camera suffices to create a photographic event'. Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 1.

¹⁴³ Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 368.

visible'.¹⁴⁴ In this case, the evidentiary content of the image is supplemented by testimonial accounts, in something akin to what Taussig calls 'a model of text-image interchange', whose 'twofold, generative character of complementary opposites expresses itself *as an act of bearing witness*'.¹⁴⁵

In a short introduction to her drawings, Azoulay sketches out a taxonomy of the unseen photographs. As well as the 'untaken photographs' there are 'inaccessible photographs'; the Red Cross images are 'unshowable photographs'.¹⁴⁶ In all of these cases, she argues, 'photographs are "missing," creating a hole in our ability to reconstruct that of which we ourselves are a part'.¹⁴⁷ Drawing helps Azoulay undertake that act of reconstruction, just as it helps Reeve and Plender interrogate historical conditions of visibility.

IMAGINED PHOTOGRAPHS

Alongside Sylvia Pankhurst's own artworks at the Tate Britain retrospective were a series of five drawings by the Emily Davison Lodge. Produced in order to create a space for consideration of Pankhurst's political activism within an exhibition that showcased her painting and design, and to beg the question of the relationship between them, they are detailed pencil drawings of events in Pankhurst's political life that look much like those in the chapbook—some are posed portraits, some street scenes.¹⁴⁸ And yet, despite the title given at the exhibition, describing them as drawings 'from the series *The Suffragette as Militant Artist*', it soon becomes apparent that these cannot be quite like the drawings of the chapbook.¹⁴⁹ In the first of the

¹⁴⁴ Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 368.

¹⁴⁵ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 101-2 (italics author's own). Chute quotes Mitchell from *Iconology*: 'Perhaps the redemption of the imagination lies in accepting the fact that we create much of our world out of the dialogue between verbal and pictorial representations, and that our task is not to renounce this dialogue'. Mitchell cited in Chute, *Graphic Women*, 27.

¹⁴⁶ Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 1.

¹⁴⁸ See Reeve's comments in Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, 'The Suffragette as a Militant Artist'.

¹⁴⁹ See documentation in 'Sylvia Pankhurst,' curated by the Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve) (London: Tate Britain, 2014), handout published in conjunction with the display of the same name, at Tate Britain, 16 September 2013 – 6 April 2014.

five, Pankhurst is pictured with arm aloft, about to hurl a lump of concrete at a new Andrew Carrick Gow painting in the opulent corridors of St Stephen's Hall in the Houses of Parliament, as two men in bowler hats look on (fig. 4.17). The incident did happen—Reeve has subsequently described Pankhurst's anger at a decision by the Speaker of the House of Commons, 'who had just refused to allow a women's suffrage amendment bill to be introduced despite promises to the contrary. The painting was chosen, she claimed, because it seemed uninteresting and was protected by glass'.¹⁵⁰ And yet it is unlikely to have been photographed—given the technology of the time, it certainly seems unlikely that any photographic documentation that might have been produced of such an event would catch the perpetrator in motion. These drawings, it becomes apparent, are not taken directly from archival documents—they are, as the subsequent title used by Reeve makes clear, *Imagined Photographs*.¹⁵¹

Figure 4.17 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *Imagined Photographs*, pencil on paper, series of five drawings, 2013–2014. ('14 January 1913. Sylvia Pankhurst throws a lump of concrete at a painting (Andrew Carrick Gow, *Speaker Finch Being Held in the Chair*, 1912) in St Stephen's Hall, The Houses of Parliament')

¹⁵⁰ Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, 'The Suffragette as a Militant Artist'. The painting's title is recorded as *House of Commons 1628–9 Speaker Finch Held by Holles and Valentine*, although Plender and Reeve consistently refer to it as 'Speaker Finch Being Held in the Chair'.

¹⁵¹ Reeve makes reference to the latter title in Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, 'The Suffragette as a Militant Artist'.

