

Time and Presence

Curator: Kathryn Simon

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- Catalogue Essay
- List of artwork included in the show
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 - Gallery B Robert Smithson **Wall Text**
 - Robert Morris, Fred Sandback, Sol LeWitt (and possibly Art & Language and Joseph Kosuth) Gallery H **Wall Text**
 - *Spiral Jetty* Film Gallery D **continuous loop in gallery space**
 - *Derrida* Film Gallery F **continuous loop in gallery space**
 - Recent artwork Gallery G **Wall Text**
 - Reading room Gallery C
- Issues with the site
- Related Events (Details in body of this paper)
 - **Live: Curators Speak**
 - Marshal Blonsky Co-Curator, Philosophy
 - Anne Reynolds Art Co-Curator, Art
 - Kathryn Simon Senior Curator, Concept

- Two Panel Discussions
 - On Time and Presence: Minimalism
 - (Are you) Experienced: Contemporary Art
- Films
- o Supplemental Material for the Reading Room

It was a dark night and there were no lights or shoulder markers, lines, railings or anything at all except the dark pavement moving through the landscape of the flats, rimmed by hills in the distance, but punctuated by stacks, towers, fumes and colored lights. This drive was a revealing experience. The road and much of the landscape was artificial, and yet it couldn't be called a work of art. On the other hand, it did something for me that art had never done. At first I didn't know what it was, but its effect was to liberate me from many of the views I had had about art. It seemed that there had been a reality there which had not had any expression in art.

The experience on the road was something mapped out but not socially recognized. I thought to myself, it ought to be clear that's the end of art. Most paintings look pretty pictorial after that. There is no way you can frame it, you just have to experience it.

-Tony Smith, sculptor, a conversation with Sam Wagstaff Jr. about his midnight drive through the industrial parks of the New Jersey Meadowlands on the then unfinished New Jersey Turnpike, 1959.

Tony Smith/Gallery A

Entrance to show: Playing at a barely audible level is a recording of cars passing on the New Jersey turnpike after midnight. Considering creating a subtle play of shadows moving across the walls in this entering gallery very subtle-not tricky.

Wall Text “The end of art” (above) written on Lucite wall that serves as a divider between this gallery and the Smithsonian Gallery.

Sculpture:

Smog 1973

Die 1962 Painted Steel 6x6x6 ft.

Robert Smithson/Gallery B

Heap of Language

Map of Broken Glass (Atlantis) 1969

Map of Broken Glass drawing 1969

New Jersey, New York with 2 photos 1967

Alogon, 1966

Stills from Spiral Jetty, 1970

Photograph of Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty, Rozel Point, Salt Lake, Utah,

Photo by Gianfranco Girogoni

Untitled (Map on Mirror-Passaic, New Jersey), 1967

A Non-Site (on indoor earthwork), 1968

Untitled (folded map of Baeufort Inlet), c 1967

Untitled (Antarctica), n.d.

Drawing for Leaning Strata, 1968

Pointless Vanishing Point

Nonsite, Franklin, New Jersey 1968

Lemuria

Wall Text about Smithson's work and its relationship to this show as a germinal
artist

The Reading/Information Room/Gallery C

Wall Text

Timeline

Phenomenology _____ **Existentialism** _____ **Semiotics**

Edmond Husserl b 1859

Jean Paul Sartre b1905
Maurice Merleau-Ponty b1908

Roland Barthes b 1915

Deconstruction _____ **Postmodernism** _____ **Post-Postmodernism**

Jacques Derrida b1930

Jean Baudrillard
Jean Francoise Lyotard

Jean Luc Nancy
Paul Virilio
Gilles Deleuze

For thoughts about time
Henri Bergson

The Reading/Information Room/Gallery C

In this room will be a large table with chairs inviting one to look more deeply at some of the information behind the artists and the photospheres mentioned in the show. Selected work is available to print out from computers loaded with biographies, images, glossary of terms explaining Deconstruction, Semiotics, etc. In addition some of the central work of the artists and philosophers books and readings are in the room to read. Other computers are loaded with media of archival performance work from the Judson Theatre, Merce Cunningham, Philip Glass/Robert Wilson, Bill Viola, Robert Morris, among others.

Materials that will be in this room are at the end of this paper.

Spiral Jetty/Gallery D

Continuous showing of *Spiral Jetty*

Additional Media Room/Gallery E

Most likely will contain the Jaar piece or the Golan's interactive piece

Derrida film /Gallery F

This segment will be running on a dedicated large screen stretching across the small gallery. Other excerpts will run on screens embedded into the wall. A portion of the written version of the spoken text will be posted in shorter fragments (not yet determined) directly on the walls as wall essays. Excerpts from this text will be posted on the walls in this gallery.

From *DERRIDA*, the film

Wall Text

What do we mean by this word being? ...

The first question on the question that preoccupied me. Couldn't there be a more ancient, profound, and radical movement that is not questioning but is rather an affirmation. That's the first question...

In general I try to distinguish ---

Derrida

Wall text

The very work of a deconstruction may be at work, within the system to be deconstructed, it may already be located there, already at work, not at the center, but some eccentric center, in a corner whose eccentricity *arrives* (check this word not correct) the solid concentration of the system participating in the construction of what it at the same time, threatens to deconstruct. One might then be inclined to reach this conclusion. Deconstruction is not an operation that supercedes afterwards from the outside, one fine day.

It is always already at work in the work. Since the disruptive force of deconstruction is always already contained within the work—all one would finally have to do to be able to deconstruct given this always already is to do memory work.

Yet since I want neither to accept or reject a conclusion formulated in precisely these terms let us leave this question suspended for the moment- **Memoir Paul de Man 1986**

Other excerpts for wall text will be taken from the below:

The first question on the question that preoccupied me –has two parts
Couldn't there be a more ancient, profound, and radical movement that is not questioning but is rather an affirmation. That's the first question on the question, then, (pre) supposing that the first question, of philosophy concerns Being. What is 'to be', what is the sense of this or that, what do we mean by being, is there is not something presupposed in the way we come to understand Being?....

That is not something I invented Heidegger

Heidegger was suspicious of the Greek philosophers and their tradition of privileging the present participle of Being, meaning a presence of Being. Haven't we in our interpretation of Being privileged a modality of time that is the present? And the present of the present. As soon as one is suspicious of the presentness of the present, of interpreting Being as a presence of the present, are there not serious consequences that follow this desire for the present, the desire to interpret Being as presence?

This is the question Heidegger formulated in his own way, and I tried to reinscribe, to displace, in a different terrain or corpus, in texts Heidegger didn't interrogate.

Everything that I wrote about the trace in writing, which is itself, the very condition of non presence of the present. In order to access the present as such there must be an experience of the trace. A rapport to (with) something else to the Other. Sometime to something other than Being to the Other past., the Other future, or to Others in general, but an Other that does not appear as the present or presence. The trace in the way that I elaborate it, involves putting into questions both the questioning form of thought as well as the authority of the present or presence. That's my explanation of this philosophical debate concerning the authority of the question. I have a lot of respect for the question; I'm not against questioning since it's the condition of critiques and deconstruction. But to try to understand what comes before the question. What is the very condition of the question itself.

