Abstracts

Duchamp and Dalí: Photographing the Naked Object

Haim Finkelstein

This paper centers on two photographs whose objects of focus define significant signposts in the two complex, at times paradox-ridden trajectories of Marcel Duchamp's and Salvador Dalí's respective involvement with photography. One of these objects is a white "threadless spool" seen in the lower portion of an anonymous photograph accompanying Dalí's 1935 essay "Non-Euclidean Psychology of a Photograph." The other is a readymade appearing as a white silhouette in a photograph of Duchamp's studio, one constituting an interim stage in his preparatory work on the *Boîte-en-valise*, or "Box in a Suitcase," a kind of portable museum of his works on which he worked from 1938 and practically until 1971. The photograph to which Dalí refers serves as a launch pad for an "interpretative" feat employing his paranoiac-critical method, presenting a complex tale of the changing circumstances of the threadless spool in the light of philosophical and scientific thought, past and present. Dalí places the spool on the opposite pole to metaphysical abstraction and closer to modern physics, thus arguing that it is non-Euclidean because its situation is defined not in terms of classical space and time, but in those of the theory of relativity. He then places the spool at the meeting point of modern psychology and physics, defining the photograph itself as embodying a psychological non-Euclidean dimension. The photograph of Duchamp's studio, with "Trébuchet," a coat hanger, as one of the readymades placed there, represents a stage in the complex process of preparing it for publication in the *Boîte-en-valise*, when the object, after being rendered separately in the style of a mechanical drawing, was whitened out. Later in the process, the detailed drawing was printed over the whitened area and the whole photograph was colored. The reason for whitening out the image might be associated with Duchamp's investigations of the notion of the fourth dimension, as described and developed in his notes over the years. I have found a significant congruence between his ideas in this respect and the stages of re-fashioning the photograph. Duchamp's "Trébuchet," in its pristine,

white, and naked state, forms part of a conceptualization process of the photo itself. The fourth dimension is virtualized through various symbolic actions of the kind employed by Duchamp. With this photograph as well as others included in the *Boîte-en-valise*, he challenges photography's conventional task of serving as a faithful documentation of visible reality. For his part, Dalí employed photographs over the years as conceptual tools, both as vehicles for the evocation of surreality, in the early years, and later as embodying a non-Euclidean psychological dimension or as vehicles for provoking paranoiac-critical interpretation.

Autobiographical Comics in Michel Kishka's *Second Generation: Things I Didn't Tell My Father*

Dalia Rak

Michel Kishka's autobiographical comics *Second Generation: The Things I Didn't Tell My Father* is a first-person account of his life as a member of the second generation of Holocaust survivors in relation to the 'other' – his father, the Holocaust survivor. The main challenge facing the autobiographer is turning the course of his life events into words and images while committing himself to factual truth. Kishka's comics integrates reality into the fabric of the graphic novel. By treating the heavily charged subject of the Holocaust via literary-poetic and artistic-visual means, his comics turns into a comprehensive literary-visual creation. Kishka uses intertextual allusions from different artistic fields, such as literature, cinema, painting, and photography, in addition to other poetic means utilized in the visual images, such as dreams, parallelisms, and metonymies that illustrate human situations. Humor is Kishka's main means of expression in dealing with being a member of the second generation of Holocaust survivors and with the ethical-aesthetic dilemma facing every autobiographer: exposing the other's life with criticism and judgment. Eventually, Kishka's ethical dilemma results in love and reconciliation following a process of identification, understanding, compassion, and forgiveness towards his father, who experienced the horrors of the Holocaust.

Between Courtly Ideal and Christian Purity: How Do the Female Characters in Disney Films Reflect the Medieval Feminine Ideal?