Figure 4.18 The Emily Davison Lodge (Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve), from *Imagined Photographs*, pencil on paper, series of five drawings, 2013-2014. (Above: '27 July 1913. Sylvia Pankhurst, her license expired under the Cat and Mouse Act [...] manages to fool the police by disguising herself as a shepherd so she can address a Suffragette rally at Trafalgar Square'. Below: 'July 1920. Sylvia Pankhurst is a stowaway on a Norwegian ship bound for the Soviet Union'.)

In the other drawings, as accompanying captions explain, Pankhurst addresses a rally in disguise; stands with the ranks of the ‘People’s Army’, members of the East End Federation of Suffragettes; ‘drags her weakened body to the base of the statue of Oliver Cromwell outside the Houses of Parliament’ to confront Prime Minister Asquith; and sits amid winches and ropes on a Norwegian ship where she has stowed away, travelling to the Soviet Union at the invitation of Lenin (fig. 4.18).¹⁵² The incidents, Reeve has said, were chosen because of a sense on the part of the artists that that they were actions ‘as creatively savvy as they were politically’.¹⁵³ It is arguable whether these are examples of what Azoulay means by ‘untaken photographs’, which take place ‘in the real or imagined presence of a camera’, though ‘no trace of that event was recorded on a photographic support’.¹⁵⁴ There were probably cameras present at some of these incidents—at the rally, for example. The weight of the ‘imagined presence of a camera’ at a time when reportage photography was really in its infancy is harder to ascertain (though, given the suffragettes’ acuity in matters of publicity it seems very likely that they would have understood the value of a photo opportunity).¹⁵⁵ In that sense, these drawings bring a contemporary sensibility to bear upon these incidents, in their desire for photographic documentation of events that, Reeve suggests, ‘really capture the imagination and hence still hold the potential to inspire change’.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, as Azoulay observes, when such photographic documentation is ‘missing’, it ‘[creates] a hole in our ability to reconstruct that of which we ourselves are a part’.¹⁵⁷ These drawings—these marks made ‘out of a desire to render history concrete’—address that absence, and begin the work of reconstruction.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² See the text accompanying the drawings in the Tate display, as documented in in ‘Sylvia Pankhurst’.

¹⁵³ Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, ‘The Suffragette as a Militant Artist’.

¹⁵⁴ Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 1.

¹⁵⁵ Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 1. Chute discusses the sometime surprising and recursive process by which photography gradually usurped drawing’s role in reportage during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in *Disaster Drawn*, 63–67.

¹⁵⁶ Reeve on behalf of the Emily Davison Lodge, ‘The Suffragette as a Militant Artist’.

¹⁵⁷ Azoulay, *Different Ways*, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 26.

ON PRESENCE

Hallas and Guerin write that ‘it has become commonplace to accept that the ontology of the image claims an immediacy and presence at events [...] Images are considered not simply to evoke the violence and trauma of the event, but to re-present it, to make it present again (and in some cases, consciously make it present for the very first time’.¹⁵⁹ Citing Berger, Chute explains how this takes place through drawing: ‘It inscribes and concretises, through the embodied labour of drawing, “the spatial charge of a presence,” the tactile presence of line, the body of the medium’.¹⁶⁰ Drawings, Chute argues, ‘[call] attention to images as material objects and not just as representation’.¹⁶¹ This attentiveness to materiality refigures representation, as part of what Daston and Galison have described in historical terms as a movement from representation to presentation—a shift from ‘image-as-representation to image-as-process’.¹⁶² This idea is intimately connected to the image’s materiality, and its material interventions in the world: in a survey of scientific imaging, Daston and Galison argue that, by the end of the twentieth century, ‘no longer were images traced *either* by the mind’s eye *or* by “the pencil of nature”. Images began to function at least as much as a tweezer, hammer, or anvil of nature: a tool to make and change things’.¹⁶³ In fact the ‘presence effects’ of drawings such as these are overdetermined: induced not only by the tactility of marks that attest to the artist’s body, as the trace of his or her arduous labour, but also by the laborious looking through which audiences are conscripted as participants in the image as performative process.¹⁶⁴ This is why Chute asserts that drawing is not ‘a duplicative form’—and this is the paradoxical conclusion to be made about a series of works that begin by copying.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 9.

¹⁶⁰ John Berger cited in Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 27.