To ask a question, I must address someone, even innocent questions presuppose a primary affirmation. I address myself to someone else and I am saying 'its better we speak than we don't' its better that I relate to the Other than not. And so I affirm a sort of yes, a sort of 'anterior' experience. I say it in quotes because it's not a question of time. but rather what precedes the question with regard to the order of thought. Once the question itself is interrogated in this way then comes the question of the present followed by the work on what I want to call 'trace', writing, not just writing in the sense of what we write on paper or a computer, but in everything. There is a trace, the experience of a return to something else, of being returned to another past, present, future, a different type of temporality that's even older than the past and that is beyond the future,

I want to try to think of a past or a coming to be that is not just a modified present not future present's or past present's, but a different perspective with regard to the past or the future and this takes place in a rapport with the Other or Others.-*Derrida, One fine day...*

Art & Language, Frank Stella, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt / Roland Barthes /

Gallery H

Wall Text

...there is, however, someone who understands each word in its duplicity and who, in addition, hears the very deafness of the characters speaking in front of him-this someone being precisely the reader (or here the listener). This is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writing, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space upon which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. Which is why it is derisory to condemn the new writing in the name of humanism hypocritically turned champion of the reader's rights. Classic criticism has never paid any attention to the reader; for it the writer is the only person in literature. We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphrastical recriminations of good society in favor of the very things it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author. –Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, *Image-Music-Text*, Written 1968 / Trans.1977

Art Work

-Sol Lewitt

Wall Drawing #1166 Light to dark (scribbles), from instructions, July 2005, black pencil, 16' 8" x 34' (5.08 m x 10.4 m). Drawn by instructions by: Takeshi Arita, Matthew Bowne, Andy Cross, Mary Gagne, Steven Glazman, Steve Gunn, Ian Holman, Roland Lusk, Rob Nelson, Mike Paré, Daniel Reiser, D.J. San Felipe, Anthony Sansotta, Gyan Shrosbree, Michael Benjamin Vedder

One and Three Hammers, 1965

Variations on Color

-Art & Language

Secret Language 1968

-Joseph Kosuth

Hammer

-Frank Stella

Tuxedo Park 1970

Site Mile Bottom 1970

**Jim Campbell, John F. Simon Jr., Ann Hamilton, Felix Gonzalez-Torres,
Alfredo Jaar, Golan Levin/ Recent Work / Gallery G (narrowed to 4 artists)**

Wall text: Post-Postmodern Philosophers—quote from Nancy or Virilio

Jim Campbell:

Resurrection

Motion and Rest #5, 2002, Custom Electronics, LCD's 23 x 28 x 1"

-John F Simon, Jr.

CPU, 1999

Software, Macintosh, 280c, acrylic plastic 14.5 x 10.5 x 3.5"

-Alfredo Jarr

Bonjour Securite

-Ann Hamilton

Making Time-balls made of newspaper

-Golan Levin

messa di voce, 2003

tmema, blonk, la barbara

(An audio-visual performance & demonstration,
exhibited and installed as an interactive apparatus)

-Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Untitled (right billboard)

Perfect Lovers (clocks)

Stack of paper

Notes on Timeline and Reading Room / Gallery C or H / Wall Text

The quote from Roland Barthes, *Death of the Author*, will be posted on wall in the Derrida room or in the Art & Language room

Timeline (essay posted directly on wall)

A short bio, will also be posted directly on the wall of selected philosophers from the list above with citation of one or two significant works to give a context for the ideas being discussed

Gallery C The Information/Reading room.

A table with selections from each of these philosopher's works, books, articles that are referenced in the show and relate to the art, artists, art criticism and philosophic ideas will be on the shelves and installed in an interactive manner. There will be computers in this room where many of the essays will be available to print and take away. Separate computers will be loaded with DVD's of interviews with Derrida, Barthes, and some of the artists in the show speaking about their work. .

The bios that follow were taken from the *Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, Copyright (c) 2004 and from the European Graduate School website, where Jean Luc Nancy, Jean Baudrillard and Yve Alain Bois are faculty. These bio's will be also be available in the reading room and / or essays of works, where permissions can be obtained. I am advocating collaboration between European Graduate School and the sponsoring Museum to present Time and Presence as a panel discussion with 6 of the featured artists or their main conservators, critics and philosophers included in the show.

Robert Morris, Sol LeWitt, Fred Sandback, Piero Manzoni / Gallery I

Wall Text

In general I try to distinguish between what one calls the future and "l'avenir." The future is that which, tomorrow, later, next century, will be. There's a future which is programmed, predictable, programmed, prescription, scheduled, foreseeable. But there is a future, a 'to come', which refers to someone who comes whose arrival is totally unexpected, not predictable. For me, that is the real future. That which is unpredictable. The Other who comes without my being able my being able to anticipate their arrival. So if there is a real future beyond this other known future, it's avenir, it's the coming of the Other when I am completely unable to foresee their arrival.

- Jacques Derrida, speaking on film "*Derrida*"

Art Work:

-Robert Morris

Untitled (3 L Beams), 1969 refabrication of 1965 original

Slab 1962 painted plywood

Mirror Boxes

-Fred Sandback

untitled 1970, orange elastic cord

-Piero Manzoni

Achrome 1959

-Sol LeWitt

Serial Cubes

Related events:

- Related Events
 - o **Live: Curators Speak**
 - Marshal Blonsky Co-Curator, Philosophy
 - Anne Reynolds Art Co-Curator, Art
 - Kathryn Simon Senior Curator, Concept
 - o Two Panel Discussions
 - **Panel One-On Time and Presence: Minimalism,**
 - Michael Kimmelman, Critic Moderates

Lynne Cooke, Curator Dia

Robb Storr, Curator, Art Historian

Frank Stella, Painter (or Michael Heiser)

Philip Glass, Musician

Joseph Kosuth, Conceptual Artist

Anne Reynolds, Curator and Writer/ Smithsonian book

- **Panel Two: (Are you) Experienced: Contemporary Art**

Questions for discussion may include:-Issues of time, from biological to glacial, from the material to the virtual and transcendent, vulgar to the sublime ideas and the representation of multiple states of the present, past and future co exist in day to day experience and in the arts.

-Presence (being present) reflected in recent art work

- The challenges Curators face with presenting and installing new media.

-The role of the art critic and art criticism today, how does this discourse enter the field without destroying the fragile landscape -
From an artist perspective-issues of the apparatus.

Performative aspects as a distinguishing aspect of much of the art being made today and possibly a separate panel about time, presence, experience in new media and contemporary art.

Panelists: (total will be 5 speakers + one moderator)

- Bonnie Clearwater, Director, Miami, MOCA, NoMI
- Manuel DeLanda, Vigorous Thinker, Writer, Professor Columbia University
- Roselee Goldberg, Performance Curator and Historian
- Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery
- Laurie Anderson
- Alfredo Jaar, Installation Artist, Photography
- Brian Eno, Musician, Noted for creating Ambient Music, Founding member The Foundation of the Long Now
- Paul Virilio, Philosopher
- Lev Manovich, One of today's most influential thinkers in the fields of media arts & digital culture, Professor, Author

(this may end up in a slightly different format or as two panels if all the guest speakers accept-it promises to be a very engaging discussion especially with DeLanda, Clearwater (or Illes), Virilio and Manovich.

Films

- The schedule will include films of interviews with the artists involved with Minimalism, Earth Art, Conceptual, Installation art and Performance art. As well as some important Abstract Expressionist or Modernist conversations on film
- *Jackson Pollock: Tim Clark and Michael Fried in Conversation*
- *Painters Painting*
- Archival footage of documentaries and films featuring critics speaking about the work: Greenberg, Rosenberg, Fried, Lippard, Krauss, Rose, Judd, Michelson, Reynolds, Karmel, Owens
- Archival Performances from The Judson Church, The Kitchen, Meredith Monk, Happenings from: Fluxus, Yoko Ono, Allan Kaprow, Robert Morris & Carole Sheinniman, Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman, Philip Glass, Merce Cunningham, Yvonne Rainer, Bill Viola, John Cage, Steve Reich

About the Related Events program:

This program was designed to bring the public into contact with the Museum and its rich resources by engaging conversations with the individuals that have shaped and contribute to the cultural landscape of the arts. Programs as this provide stimulating social areas to investigate and discuss fresh

perspectives and new contexts with a diverse community. It is pressing to introduce the public to the museum and its resources in order to continue to find the financial resources critical to the independence and survival of the arts. The approach taken in the development of this show and related programs seeks a higher ground welcoming new members and patrons from all sectors and across all age groups. This begins a process of transparency where what goes on behind the scenes becomes evident and available to a larger community that can set the climate for the arts to thrive, and to find resonance in shaping a life. From extensive studies we know that this happens when children are exposed at an early age (think Kennedy Administration) and continues as a lifelong pursuit to enrich, empower, and ennoble one's spirit throughout life.

This program at the Museum will present a cross pollinated path into some provocative and critical issues of this time by offering a varied selection of dynamic opportunities to move away from daily concerns and production by entering a different kind of process, one that is not predetermined.