Daniel Wolter

This study explores how the feminine ideal and the desired characteristics for women from the Middle Ages, as depicted in etiquette books and Gothic sculpture from that period, are reflected in the female characters of two Disney films set against a medieval backdrop: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). The goal of this research is to uncover how the medieval feminine ideal merged with the neo-medievalism and conservatism of Walt Disney in the United States during the 1930s and 1950s, leading to the creation of these female characters. Unlike the methods of conveying desired social norms regarding gender roles during the Middle Ages, where one had to visit a church or read manuscripts in order to encounter these messages, twentieth-century American audiences received them via Disney films. These films had a lasting impact on communicating gender role expectations, leaving a significant impression on many generations of viewers since their release. This article examines how these films, set in a medieval context, represent the feminine ideal of that period and discusses the connection between this ideal and Walt Disney's attitudes, beliefs, and vision regarding gender relations and the ideal of femininity.

Intentional Prayer: Bernini's Portrait of a Papal Doctor

Lior Aviv

Between 1668 and 1673, Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) sculpted a portrait of Gabriele Fonseca (Fig. 1), who was personal physician to Pope Innocent X in the mid-seventeenth century. The portrait is still in its original location in Rome in the church of San Lorenzo in Lucina in the Cappella della SS. Annunziata, also designed by Bernini. The Fonseca portrait belongs to a phenomenon of which there are more than a hundred works in Italy, all sculpted between the mid-sixteenth and early twentieth centuries and ninety of which are located in Rome. The uniqueness of the phenomenon is characterized by the display of portrait statues of the deceased in prayerful poses above the tombstone or memorial monument.

This article will attempt to provide explanations for at least two of the questions raised by Fonseca's desire to present his portrait in this manner: In what way did such a statue serve its patron, and how did it serve the beholder? Without underestimating the importance of the artist, in order to respond to these questions, this paper will concentrate on a number of topics to be dealt with

in the following sequence: consideration of the church in which the work is located; a brief overview of the gravestone in Western culture; an examination of the phenomenon to which these works belong; an introduction to the patron's life story; and an analysis of the relevant chapel. The information compiled should enable the reading of the Fonseca portrait in its original context so that credible answers to the questions raised can be determined. Thereafter, other works belonging to this phenomenon can be examined in the light of the understandings achieved.

We Didn't Know: Art, Protest, and Testimony in Argentina during the Dictatorship

Ronit Tal-Sultan (1967-2023)

This article focuses on the series of artworks titled *We Didn't Know* (*Nosotros No Sabíamos*) created by the Argentinian artist Leon Ferrari referring to the military dictatorship in Argentina. Ferrari's work, which includes press clippings and missing persons advertisements, serves to reveal, criticize, and protest against the severe violence that took place in his country, which resulted in the disappearance and murder of about 30,000 innocent civilians. Through a visual and theoretical analysis of Ferari's series, this article offers a new formulation of the role of protest artists as witnesses, art as documentation, and artistic practice as a means of disseminating information and forming collective memory. In this way, the article contributes to contemporary artistic discourse regarding art as testimony and reveals the limits of artistic freedom in times of dictatorships.

Along This Channel Jacob Ascends to the Neck: On Movement and Change in the Kabbalistic Tree

Eliezer Baumgarten & Uri Safrai

The kabbalistic *Ilan* (diagram of the ten sefirot) appears in many forms and configurations in manuscripts throughout history. The different forms differ both visually and textually: visually in the ways in which the *ilan* is designed and the sefirot are organized on the page; textually in the selection of texts that the creators of the *ilanot* deliberately chose to implement in them. This phenomenon of combining text with a visual element, known as 'icono-text,' raises several questions: How should this object be 'read'? Is there a certain order for reading it, and was it even meant to be read? This article offers initial directions for dealing with these questions by focusing on the *ilanot* related to

R. Joseph Gikatilla, a Castilian Kabbalist active at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

These *ilanot* are divided into three families. At the center of each family, we can identify a certain biblical character, which creates an internal narrative within the *ilan* itself. The first family includes *ilanot* that present King David at the center and describe his war against the demonic forces who seek to break into the holy realm. The second family includes *ilanot* where we find the figure of Jacob at the center, which display his confrontation with Laban and Esau. In the third family, we have *ilanot* in which Moses is placed at the center, which deal with questions such as learning the Torah and observing the commandments. The examination of the texts implemented in these *ilanot* allows us to establish a complete and coherent narrative in each of the groups and provides interesting directions concerning the role and purpose of the *ilanot* and their meaning in the eyes of their creators.