¹⁶¹ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 21.

¹⁶² Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 382–383. See chap. 1, n. 158.

¹⁶³ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 383.

¹⁶⁴ Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2.

¹⁶⁵ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 21.

Steyerl argues that the dichotomy between representation and represented is false: the image, Steyerl writes, ‘doesn’t represent reality. It is a fragment of the real world’.¹⁶⁶ She discusses Walter Benjamin’s assertion that ‘the past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption’: we encounter that past, she writes, in artefacts, images and objects that come to congeal social relations and tensions.¹⁶⁷ As Steyerl suggests, ‘in this perspective, a thing is never just an object, but a fossil in which a constellation of forces are petrified’.¹⁶⁸ For Steyerl, this applies equally to what she calls the ‘specific thing called “image”’, which even in its digital incarnations ‘bears the bruises of its crashes with politics and violence’.¹⁶⁹ This, then, is an understanding of profoundly corporeal, materialist image-making practices, alert to how ‘senses and things, abstraction and excitement, speculation and power, desire and matter actually converge within images’.¹⁷⁰ Steyerl refigures the dichotomy between representation and represented through a different means of coming to terms with the image, calling for ‘participation’ in it: to engage with the image, she argues, means ‘participating in the material of the image as well as in the desires and forces it accumulates’.¹⁷¹

These forces, of course, not only congeal in the object but are in turn perpetuated by it—this is why appropriation entails consequences, as Verwoert insists.¹⁷² To participate in the image is to embrace contingency, unanticipated effects—potentials and risks. This is what is at stake, as Steyerl puts it in terms redolent of Azoulay’s description of the work of reconstruction, in ‘participating in its collision with history’.¹⁷³ As such, to accept the contingent and unanticipated consequences of the image’s trajectory in the world only makes sense if in doing so one finds the

¹⁶⁶ Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You & Me’.

¹⁶⁷ Walter Benjamin, cited in Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You & Me’.

¹⁶⁸ Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You & Me’.

¹⁶⁹ Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You & Me’.

¹⁷⁰ Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You & Me’.

¹⁷¹ Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You & Me’.

¹⁷² See chap. 1, n. 50.

¹⁷³ Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You & Me’.

opportunity to come to understand—and to transform—the social forces and relations, collective histories and labour which formed it.¹⁷⁴

Keith Moxey discusses ‘the contemporary focus on the presence of the visual object, how it engages with the viewer in ways that stray from the cultural agendas for which it was conceived’, suggesting that it ‘asks us to attend to the status of the image as a presentation’.¹⁷⁵ In this vein, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht calls for an understanding of artworks that is as attuned to their ‘presence effects’ as it is to their ‘meaning effects’.¹⁷⁶ That is to say, images exert an ‘ontological demand’.¹⁷⁷ For Mitchell, this demand must be attended to, and lies at the heart of any engagement with the image: ‘images are not just a particular kind of sign, but something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence or character endowed with legendary status’.¹⁷⁸ Such ideas afford a certain autonomy to the image. It is an ancient notion which nonetheless persists, and indeed has of late been revisited eagerly by artists and curators who share Mitchell’s sentiments when he remarks, ‘I don’t think we can properly understand images without some reckoning with vitalism and animism’.¹⁷⁹ It is never far from accounts of the performativity of the image. Verwoert describes

¹⁷⁴ On the implications of such an understanding of the materiality of the image, Steyerl writes: ‘it is a matter of presencing and thus transforming the social, historical and also material relations, which determine things. Steyerl, ‘The Language of Things,’ *eipcp* (June 2006), accessed 28 September 2016, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0606/steyerl/en>.

¹⁷⁵ Keith Moxey, ‘Visual Studies and the Iconic Turn,’ *Journal of Visual Culture* 7, no. 2 (August 2008): 3.

¹⁷⁶ Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*, 2.

¹⁷⁷ Moxey, ‘Visual Studies and the Iconic Turn,’ 132.

¹⁷⁸ Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 9. The comment is also cited in Guerin and Hallas, ‘Introduction,’ 1.