These events would be underwritten by sponsors and patrons and provide additional revenue and greater visibility for the museum and the exhibit.

Challenges of the site:

Presenting this show at Cooper Hewitt comes with a number of challenges. First among them is reconciling the Beaux Arts details throughout the interior of the Mansion with the spare Minimalist work in the exhibition. Beaux Arts style evokes old world European aristocracy, wealth and lineage. Instead of a brilliant juxtaposition of tendencies, the austere quality of the minimalist work in the exhibition makes the space feel dowdy and burdened; the ceilings are high but not high enough, the spaces are large but not vast, the height one aspires to is material and weighty not soaring and triumphant (overcoming or momentous). Minimalist work is stark, momentous; best experienced in natural or neutral space, suggesting natural light, large contemporary architecture, empty warehouse like spaces, or even white boxes. The architecture of the mansion does not advance the art or the thesis. The physical spaces of the galleries disrupt, they are one room after another often without easy circulation. Past shows of contemporary work at the Cooper Hewitt seem to require dissolving rather than featuring the architecture. The mansion has an index-Barthes²; it uses the decoration as a signifier of values. Minimalist work is the thing in itself, "What you see is what you see"-Stella¹. It is somewhat like a young exceptional artist being invited for a stay with a highly revered aristocratic host, that must, out of politeness, extend the invitation. Neither is at ease with the prolonged meeting, their values and priorities are not inimitable or even comprehensible to one another.

Museum spaces that would be better suited for this show would be The Guggenheim, MoMA, the Chelsea Museum of Art (Minotti Collection) or reconfigured for an expanded space like PS1, where the space would allow for a more thorough presentation of contemporary work reckoning with these same issues. These sites share a natural affinity with issues that live between art and philosophy and can accommodate large contemporary objects and multi media installations.

Materials for the Reading Room:

The references contained below be added to the literature that will available to take away from the 'Information Room' in addition to print outs of the wall text and the opening essay. These are only examples but are not final bio's or descriptions. They will be condensed and abbreviated to include their birth, salient contributions and signature work and ideas.

References for Philosophical terms and ideas

DECONSTRUCTION -- (from literary theory)

- meanings not fixed -- meaning "deferred"
- rejects authority of authors and
- rejects mimetic illusionist skill
- rejects essential "idea" ideal
- no ultimate meanings or fixed end points -- all contingent all relative

POST-STRUCTURALISM (from linguistics and anthropology)

- meanings not fixed -- meaning "deferred"
- rejects authority of authors and
- rejects mimetic illusionist skill
- rejects essential "idea" ideal
- no ultimate meanings or fixed end points -- all contingent all relative

phenomenology

modern school of philosophy founded by Edmund **Husserl** . Its influence extended throughout Europe and was particularly important to the early development of existentialism. Husserl attempted to develop a universal philosophic method, devoid of presuppositions, by focusing purely on

phenomena and describing them; anything that could not be seen, and thus was not immediately given to the consciousness, was excluded. The concern was with what is known, not how it is known. The phenomenological method is thus neither the deductive method of logic nor the empirical method of the natural sciences; instead it consists in realizing the presence of an object and elucidating its meaning through intuition. Husserl considered the object of the phenomenological method to be the immediate seizure, in an act of vision, of the ideal intelligible content of the phenomenon. Notable members of the school have been Roman Ingarden, Max Scheler, Emmanuel Levinas, and Marvin Farber.

Bibliography: See E. Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (tr. 1931, repr. 1989) and *Cartesian Meditations* (tr. 1960, repr. 1970); M. Farber, *The Foundation of Phenomenology* (1943, repr. 1967); R. Zanes, *Way of Phenomenology* (1970); M. A. Natanson, ed., *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences* (2 vol., 1973); H. Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement* (1981); R. Grossman, *Phenomenology and Existentialism* (1984).

existentialism <http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/e1/existentism.asp>

(ěgzıstěň'shelızem, ěksı-), any of several philosophic systems, all centered on the individual and his relationship to the universe or to God. Important existentialists of varying and conflicting thought are Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, and Jean-Paul Sartre. All revolt against the traditional metaphysical approaches to man and his place in the

universe. Thinkers such as St. Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal, and Friedrich Nietzsche have been called existentialists, but it is more accurate to place the beginnings of the movement with Kierkegaard. In his concern with the problem of the individual's relationship to God, Kierkegaard bitterly attacked the abstract metaphysics of the Hegelians and the worldly complacency of the Danish church. Kierkegaard's fundamental insight was the recognition of the concrete ethical and religious demands confronting the individual. He saw that these demands could not be met by a merely intellectual decision but required the subjective commitment of the individual. The necessity and seriousness of these ethical decisions facing man was for Kierkegaard the source of his dread and despair. Kierkegaard's analysis of the human situation provides the central theme of contemporary existentialism. Following him, Heidegger and Sartre were the major thinkers connected with this movement. Both were influenced by the work of Edmund Husserl and developed a phenomenological method that they used in developing their own existential analyses. Heidegger rejected the label of "existentialist" and described his own philosophy as an investigation of the nature of being in which the analysis of human existence is only the first step. Sartre was the only self-declared existentialist among the major thinkers. For him the central idea of all existential thought is that existence precedes essence. For Sartre there is no God and therefore no fixed human nature that forces one to act. Man is totally free and entirely responsible for what he makes of himself. It is this freedom and responsibility that, as for Kierkegaard, is the source of man's dread. Sartre's thought, as expressed in his novels and plays as well as in his

more formal philosophical writings, strongly influenced a current in French literature, best represented by Albert Camus and Simone de Beauvoir. In France the most prominent exponent of a Christian existentialism was Gabriel **Marcel** , who developed his philosophy within the framework of the Roman Catholic Church. Aside from Heidegger, the leading German existentialist was Karl Jaspers, who developed the central Kierkegaardian insight along less theological lines. Various other theologians and religious thinkers such as Karl Barth, Martin Buber, Paul Tillich, and Reinhold Niebuhr are often included within the orbit of existentialism.

Bibliography: See J.-P. Sartre, *Existentialism* (1947); J. Macquarrie, *Studies in Christian Existentialism* (1966); R. C. Solomon, ed., *Existentialism* (1974); D. E. Cooper, *Existentialism: A Reconstruction* (1990); D. B. Raymond, ed., *Existentialism and the Philosophical Tradition* (1991).

semiotics (this is not good)

or semiology, discipline deriving from the French linguist Ferdinand de **Saussure**. It has come to mean generally the study of any cultural product (e.g., a text) as a formal system of signs. Saussure's key notion of the arbitrary nature of the sign means that the relation of words to things is not natural but conventional; thus a language is essentially a self-contained system of signs, wherein each element is meaningless by itself and meaningful only by its

differentiation from the other elements. This linguistic model has influenced recent literary criticism, leading away from the study of an author's biography or a work's social setting and toward the internal structure of the text itself (see **structuralism**). Semiotics is not limited to linguistics, however, since virtually anything (e.g., gesture, clothing, toys) can function as a sign.

Bibliography: See R. Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* (1967); A. A. Berger, *Signs in Contemporary Culture: An Introduction to Semiotics* (1988).

structuralism

theory that uses culturally interconnected signs to reconstruct systems of relationships rather than studying isolated, material things in themselves. This method found wide use from the early 20th cent. in a variety of fields, especially **linguistics** , particularly as formulated by Ferdinand de **Saussure** .

Anthropologist Claude **Lévi-Strauss** used structuralism to study the kinship systems of different societies. No single element in such a system has meaning except as an integral part of a set of structural connections. These interconnections are said to be binary in nature and are viewed as the permanent, organizational categories of experience. Structuralism has been influential in literary criticism and history, as with the work of Roland **Barthes** and Michel **Foucault** . In France after 1968 this search for the deep structure of the mind was criticized by such “poststructuralists” as Jacques **Derrida** , who abandoned the goal of reconstructing reality scientifically in favor of “deconstructing” the illusions of **metaphysics** (see **semiotics**).