Visualizing Kabbalistic Secrets—The Open Book Motif in Michael Sgan-Cohen's Art

Emma Gashinsky

This article explores the open book as a pivotal motif in the art of Michael Sgan-Cohen, contending that it serves as a visual interpretation of biblical and kabbalistic themes, resembling a midrashic commentary. The recurrent presence of the book motif in Sgan-Cohen's oeuvre, previously unexamined in this light, expresses notions concerning the cosmic and ontological nature of the Torah, the relationship between divine and human creativity, and the elusive essence of divinity. Understanding the meaning of the book motif requires an interdisciplinary approach, considering both the artworks and the conceptual and physical space in which they originated. Sgan-Cohen's private home library, replete with Jewish esoteric texts and related scholarly studies, serves as a crucial backdrop. By delving into the artist's library, this study aims to shed light on the interplay between Sgan-Cohen's visual creations and Jewish kabbalistic traditions. The discussion underscores the unique fusion of kabbalistic interpretations of Genesis, post-conceptual art, and theories of language and deconstruction within Sgan-Cohen's oeuvre. The analysis spans from well-known to obscure aspects, focusing on Sgan-Cohen's strategies for depicting visibility, concealment, and the ironic representation of secrets under erasure. Drawing inspiration from seminal Jewish texts, namely, *Sefer Yetzirah* (*Book of Creation*) and the *Zohar* (*Book of Splendor*), these representations coalesce into a unique cultural stance and a reflective celebration of *ars poetica*.

Crossing Glances: The Use of Multivalent Iconography in the Analysis of the Gosport High Cross, Cumbria

Marganit (Niti) Cassapu

This paper examines the Gosforth Cross, a tenth-century monument from Cumbria, through a comprehensive art historical lens, arguing that it is characterized by a multi-faceted iconographical program that interweaves Christian iconography with Norse mythology. It posits this complex iconography as a critical interpretive tool for analyzing findings related to visual syncretism, showcasing the evident religious integration of these two cultures, particularly in the high crosses of the Insular (British Isles and Ireland) region during the early medieval period (c. 750–1050 AD). The paper delineates how the narrative program of the Gosforth Cross reveals the unique content of the depictions carved on its surface. While the monument is Christian in appearance and location, its content is exclusively drawn from narratives from Norse mythology relating to Ragnarok, the Norse apocalypse. The only distinctly Christian motif identified at first glance is the depiction of the Crucifixion, situated within a rectangular frame at the center of the eastern register of the cross. However, a comparative analysis of the figurative descriptions with Christian sources allows for the identification of Christian narratives within the iconographical program, indicating that the cross was designed as a deliberate interweaving of narratives from two different cultures dealing with a similar theme—the end of days. This approach not only evidences the syncretic integration process involving visual outputs, but also highlights the essential role of multi-faceted iconography in navigating and conveying complex cultural and religious narratives.

Unraveling Patterns: Exploring the Role of Repetition in Maya Atoun's Artwork

Noa Morduch-Simonsohn

This article delves into three distinct series within the body of work of the artist Maya Atoun (1974–2022), offering a perspective that has been relatively unexplored in previous analyses of her art. This perspective centers on the theme of "repetition," both as a recurring form and a conceptual motif. Through discussions of Atoun's series—*Daily Wonders* from 2004, featuring drawings; various works showcasing skulls starting from 2006; and the *Red Series*, comprising red ink drawings of geometric patterns on paper from 2022—this

article sheds light on the significance of formal and conceptual repetition in the artist's creative process.

The exploration of these series not only underscores Atoun's fascination with visual patterns crafted from recurring shapes, but also reveals her deeper interest in patterns as cultural symbols, tracing their manifestations across different eras. By emphasizing the theme of repetition, this article forges new connections within Atoun's oeuvre, which emerges as a complex tapestry of contrasts: beauty juxtaposed with terror, order against chaos, reassurance alongside threat, infinity versus singularity, light opposing darkness, and the eternal dance between life and death.