¹⁷⁹ Mitchell in Asbjørn Grinstead and Øyvind Vågnes, ‘An Interview with W.J.T. Mitchell,’ *Image [É] Narrative*, no. 15 (November 2006), accessed 28 September, 2016, http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/iconoclasm/gronstad_vagnes.htm. On the exploration of animism in recent contemporary art practices, see Ansel Franke, ‘Animism: Notes on an Exhibition,’ *e-flux journal*, no. 36 (July 2012), accessed 28 September, 2016. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/animism-notes-on-an-exhibition/>.

Steyerl acknowledges this encounter with animism when she notes that the Benjaminian understanding that ‘things are never just inert objects, passive items, or lifeless shucks, but consist of tensions, forces, hidden powers, all being constantly exchanged’ is one that ‘borders on magical thought, according to which things are invested with supernatural powers’. And yet, she points out, it is also a classical materialist take. Because the commodity, too, is understood not as a simple object, but a condensation of social forces’. Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You & Me’.

contemporary appropriation as invocation, arguing that ‘tactically speaking, the one who seeks to appropriate such temporally layered objects with critical intent [...] must be prepared to relinquish the claim to full possession, loosen the grip on the object and call it forth, invoke it rather than seize it’.¹⁸⁰ This is a trope which enables him to do two things. It enables him, in the first place, to make a claim for the impact of images in the world, contentious and with real-life consequences. This is in contrast to the kind of indifferent play of empty signifiers with which appropriation has been associated by theorists of postmodernity. But secondly, and importantly, this trope also attributes this rediscovered power of enunciation and intervention to the artwork itself. It affords autonomy to the object, or indeed the image, in all its ‘thingness’—that is, the image as manifested, transmitted and transformed under specific material conditions. It reintroduces the idea of actions with discernible and meaningful effects after a period of paralysis. And yet the protagonist it reinstates is not, or not solely, the subject who deploys the object—it is also the object itself. This is the indeterminacy that Stimson suggests is proper to the aesthetic: ‘the aesthetic functions as a distinctive form of experience by virtue of being charged with unspecified vulnerability and danger, with openness, willing or unwilling, to the possibility of another world’.¹⁸¹

In his defence of the ‘factish’ (*faitiche*), in which reality and invention (or fact and fetish) are in fact revealed to be mutually constitutive, Latour draws on such ideas, writing that ‘what we fabricate never possesses, and never loses, its autonomy’.¹⁸² Fabricated entities of all kinds are mediators that ‘transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry’, confounding easy distinctions between subject and object positions as they do so.¹⁸³ These observations distil a sense that has recurred throughout this project, and its descriptions of the complex embodiment shaped by these drawings, on the part of artist, spectator, and participants of all kinds: that in addressing the complex, mutually constitutive

¹⁸⁰ Verwoert, ‘Apropos Appropriation’, 17. See chap. 1, n. 33.

¹⁸¹ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 25.

¹⁸² Bruno Latour, *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 21. He also draws on such ideas, of course, in his use of the trope of the icon, in his writings on iconoclasm

¹⁸³ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 39.

intersections of what Sven Lütticken calls ‘human-thing interfaces’, one might ‘go beyond a static dichotomy of subject and object’.¹⁸⁴ Simon Mussell argues that the artwork ‘operates within the positively charged nexus of personhood and thinghood, subjectivity and objectivity’.¹⁸⁵ It is a dynamic which, he suggests, precludes the emergence of subjectless objects at the same time as it ‘dethrones the constitutive bourgeois subject’.¹⁸⁶ In it, a tension emerges between a heightened awareness of materiality from an engagement with the object, and of a pronounced sense of immateriality, as the object emerges as an interlocutor, a collaborator of sorts, which exceeds our capacity to direct it. What is at stake in addressing such tensions, as is apparent throughout the accounts of the image on which I have drawn in my discussion of these drawings—from Stimson’s discussion of images as a ‘mode of being with the world’ to Azoulay’s description of the imbrication of photography with modes of co-existence between people and ‘*with objects*’—is the desire to bring the subject into a more productive, generative relationship with material and structural constraints.¹⁸⁷