Bibliography: See J. Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (1976); J. Sturrock, ed., *Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida* (1979).

deconstruction

in linguistics, philosophy, and literary theory, the exposure and undermining of the metaphysical assumptions involved in systematic attempts to ground knowledge, especially in academic disciplines such as **structuralism** and **semiotics**. The term “deconstruction” was coined by French philosopher Jacques **Derrida** in the 1960s. In general, deconstruction is a philosophy of meaning, which deals with the ways that meaning is constructed by writers, texts, and readers. Extending the philosophical excursions of **Nietzsche** and **Heidegger**, Derrida criticized the entire tradition of Western philosophy's search to discover the essential structure of knowledge and reality, ultimately confronting the limits of human thought. As an extension of his theory of logocentrism, Derrida posited that all texts are based on hierarchical dualisms (e.g., being/nonbeing, reality/appearance, male/female), where the first element is regarded as stronger and thus essentially true and that all systems of thought have an assumed center, or Archimedean point, upon which they are based. In a deconstructionist reading, this unconscious and unarticulated point is revealed, and in this revelation the binary structure upon which the text rests is imploded. Thus what appears stable and logical is revealed to be illogical and paradoxical, and interpretation is by its very nature misinterpretation.

To a deconstructionist, meaning includes what is left out of the text or ignored

or silenced by it. Because deconstruction is an attack on the very existence of theories and conceptual systems, its exposition by Derrida and others purposely resists logical definitions and explanations, opting instead for a linear presentations based on extensive wordplay and puns. Deconstructionists tend to concentrate on close readings of particular texts, focusing on how these texts refer to other texts. Certain scholars have severely criticized this movement on this basic point.

Nevertheless, deconstruction, especially as articulated in Derrida's writings and as promoted by Paul de Man and others, has had a profound effect on many fields of knowledge in American universities, particularly during the 1970s and 80s. In addition to philosophy and literary theory, the techniques and ideas of deconstruction have been employed by scholars in history, sociology, educational theory, linguistics, art, and architecture. While the theory has lost much of its intellectual currency, the general acceptance and popularity of interdisciplinary scholarship in the 1980s and 90s are regarded by many as an outgrowth of deconstruction.

Bibliography: See J. Culler, *On Deconstruction* (1982); R. Gasche, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (1986); P. Kamuf, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (1991) <http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/d1/deconstr.asp>

postmodernism

term used to designate a multitude of trends—in the arts, philosophy, religion, technology, and many other areas—that come after and deviate from the many

20th-cent. movements that constituted modernism. The term has become ubiquitous in contemporary discourse and has been employed as a catchall for various aspects of society, theory, and art. Widely debated with regard to its meaning and implications, postmodernism has also been said to relate to the culture of capitalism as it has developed since the 1960s. In general, the postmodern view is cool, ironic, and accepting of the fragmentation of contemporary existence. It tends to concentrate on surfaces rather than depths, to blur the distinctions between high and low culture, and as a whole to challenge a wide variety of traditional cultural values. The term postmodernism is probably most specific and meaningful when used in relation to architecture, where it designates an international architectural movement that emerged in the 1960s, became prominent in the late 1970s and 80s, and remained a dominant force in the 1990s. The movement largely has been a reaction to the orthodoxy, austerity, and formal absolutism of the **International Style**. Postmodern architecture is characterized by the incorporation of historical details in a hybrid rather than a pure style, by the use of decorative elements, by a more personal and exaggerated style, and by references to popular modes of building.

Practitioners of postmodern architecture have tended to reemphasize elements of metaphor, symbol, and content in their credos and their work. They share an interest in mass, surface colors, and textures and frequently use unorthodox building materials. However, because postmodern architects have in common only a relatively vague ideology, the style is extremely varied. Greatly affected by the writings of Robert **Venturi**, postmodernism is evident in Venturi's

buildings and, among others, in the work of Denise Scott Brown, Michael **Graves** , Robert A. M. **Stern** , Arata **Isozaki** , and the later work of Philip **Johnson** .

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contemporary art

the art of the late 20th cent. and early 21st cent., both an outgrowth and a rejection of **modern art** . As the force and vigor of **abstract expressionism** diminished, new artistic movements and styles arose during the 1960s and 70s to challenge and displace modernism in painting, sculpture, and other media. Improvisational and **Dada** -like styles employed in the early 1960s and thereafter by Robert **Rauschenberg** and Jasper **Johns** had widespread influence, as did

the styles of many other artists. The most significant of the often loosely defined movements of early contemporary art included **pop art** , characterized by commonplace imagery placed in new aesthetic contexts, as in the work of such figures as Andy **Warhol** and Roy **Lichtenstein** ; the optical shimmerings of the international **op art** movement in the paintings of Bridget **Riley** , Richard Anusiewicz, and others; the cool abstract images of **color-field painting** in the work of artists such as Ellsworth **Kelly** and Frank **Stella** (with his shaped-canvas innovations); the lofty intellectual intentions and stark abstraction of conceptual art by Sol **LeWitt** and others; the hard-edged hyperreality of **photorealism** in works by Richard **Estes** and others; the spontaneity and multimedia components of **happenings** ; and the monumentality and environmental consciousness of **land art** by artists such as Robert **Smithson** . One of the most long-lived of these movements was the abstract development known as **minimalism** , which emphasized the least discernible variation of technique in painting, sculpture, and other media. Taken together, these many approaches to art represented a wholesale rejection of the tenets of modernism—e.g., its optical formalism, high seriousness, utopianism, social detachment, invocation of the subconscious, and elitism—and marked the beginning of a new era in art. In their many manifestations, these movements and those styles that followed have come to be grouped under the umbrella term of **postmodernism** . For the most part, this art is one of pluralism and eclecticism. In fact, the very lack of a uniform organizing principle or ideology is one of the most important hallmarks of postmodern art. Nonetheless, within the enormous diversity certain tendencies, trends, and

movements can be discerned.

.Among other contemporary “neo” styles are the cool “neo-geo” abstractions of Peter Halley and others, the stark structures of neoconceptualism, the slick neopop of such artists as Jeff Koons, and the landscape revival represented by Diane Burko and April Gornik, among others.

Many new artists have simultaneously invoked and challenged art history, rejecting the heroic stature of the singular work of art and the single (usually white male) artist and invoking the ubiquity of mechanically produced reproductions by employing sophisticated “quotations” or “appropriations” from prior works. This can be found, for example, in Cindy Sherman's photographic recreations of paintings, in the multiple quotations of historic images of David **Salle** 's paintings, in the postmodern takes on Barnett **Newman** by Philip Taaffe and on **Manet** by Yasumasa Morimura, and in the nearly identical representations of famous images such as **Picasso** 's icon of modernism *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* by Mike Bidlo.

Also widespread among contemporary artists has been a repudiation of the idea that underlies most works of pure abstraction—that the work of art is a self-sufficient entity. Rejecting the exclusively self-referential images of abstraction and the constricted commercialism of the art world (yet often embracing the wider commercialism of a consumer society), the new art has sometimes manifested a marked if somewhat detached social consciousness, often expressed in issue-driven minority, gay (frequently **AIDS** -related), and feminist imagery. By and large, the inroads achieved by **feminism** in the 1970s have

been reflected in later decades not so much by the insistently female, body-derived 1970s imagery of Judy **Chicago** or Miriam Schapiro as by the full participation in the once mainly male-dominated art world of such varied artists as Jenny Holzer, Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Jennifer Bartlett, Elizabeth Murray, Judy Pfaff, Sherrie Levine, Barbara Bloom, Katharina Fritsch, and others.

Arising from the multimedia experiments of the 1970s, the widespread use of a variety of technology-based media has persisted into the art of the new century. Often included are elements of film, video, sound, performance (see **performance art**), and architecture (principally in installation art). Another trend that has widened the definition and scope of contemporary art has been the conceptually driven use of both photography and language as the substance of numerous works of art—in Kiefer's photographic collages, in Kruger's words and photographic images, in Bruce Nauman's neon phrases, in Lawrence Weiner's painted words, in Holzer's billboarded, carved, electronically reproduced, or otherwise created linguistic neotruisms, and in many other artists' works. Another contemporary art movement, **digital art** , was pioneered in the 1970s but did not become prevalent until the beginning of the 21st cent. Digital artists make use of sophisticated computers, software, and video equipment to create an extremely varied body of works.

Postmodern art has also blurred the distinctions between painting and sculpture (and sometimes architecture), with artists often including in their works a host of wildly nontraditional materials. Since the 1960s shaped paintings and painted sculpture have become commonplace, while the materials of art have

ranged from Rauschenberg's stuffed goat to Joseph **Beuys** ' globs of fat to the smeared body fluids of various contemporary artists. Moreover, a wide variety of spaces and places, both private and public, have become arenas for the frequently ephemeral work of many contemporary artists.

Later 20th-cent. and early 21st-cent. sculpture has assumed a central position in contemporary art and has followed the patterns of the various postmodern art movements, for example, the three-dimensional pop icons of Claes **Oldenburg** , Koons's purposely banal, often erotic figures, and the minimalist constructions of such artists as Carl **Andre** , Donald **Judd** , and Robert **Morris** . Other important trends in contemporary sculpture include an increasing use of mixed media and the creation of works that draw their meaning and impact from their architectural context and also emphasize the role of the spectator. This is as significant in the room-centered examples of installation art as it is in such large public works as Maya **Lin** 's **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** .

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Maurice Merleau-Ponty,

(mōrēs' mērlō'-pōNtē') , 1908-61, French philosopher. Merleau-Ponty stressed the primacy of perception as a mode of access to the real, but, unlike many phenomenologists, he affirmed the reality of a world that transcends our consciousness of it. In his studies of perception he laid emphasis on the physical

and the biological (or vital) as levels of conceptualization that preconditioned all mental concepts. This emphasis led him to a sympathy for Karl Marx's historical materialism, although he differed from most Marxists in regarding history as irreducibly plural and contingent. No single movement could claim to be the unique agency of the historical process. His study of perception also laid stress on the stratum of socially founded meanings that to him was intermediary between pure individual subjectivity and the objective existence of things. Since language was the chief repository of these meanings, he became interested, particularly in his later work, in the role of language in perception. Merleau-Ponty's works include *The Structure of Behavior* (1942, tr. 1963), *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945, tr. 1962), *Humanism and Terror* (1947, tr. 1969), *Sense and Nonsense* (1948, tr. 1964), *Adventures of the Dialectic* (1955, tr. 1973), and *Signs* (1960, tr. 1964).

Jean-Paul Sartre <http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/s/sartre-j1.asp>

(zhän-pôl sär'tre) , 1905-80, French philosopher, playwright, and novelist.

Influenced by German philosophy, particularly that of **Heidegger** , Sartre was a leading exponent of 20th-century **existentialism** . His writings examine man as a responsible but lonely being, burdened with a terrifying freedom to choose, and set adrift in a meaningless universe. His first novel, *Nausea* (1938, tr. 1949), was followed by *Intimacy* (1939, tr. 1949), a collection of short stories. Sartre served in the army during World War II, was taken prisoner, escaped, and was involved in the resistance. During the occupation he wrote his first plays, *The Flies* (1943,

tr. 1946) and *No Exit* (1944, tr. 1946), and the monumental treatise *Being and Nothingness* (1943, tr. 1953). Theatrically expert, his plays also express his philosophy. After the war Sartre's writings became increasingly influential, and his ideas began to reflect his interest in Marxism. In 1945 he founded the periodical *Les Temps modernes*. His other major works include the trilogy of novels *The Age of Reason*, *The Reprieve* (both: 1945, tr. 1947), and *Troubled Sleep* (1949, tr. 1951); and the plays *The Respectful Prostitute* (1947, tr. 1949), *Dirty Hands* (1948, tr. 1949), *The Devil and the Good Lord* (1951, tr. 1953), *The Condemned of Altona* (1956, tr. 1961), and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960, tr. 1963). He wrote several major studies of literary figures, including Baudelaire and Flaubert. His essay collections in translation include *Essays in Aesthetics* (1963), *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (ed. by R. D. Cumming, 1965), and *Of Human Freedom* (1967). Among his later individual essays are *What Is Literature?* (1948, tr. 1965), *The Ghost of Stalin* (tr. 1968), and *On Genocide* (1968). Sartre declined the 1964 Nobel Prize in Literature on the grounds that such awards lend too much weight to a writer's influence. Simone de **Beauvoir** , his close associate of many years, wrote about him in her autobiography, *The Prime of Life* (tr. 1962).

Bibliography: See his autobiographical *The Words* (1964); F. Jameson, *Sartre after Sartre* (1985); A. Cohen-Solal, *Sartre* (tr. 1987); S. de Beauvoir, ed., *Quiet Moments in a War: The Letters of Jean-Paul Sartre to Simone de Beauvoir*,

1940-1963 (1994); K. and E. Fullbrook, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre: The Remaking of a Twentieth-Century Legend (1994).

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/b/bergson.asp>

Roland Barthes

1915-80, French critic. Barthes was one of the founding figures in the theoretical movement centered around the journal *Tel Quel*. In his earlier works, such as *Writing Degree Zero* (tr. 1953) and *Mythologies* (1957, tr. 1972), he argued that literature, like all forms of communication, is essentially a system of signs. As such, he argued that it encodes various ideologies or “myths,” to be decoded in terms of its own organizing principles or internal structures. He was strongly influenced by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, and his ideas, as expressed in works such as *S/Z* (1970, tr. 1974) and *Empire of Signs* (1970, tr. 1982), became more eclectic. Barthes has had an enormous influence on American literary theory.

Bibliography: See studies by J. Culler (1983), P. Lombardo (1989), and M. B. Wiseman (1989).

Henri Bergson

(äNrē´ bĕrgsôN´) , 1859-1941, French philosopher. He became a professor at the Collège de France in 1900, devoted some time to politics, and, after World War I, took an interest in international affairs. He is well known for his brilliant and imaginative philosophical works, which won him the 1927 Nobel Prize in Literature. Among his works that have been translated into English are *Time and*

Free Will (1889), *Matter and Memory* (1896), *Laughter* (1901), *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1903), *Creative Evolution* (1907), *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932), and *The Creative Mind* (1934). Bergson's philosophy is dualistic—the world contains two opposing tendencies—the life force (*élan vital*) and the resistance of the material world against that force. Human beings know matter through their intellect, with which they measure the world. They formulate the doctrines of science and see things as entities set out as separate units within space. In contrast with intellect is intuition, which derives from the instinct of lower animals. Intuition gives us an intimation of the life force which pervades all becoming. Intuition perceives the reality of time—that it is duration directed in terms of life and not divisible or measurable. Duration is demonstrated by the phenomena of memory.

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Jacques Derrida

(zhäk´ dër&180;rädä´) , 1930-2004, French philosopher, b. El Biar, Algeria. A graduate of the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, he taught there and at the Sorbonne, the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, and a number of American universities. In his famously dense and complex writings he

refuted the theory of **structuralism** and attempted to take apart, or “deconstruct,” the edifice of Western metaphysics and reveal what he deemed its incompatible foundations. In *Of Grammatology* (1967, tr. 1976), for example, Derrida contended that Western metaphysics (e.g., the work of **Saussure**, whose theories he rejected) had judged writing to be inferior to speech, not comprehending that the features of writing that supposedly render it inferior to speech are actually essential features of both. He argued that language only refers to other language, thereby negating the idea of a single, valid “meaning” of a text as intended by the author. Rather, the author's intentions are subverted by the free play of language, giving rise to many meanings the author never intended. Derrida had a major influence on literary critics, particularly in American universities and especially on those of the “Yale school,” including Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, and J. Hillis Miller. These deconstructionists, along with Derrida, dominated the field of literary criticism in the 1970s and early 1980s. Influential in other fields as well, the philosophy and methodology of **deconstruction** was subsequently expanded to apply to a variety of arts and social sciences including such disciplines as linguistics, anthropology, and political science. Derrida's writings include *Writing and Difference* (1967, tr. 1978), *Margins of Philosophy* (1972, tr. 1982), *Limited Inc.* (1977), *The Post Card* (1980, tr. 1987), *Aporias* (tr. 1993), and *The Gift of Death* (tr. 1995).