HORIZONS OF EXPECTATION

These kinds of fruitful entanglements are part of the promise of drawing—it is what leads Taussig to pose the question of ‘whether what we call “image” as opposed to body, [...] can be so neatly delineated?’¹⁸⁸ Taussig discusses John Berger’s suggestion that there is a ‘corporeal attachment’ that develops between the drawer and the thing being drawn, under the conditions of sustained attention fostered in that encounter—Hanrahan’s ‘sustained “presence to” of drawing’.¹⁸⁹ But, Taussig suggests, the

¹⁸⁴ Sven Lütticken, ‘Art and Thingness, Part I: Breton’s Ball and Duchamp’s Carrot,’ *E-flux journal*, no. 13 (February 2010), accessed 28 September, 2016, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/13/61327/art-and-thingness-part-i-breton-s-ball-and-duchamp-s-carrot/>. Lütticken suggests that there exists ‘a long tradition of Marxian thought’ that, in ‘studying existing relationships in order to sketch possible alternatives’, seeks to do just that. Sven Lütticken, *Idols of the Market: Modern Iconoclasm and the Fundamentalist Spectacle* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2009), 112.

¹⁸⁵ Simon Mussell, ‘Object-Oriented Marxism?’, *Mute*, 28 August 2013, accessed 28 September, 2016, <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/object-oriented-marxism>.

¹⁸⁶ Mussell, ‘Object-Oriented Marxism?’

¹⁸⁷ Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, 167; Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 18 (italics author’s own).

¹⁸⁸ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 80.

¹⁸⁹ Berger cited in Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 80; Hanrahan, ‘Acts of Hubris’, xxvii.

embodied experience of an encounter, that drawing in some senses consummates, might also be an aspiration—‘perhaps’, he asks, ‘when drawing something fleeting, any corporeality that emerges [is] not so much a consequence of the drawing process as its motivation?’¹⁹⁰ I would suggest that we can discern the same motivation in drawings of images and artefacts of political antecedents—the pursuit of a elusive experience of the political. In this way these drawings articulate what Ross calls the ‘drastic reversal of horizon of expectation and space of experience’ that is proposed by Benjamin: ‘To all past epochs he ascribes a horizon of unfulfilled expectations, and to the future-oriented present he assigns the task of experiencing a corresponding past through remembering’.¹⁹¹

In the work of Plender and Reeve, attentive to the congealed forces of the historical image, drawing takes its place alongside a handful of different performatic strategies, to use Taylor’s term.¹⁹² What such strategies share is the ‘immediacy-provoking insistent positioning of the body’ that Chute associates with drawing.¹⁹³ It is this corporeality that gives them ‘the physical means of dissolving frozen images back into mobile practices, dead identities into live social acts’—they are, in Freeman’s vivid turn of phrase, ‘an acid bath for congealed meanings’.¹⁹⁴

Plender and Reeve’s work might therefore be understood to be something like a ‘haptic historiography’.¹⁹⁵ The term is one Freeman proposes, picking up on Laura U. Marks’s writing on ‘haptic visuality’ in relation to film, to describe practices of ‘negotiating with the past and producing historical knowledge through visceral sensations’.¹⁹⁶ ‘Haptic *perception*’, Marks writes, ‘is usually defined by psychologists as

¹⁹⁰ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 124.

¹⁹¹ Ross, *The Past is the Present*, 160.

¹⁹² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 6. Other strategies include, as we have seen, physical re-enactment; performance to camera; the distribution of publications; and the performative inauguration of an institution and a day of celebration.

¹⁹³ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 70.

¹⁹⁴ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 126.

¹⁹⁵ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 123.