Gilles Deleuze(1925-1995)

Gilles Deleuze was born in 1925 in Paris, where he continued to live his entire life except for short periods of his youth. His father was a veteran of World War I and an engineer. His brother was arrested for resistance activities during the German occupation of France and was killed on route to Auschwitz.

From 1944 to 1948 he went on to study philosophy at the Sorbonne where he counted among his friends Michel Buro, Michel Tournier and François Châtelet. His professors included Ferdinand Aliquié (a specialist in Descartes and the philosophy of Surrealism), Georges Canguilhem (Foucault's supervisor), and Jean Hyppolite (a specialist in Hegelian philosophy). He gained his aggregation in philosophy in 1948, then taught philosophy in various Paris lycées until 1957. In 1953 he published his first book, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, on David Hume. In 1957 he began teaching history of philosophy at the Sorbonne, and from 1960-64 he was a researcher with the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique.

Deleuze held a number of assistant teaching positions in universities over the next ten years, and in 1962 he published *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. It was during this time that he began a long-standing friendship with Michel Foucault. They met one another at the home of Jules Vuillemin, when Foucault was petitioning to have Deleuze nominated for a position at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. Deleuze taught from 1964-69 at the University of Lyon, then took a position as professor of philosophy at Vincennes at the behest of Foucault. In 1968 Deleuze published his doctoral thesis comprised of a major

thesis, *Différence et répétition (Difference and Repetition)*, and a minor thesis, *Spinoza et le problèmes de l'expression (Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza)*. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze works with the nature of thought, identity and time, and the book poses a significant disruption to the canonical traditions of philosophy, an attitude that he would become known for in his body of work in general. 1968 would also mark the first major incidence of pulmonary illness that would weigh on Deleuze his entire life.

Deleuze was among the first thinkers to register the events of May 1968 in conceptual terms. His response to the student uprisings combined with his elegant ability to think through the various disciplines of politics, psychoanalysis, literature and philosophy, made him a celebrated philosopher of the generation. In 1969 he took a teaching position at the experimental University of Paris VII, and he continued to teach here until his retirement in 1987. It was at Paris VII that he met Félix Guattari, who became his partner in writing a number of influential texts including the two volumes of **Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Anti-Oedipus (1972) and A Thousand Plateaus (1980)**. These texts came about as an expression of the political environment in France during May 1968, and are a continued development of many of Deleuze's philosophical concerns such as commitment to an immanent ontology, the position of the social and political at the core of being, and the affirmation of difference over transcendental hierarchy. The unique manner in which these books were written, between the two writers and not separately, allows for the emergence in the text of elements that cannot be attributed to either one of the authors on their own. Many ideas

central to Deleuze's work undergo a fascinating transformation and move in unexpected directions, or as Deleuze and Guattari might put it, they undergo a process of "becoming." In an interview Deleuze talks about the intent and process in the making of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*:

"We don't claim to have written a madman's book, just a book in which one no longer knows-and there is no reason to know- who exactly is speaking, a doctor, a patient, an untreated patient, a present, past or future patient. That's why we used so many writers and poets; who is to say if they are speaking as patients or doctors- patients or doctors of civilization. Now, strangely, if we have tried to go beyond this traditional duality, it's precisely because we were writing together. Neither of us was the madman, neither of us was the psychiatrist; there had to be two of us in order to find a process that was not reduced either to the psychiatrist or his madman, or to a madman and his psychiatrist.

The process is what we call a flux. Now, once again, the flux is a notion that we wanted to remain ordinary and undefined. This could be a flux of words, ideas, shit, money, it could be a financial mechanism or a schizophrenic machine: it goes beyond all dualities. We dreamed of this book as a flux-book."

(from "In Flux" in Chaosology. By Felix Guattari, Semiotext[e], NY, 1995.)

He approached each philosopher he wrote about with the constructivist attitude, expressed clearly in *What is Philosophy?* (1991), that these re-readings are done with the motivation of creating concepts that are not pre-existing. He was a strong critic of the history of philosophy, its hegemonic structuring of thought and its traditional style of 'reflection': "The philosopher creates, he doesn't reflect." He

wrote: "An image of thought called philosophy has been formed historically and it effectively stops people from thinking." *What is Philosophy?* was Deleuze's final collaboration with Guattari, who died in 1992. The book takes a critical approach to philosophy, looking at its presuppositions, its relationship to science and art, and the creation of concepts. They write that concepts are active and affective, rather than signifiers of the contents of ideas.

Immanence was a key word for Deleuze, returning time and again throughout his texts. The term refers to what he called his empiricist philosophy based on the empirical real without recourse to the transcendental. Deleuze insists that philosophy, rather than setting up transcendentals, must approach the immanent conditions of that which it is trying to think. Thought must create movement and consequences. His last text was entitled "Immanence: a life...". It was published only months before his death. His last book was a collection of essays called *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1993). By the time of its publication Deleuze's pulmonary illness had put him in severe confinement, making it difficult for him to write. He took his own life on November 4th, 1995.

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Jean Luc Nancy

born on the 26th of July 1940 in Caudéran, near Bordeaux in France. His first philosophical interests were during his youth in the catholic environment of Bergerac. Shortly after he obtained his graduate in philosophy in 1962 in Paris, Nancy began to publish. His work is from the beginning marked by diverse influences, from Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot to Descartes, Hegel,

Kant, Nietzsche and Heidegger. These authors are already evident in the very first books that Nancy published: *Le discours de la syncope* (1976) and *L'impératif catégorique* (1983) on Kant, *La remarque spéculative* (translated as *The Speculative Remark*, 2001) on Hegel, *Ego sum* (1979) on Descartes and *Le partage des voix* (1982) on Heidegger. After his aggregate in philosophy in Paris and a short period as a teacher in Colmar, Nancy became an assistant at the Institut de Philosophie in Strasbourg in 1968. In 1973, he obtained his Phd under the supervision of Paul Ricoeur, via a dissertation on Kant. Soon after, he became the 'maître de conférences' at the Université des Sciences Humaines in Strasbourg, the institute to which he is still attached. In the seventies and eighties he was a guest professor at the most diverse universities, from the Freie Universität in Berlin to the University of California. As a professor in philosophy, he was also involved in many cultural delegations of the French ministry of external affairs, particularly in relation to Eastern Europe, Great-Britain and the United States of America. Together with his ever-growing publication list, this began to procure Nancy an international reputation. The quick translation of his work into several languages enhanced his fame (Nancy mastered, besides his mother tongue, also German, Italian and English).

Nancy's first book appeared in 1973: *Le titre de la lettre* (*The Title of the Letter*). He wrote it with his philosophical partner Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe. Up until now, it has frequently been described as a critical study on the work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Nancy consistently refers to psychoanalysis, often in a critical way arguing that Lacan questions the metaphysical subject, but

does so in a metaphysical way. Since then, Nancy has continued to formulate his reservations against psychoanalytic concepts like Law, Father, Other, Subject, etc. While he contends that psychoanalytic jargon still bears some theological remnants, Nancy also thinks that a lot of its concepts are worth thinking through.

The book that Nancy into notoriety is *La communauté désœuvrée* (*The Inoperable Community*, 1982), at the same time a work on the question of community and a comment on the work of Bataille. Besides revealing his strategy of thinking, in this text one can also discover the main philosophical themes that Nancy is concerned with in his later work. These often circle around social and political philosophical problems, like the question of how to develop our modern society with the knowledge of political projects that start by trying to build society according to a well-defined shape or plan have frequently led to political terror and social violence. Nancy examines community as an idea that has dominated modern thought and traces its relation to concepts of experience, discourse, and the individual. Contrary to popular Western notions of community, Nancy shows that it is neither a project of fusion nor production. Rather, he argues, community can be defined through the political nature of its resistance against immanent power. This text led Maurice Blanchot to discuss the question of community, and also to consider Nancy's comments on Bataille, in his *La communauté inavouable* (trans. *The Unavowable Community in 1988*).

Inspired by Derrida, Nancy affirms in several interviews that after Sartre, something new and contemporary was born in philosophy. Nancy organized, along with Lacoue-Labarthe, the famous conference in 1980, *Les fins de*

l'homme, in Cerisy-la-Salle on Derrida and politics. This conference helped to consolidate Derrida's solid place at the pinnacle of contemporary philosophy. For Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe, this conference on Derrida and politics served as the starting point to deal with contemporary politics in depth. In the same year, they set up the 'Centre de recherches philosophiques sur le politique' (The Centre of Philosophical Research of the Political); starting from the demand to rethink the political and not to rest on the blinding rhetoric of our current democracy. Over several years, philosophers such as Claude Lefort and Jean-François Lyotard gave lectures on this topic, and out of this two books sprang up: *Rejouer le politique* (1981) and *Le retrait du politique* (translated as *Retreating the Political* in 1997). In 1984, Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe put an end to the activities of the Centre, because, according to them, its role as a place of encounter 'had become almost completely dissociated from that as a place of research and questioning'. The Centre had too often been the mere successive reception of speakers, rather than a common space with common concerns. Despite the closing down of the Centre in 1984, Nancy's concern with the question of the political, and that of community, has never disappeared.

In 1987, Nancy was elected docteur d'état (doctor of state) in Toulouse with the congratulations of the jury. His dissertation handled the topic of freedom in the work of Kant, Schelling and Heidegger, and was published as *L'expérience de la liberté* (trans. *The Experience of Freedom*) in 1988. His supervisor was Gérard Granel and members of the jury included Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Derrida. Since 1987 Nancy's thought concentrates primarily on a reorientation of

the work of Martin Heidegger. In *The Experience of Freedom* for example, Nancy's study of the notion of freedom within Heidegger's work, is not only a discussion of Heidegger, but also of Kant, Schelling and Sartre. Nancy is looking for a sort of 'non-subjective' freedom, a concept of freedom that tries to think the existential ground from which every freedom (thought as a property of the individual or a collectivity) starts. Freedom, instead of being, seen as the classical 'liberum arbitrium' or the subjectivistic free-will, lies in the being thrown into the world, and into existence. As Heidegger does, Nancy accentuates the fact that freedom in Kant's work is a sort of unconditional causality. In 'the second analogy of the experience' of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*The Critique of Pure Reason*), Kant argues that the specific form of causality that human freedom is - the subject acts 'spontaneously' ñ means that the subject must withdraw itself out of time, to not be determined by empirical causality. Therefore, as in Heidegger's *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, Nancy determines Kantian freedom as a autopoitional freedom, the freedom of a subject who 'forgets' that it is always already thrown into existence, even before it can decide to be free. So, one has to think freedom from its existential ground, its finite being. As long as one thinks freedom as the property of an 'infinite' subject, every form of finite being will appear a kind of heteronomy, as a restraint of my freedom'. My freedom, says Nancy, does not end where that of the other starts, but the existence of the other is the necessary condition to be free. There is no freedom without the presupposition of our being-in-the-world, and of our being-thrown into the existence.

Nancy also discusses in his work political themes like justice, sovereignty and freedom, and how they may apply in our increasingly global world. In 1993, Nancy wrote his book *Le sens du monde (The Sense of the World)* in which he searched for what we mean when we say that we are living in a world, or in one world; about what we mean when we say that the sense of the world is no longer situated above but within the world. The world, the existence, is our radical responsibility, he says, but by this he doesn't mean that we are always responsible for everything and everyone. He wants to make clear that the political, juridical or moral responsibility in concrete situations is based on a preceding ontological responsibility. From the moment that the measure for our responsibility is no longer given by a metaphysical or divine order, we are living in a world where we are exposed to a naked existence, without the possibility to fall back upon a preceding fundamental cause of the world. For Nancy, the contingency of our naked existence is not in the first place a moral problem. It is an ontological question. Whereas in a feudal world the meaning and destination of life was clear and fixed, contemporary existence can no longer refer to a general metaphysical framework. Nothing other than this contingency is the challenge for our global existence today.

In *Être singulier pluriel (trans. Being Singular Plural, 2000)* Nancy deals with the question how we can still speak of a 'we' or of a plurality, without transforming this 'we' into a substantial and exclusive identity. The fundamental argument of the book is that being is always "being with," that "I" is not prior to "we," that existence is essentially co-existence. Nancy thinks of this "being-with"

not as a comfortable enclosure in a pre-existing group, but as a mutual abandonment and exposure to each other, one that would preserve the "I" and its freedom in a mode of imagining community as neither a "society of spectacle" nor via some form of authenticity. The five shorter essays translate the philosophical insight of "Being Singular Plural" into discussions of national sovereignty, war and technology, identity politics, the Gulf War, and the tragic plight of Sarajevo. The essay "Eulogy for the Mêle," in particular, is a discussion of identity and hybridism that resonates with many contemporary social concerns. As Nancy moves through the exposition of his central concern, being-with, he engages a number of other important issues, including current notions of the "other" and "self" that are relevant to psychoanalytic, political, and multicultural concepts. He also offers original reinterpretations of major philosophical positions, such as Nietzsche's doctrine of "eternal recurrence," Descartes's "cogito," and the nature of language and meaning.

Nancy is also an influential philosopher of art and culture. Besides his interest for literature, film, theatre and poetry, Nancy also writes many contributions in art catalogues, especially in relation to contemporary art. Nancy has exhibited some of his own work together with the French artist François Martin, and he has also written poetry and theatre texts. One can read his philosophical reflections on the statute of art in general, in the book *Les Muses*, published in 1994 (trans. *The Muses*, 1996). In it, Hegel's thesis of the death of art takes a central role. There is also a text from a lecture in 1992 at the Louvre museum in Paris on the painting 'The death of the virgin' by the Italian painter Caravaggio. From Caravaggio's

painting, Nancy is looking for another conception of painting. The painting is not a representation of the empirical world - understood in the platonic, metaphysical way - but a presentation of world, of sense, of existence. In 2001, Nancy published *The Evidence of Film*, a book on the Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami. Nancy also wrote numerous texts on art in several international journals. Texts on Baudelaire, the relation between image and violence, the problem of representation in art, the statute of literature, on Hölderlin, on contemporary artists On Kawara and Soun-gui and on techno-music.

Nancy's active career had to take a break when he became gravely ill at the end of the eighties. He was forced to undergo a heart transplant (which Derrida talks about in his recently released book on Nancy, *Le Toucher*) from which his recovery was inhibited by a long-term fight with cancer. Out of sheer necessity, he put an end to all of his courses at the beginning of the nineties and quit his membership of almost all of the committees that he participated in. He has recently restarted most of his activities, but during these troubles Nancy never stopped writing and publishing. Many of his main works, most of which are related to social and political philosophical topics, were published in the nineties and he even wrote a text on his disease. It was published as a book in 2000 with the title *L'intrus: the intruder*. Today he is a remarkably active philosopher. He travels around the world as a popular speaker and thinker on many philosophical congresses and writes one text after another, and is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Strasbourg, and a member of the faculty at the European Graduate School. Copyright © 1997 –05. European Graduate School EGS.

Paul Virilio

Virilio developed what he calls the 'war model' of the modern city and of human society in general and is the inventor of the term 'dromology', meaning the logic of speed that is the foundation of technological society. His major works include [War and Cinema](#), [Speed and Politics](#) and [The Information Bomb](#) in which he argues, among many other things, that military projects and technologies drive history. Like some other cultural theorists, he rejects labels - including 'cultural theorist' - yet he has been linked by others with post-structuralism and postmodernism. Some people describe Virilio's work as being positioned in the realm of the 'hypermodern'. This description seems most apt, as Virilio works very much with the concepts and artefacts of [modernism](#). He has repeatedly affirmed his links with phenomenology, for example, and offers humanist critiques of [modernist art movements](#) such as [Futurism](#). Throughout his books the political and theological themes of [anarchism](#), [pacifism](#) and [Catholicism](#) reappear as central influences to his self-proclaimed 'marginal' approach to the question of technology. His work has been compared to that of [Baudrillard](#), [Deleuze & Guattari](#), [Lyotard](#) and others, although many of these connections are problematic. Virilio describes himself as an 'urbanist'.