¹⁹⁶ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 123. See also Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

the combination of tactile, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive functions, the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies'.¹⁹⁷ Marks brings that expansive frame of reference to bear on a phenomenology of visual experience. To think of film in this way, Marks suggests, is to acknowledge 'the effect of a work's circulation among different audiences, all of which mark it with their presence'.¹⁹⁸ The sentiment shares in Azoulay's attentiveness to the circuits of reception by which an image is shaped and shapes in turn. In Marks's account, film becomes 'impressionable and conductive, like skin'; it is 'tactile and contagious', 'something we viewers brush up against like another body'.¹⁹⁹ Marks's words describe an encounter between 'elements of the haptic and the visual' that, as we have already seen, is inherent to these drawings, too; one that is, as Chute suggests, 'a crucial connection for witness'.²⁰⁰ The work of Plender and Reeve constitutes part of a repertoire of embodied ways of knowing not only by dint of the physical demands imposed in its production, but also by the relationships established in its reception—their interest in methods of distribution and dissemination through self-publishing emphasises as much. Reeve and Plender's drawings, then, might fruitfully be understood alongside their other approaches to politically-charged histories in the terms set out in Taylor's description of performance—'simultaneously connoting a process, a praxis, an episteme, a mode of transmission, an accomplishment, and a means of intervening in the world'.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Marks cited in Freeman, *Time Binds*, 188.

¹⁹⁸ Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, xi.

¹⁹⁹ Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, xii.

²⁰⁰ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 15.

²⁰¹ Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 71.

To draw is to make be
more than one start.....

Clark Coolidge, with Philip Guston,
*Baffling Means: Writings/Drawings by
Clark Coolidge and Philip Guston, 1972*

5

AFTERWORD

Drawing, Taussig writes, ‘intervenes in the reckoning of reality in ways that writing and photography do not’.¹ He is interested, he explains, ‘in what happens in the act of drawing or in the act of looking at a drawing and how that relates to thinking and acting in the world’.² In this thesis, I have sought to interrogate the kinds of intervention at stake in drawings which return compulsively to images and artefacts of political upheaval and protest—scenes, as Jane M. Gaines puts it, ‘of sensuous struggle’.³ Prompted by the question, ‘Did documentary films ever produce social change?’ Gaines (much like Freeman) takes a cue from theorisations of film’s ability to induce a visceral response.⁴ What Gaines calls ‘political mimesis’ is, she explains, ‘about a relationship between bodies in two locations—on the screen and in the audience—and it is the starting point for the consideration of what the one body makes the other do’.⁵ She begins with the premise that ‘the whole rationale behind documenting political battles on film, as opposed to producing written records, is to make struggle visceral, to go beyond the abstractly intellectual to produce a bodily swelling’.⁶ What is more, ‘the makers also use images of bodies in struggle *because they want audiences to carry on that same struggle*’.⁷

The works I discuss shape an experience of political subjecthood that is embodied and affectively inflected. In seeking to articulate how that experience plays out, I have elaborated an understanding of political engagement quite distinct from the one suggested by the charged scenes depicted in these drawings. The purpose of that distinction has been in the first place to find a way to discuss iconographies of political upheaval, elaborated across images which often distill complex political encounters into particularly charged events, without falling into the trap of

¹ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 13. See chap. 1, n. 106.

² Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 80.

³ Jane M. Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, ed. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 90.

⁴ Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 90. In particular, Gaines makes reference to Linda Williams’s work on ‘body genres’, genres of film that ‘make the body do things’—horror, melodrama, pornography, etc. Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 84.

⁵ Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 90.

⁶ Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 91.

⁷ Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 91 (italics author’s own).

‘[manufacturing] the political as a solo performance [...] an event distinguished from an infinite spectrum of interlocking performances of speech, the gaze, an action’.⁸ I have sought to bring an expanded, more nuanced and precise idea of political efficacy to bear upon these works, one that is capable of negotiating the complex skein of associations (positive and negative) that these images provoke.⁹ But Gaines’s work suggests the possibility, not to be overlooked, that there might be a more direct relationship between the bodies depicted in images of political action and the body of the viewer of such images—what she calls a ‘powerful mirroring effect’, such as we see at work in genre films, for example.¹⁰ To propose such an effect in relation to political images is to assume, as Gaines puts it, ‘a mimetic faculty on the part of [the] audience—the ability to “body back,” to carry on the same struggle’.¹¹ And yet any such response, of course, would inevitably play out unpredictably, in ways charged with complex and conflicted associations and emotions.

Gaines points out that, because ‘one tends to think of sense and body in terms of sexuality’, the embodied and visceral aspects of visual experience have not often been taken into account in discussions of ‘seriously asexual’ political documentary.¹² And yet, she suggests, there is much to be learnt from bringing such insights to bear on an understanding of what happens when we are confronted with scenes of protest, ‘of rioting, images of bodies clashing, of bodies moving as a mass’.¹³ Gaines’s emphasis on visceral mimetic responses to the political image in film is apposite to a discussion of drawings, too. As Taussig suggests, ‘if drawing is corporeal, it must be the mediator par excellence between body and image, and looking at a drawing must have some of

⁸ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 109. See chap. 1, n. 15.

⁹ Gaines acknowledges that her essay—which is a ‘preliminary consideration’ of the concept of political mimesis—does not discuss ‘the viewing subject who has the potential to exercise the mimetic faculty’. Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 100.

¹⁰ Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 90. Gaines, drawing on work by Williams, describes ‘films that make audience members want to kick and yell, films that make them want to do something *because of the conditions in the world of the audience*’. Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 90 (italics author’s own).

¹¹ Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 90.

¹² Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 90.

¹³ Gaines, ‘Political Mimesis’, 90. Gaines is referring in this description to Sergei Eisenstein’s *Strike* (1924).

this as well'.¹⁴ What underpins Taussig's reflections on corporeality and the visceral aspects of our encounters with images—with the 'physiognomic aspects of visual worlds'—is a Benjaminian understanding of mimesis.¹⁵

Freeman suggests that, for Benjamin, mimesis 'denotes a kinaesthetic apprehension of the object world, albeit one subject to changes in technology that variously demand, repress, or transform the kinetic element of perception, and in doing so historicise this object-world'.¹⁶ This is mimesis as 'the Surrealist "grab," the prehensile "seize of appropriation'.¹⁷ Pursuing a similar line of thought, Taussig writes that 'to ponder mimesis', is to become sooner or later caught [...] in sticky webs of copy *and* contact, image *and* bodily involvement of the perceiver in the image'.¹⁸ It is this that gives rise to the kind of situated knowledge of which Haraway writes, calling for a renegotiated understanding of visibility.¹⁹ Mimesis, Gaines notes, 'has long been associated with not-knowing, or "only imitating," reproducing without adding anything, and learning by means of the body without the engagement of the mind'.²⁰ And yet, as Taussig's Benjaminian account makes clear, mimetic practices open onto a kind of 'embodied knowing' valued not, as Haraway points out, 'for its own sake, but for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings that situated knowledges makes possible'.²¹ Here, as Taussig observes, 'the very concept of "knowing" something becomes displaced by a "relating to"'.²²

Ultimately, then, the political character of the works surveyed here does not inhere in a particular subject matter or formal approach; it is only in their capacity to engage

¹⁴ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, 80.

¹⁵ Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity* (London: Routledge, 1993), 24. Gaines makes reference to Taussig's account of mimesis in her essay. See Gaines, 'Political Mimesis', 93-94.

¹⁶ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 126. See chap. 1, n. 43.

¹⁷ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 125.

¹⁸ Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, 21.

¹⁹ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', 188. See chap. 1, n. 79.

²⁰ Gaines, 'Political Mimesis', 93-94.

²¹ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', 196.

²² Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, 26.

audiences and perpetuate the work of reconstruction, in Azoulay's terms, that these drawings can claim to be political. Making this point about photography, Azoulay writes: 'Whereas the space within which people act is, as we have stated, always a political one, the photograph is not political in itself except to the extent that people make it exist among themselves, in plurality, in public'.²³ The works I discuss in this study constitute acts of political imagination not only by virtue of the subject matter to which they return, but also through the performative, contingent and anachronistic practices of relationality that they shape. As drawings, they do so in a 'tactile register', of the kind that, Freeman suggests, 'lends itself to [...] the achronic "correspondences" that Benjamin so valued: these are felt as well as seen'.²⁴ It is through laborious, corporeally-engaged acts of looking that these works shape an understanding of the image's interventions at the intersections of historical and political consciousness.

²³ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 54.

²⁴ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 126.

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