Virilio's predictions about 'logistics of perception' - the use of images and information in war - (in [War and Cinema](#), 1984) were so accurate that during the Gulf War he was invited to discuss his ideas with French military officers. While Baudrillard famously argued that the (first) Gulf War did not take place, Virilio argued that it was a 'world war in miniature'.

The integral accident

Technology cannot exist without the potential for accidents. For example, when the locomotive was invented, simultaneously the condition of derailment came into being.

Dromology

Meaning: the 'science (or logic) of speed'. Dromology is important when considering the structuring of society in relation to warfare. 'Whoever controls the territory possesses it. Possession of territory is not primarily about laws and contracts, but first and foremost a matter of movement and circulation.'

Logistics of perception

In contemporary warfare logistics does not just imply the movement of personnel, tanks, fuel and so on but also implies the movement of images both to and from the battlefield. Virilio talks a lot about the creation of [CNN](#) and the concept of the [newshound](#). The newshound will capture images which will then be sent to CNN, which may then be broadcast to the public. This movement of images can start a conflict (Virilio uses the example of the events following the broadcasting of the [Rodney King](#) footage). The logistics of perception also relates to the televising of military maneuvers and the images of conflict that are watched not only by people at home but also by the military personnel involved in the conflict. The 'field of battle' also exists as a 'field of perception'.

War of movement

For Virilio, the transition from **feudalism** to **capitalism** was driven not primarily by the politics of wealth and production techniques but by the mechanics of war. Virilio argues that the traditional feudal fortified city disappeared because of the increasing sophistication of weapons and possibilities for warfare. For Virilio, the concept of siege warfare became rather a war of movement. In *Speed and Politics*, he argues that 'history progresses at the speed of its weapons systems'.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Virilio

Paul Virilio (1932-)

Paul Virilio was born in Paris in 1932 to a Breton mother and an Italian Communist father. Virilio was evacuated in 1939 to the port of Nantes, where he was traumatised by the spectacle of Hitler's Blitzkrieg during World War II. After training at the Ecole des Metiers d' Art in Paris, Virilio became an artist in stained glass and worked alongside Matisse in various churches in the French capital. In 1950, he converted to Christianity in the company of 'worker-priests.' Under military conscription into the colonial army during the Algerian war of independence (1954-1962), he studied architecture in Paris.

In 1963 he became the president and the editor of the *Architecture Principe* group's magazine. He was teacher at the École Speciale de Architecture until 1968, becoming Director of Studies in 1973. That same year, he became the director of the magazine *L'Espace Critique*, published by Galilee, from Paris. In 1975 he co-organised the Bunker Archeologie exhibition at the Decorative Arts Museum of Paris. In 1975 he was the General Director of the ÉSA and in 1989

Chairman of the Board. In 1987 he won the Grand National Prize for Architecture Critique. In 1989 he became the director of the program of studies at the College International de Philosophie de Paris, under the direction of Jacques Derrida. Then in 1992, he became a member of the High Committee for the Housing of the Disadvantaged. Among other projects, he is presently working on metropolitan techniques of time organization and the building of the first Museum of the Accident. Virilio retired from teaching in 1998. He currently devotes himself to writing and working with private organizations concerned with housing the homeless in Paris.

'Velocity' is the key word of Virilio's thinking, the post-modernity treasure, and the modern society capital. Reality is no longer defined by time and space, but in a virtual world, in which technology allows the existence of the paradox of being everywhere at the same time while being nowhere at all. The loss of the site/city/nation in favor of globalization implies also the loss of rights and of democracy that is contrary to the immediate and instantaneous nature of information. In his view, McLuhan's global village is nothing but a 'World Ghetto'. Virilio studied phenomenology with Merleau-Ponty at the Sorbonne. The creator of concepts such as 'military space', 'dromology', and the 'aesthetics of disappearance', Virilio's phenomenologically grounded and controversial cultural theory draws on the writings of Husserl, Heidegger, and, above all, Merleau-Ponty. Identified with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, the futurism of Marinetti and techno-scientific writings of Einstein, Virilio's intellectual outlook can

usefully be compared to contemporary architects, philosophers and cultural critics such as Bernard Tschumi, Gilles Deleuze and Jean Baudrillard.

The importance of Virilio's theoretical work stems from his central claim, that in a culture dominated by war, the military-industrial complex is of crucial significance in debates over the creation of the city and the spatial organization of cultural life. *In Speed & Politics* (1977) for example, Virilio offers a credible 'war model' of the growth of the modern city and the development of human society. According to Virilio, the fortified city of the feudal period was a stationary and generally unassailable 'war machine' coupled to an attempt to modulate the circulation and the momentum of the movements of the urban masses. Therefore, the fortified city was a political space of habitable inertia, the political configuration, and the physical underpinning of the feudal era. Nevertheless, for Virilio, the essential question is why did the fortified city disappear? His rather unconventional answer is that it did so due to the advent of ever-increasingly transportable and accelerated weapons systems. For such innovations 'exposed' the fortified city and transformed siege warfare into a war of movement. Additionally, they undermined the efforts of the authorities to govern the flow of the urban citizenry and therefore heralded the arrival of what Virilio calls the 'habitable circulation' of the masses. Unlike Marx, then, Virilio postulates the transition from feudalism to capitalism was not an economic transformation but a military, spatial, political, and technological metamorphosis. Broadly speaking, where Marx wrote of the materialist conception of history, Virilio writes of the military conception of history.

The Strategy of Deception (1999) is a collection of essays that discuss the various technological innovations on display during the war in Kosovo, as well as the shift in sensibilities that both flows from and brings about such innovations. By examining the role of information technologies and the goal of "global information dominance," Virilio asks the reader to consider the qualities of what was billed as a "humanitarian war". Rather than look at the media's image of the war as a heroic and tidy event, with few Allied casualties, Virilio digs into the ethical issues surrounding what he calls a "secular holy war":

"For want of being able to *abolish the bomb*, we have decided, then, to *abolish the state*, a nation state which is now charged with "sovereignist" vices and "nationalist" crimes, thereby exonerating a military-industrial and scientific complex which has spent a whole century innovating in horror and accumulating the most terrifying weapons, not to mention the future ravages of the information bomb or of a genetic bomb that will be capable not merely of abolishing the nation state, but the people, the population, by the 'genomic' modification of the human race" (*Strategy of Deception*, 57).

Virilio's critique looks beyond traditional weapons of war, to interrogate the way that new technologies are being implemented to the same effect. He moves from missile to satellite, charting the effects of the assault rather than the appearance, "In both cases, what one is seeking to eliminate is only life, the opponents energetic vitality" (*Strategy of Deception*, 52). He thus moves from nuclear war to information war. Virilio recontextualizes globalized warfare, which is now fought at the speed of light, through telecommunications, propaganda,

and social controls, and perhaps, supplemented by traditional means. The ultimate triumph of such a war (of any war, really) is an immobilization of the populace and/or an annihilation of the government, with or without bombs.

An absolutely crucial but somewhat overlooked aspect of Virilio's work from the beginning is his continuing allegiance to a gestalt theory of perception based in psychology. Later, Virilio broadened his theoretical sweep, arguing in the 1970s, for example, that the relentless militarization of the contemporary cityscape was prompting what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'deterritorialization' of capitalist urban space and what Virilio terms the arrival of speed or chronopolitics.

Virilio's doubts about the political economy of wealth are primarily driven by his 'dromocratic' conception of power. Virilio suggests that political economy cannot be subsumed by the political economy of wealth, with a comprehension of the management of the economy of the state being its general aim. Indeed, for him, the histories of socio-political institutions such as the military and artistic movements like Futurism show that war and the need for speed, rather than commerce and the urge for wealth, are the foundations of human society. Virilio is not arguing that the political economy of wealth has been superseded by the political economy of speed. Rather, he suggests that 'in addition to the political economy of wealth, there has to be a political economy of speed.' Hence, in *Popular Defense & Ecological Struggles* (1990 [1978]) and *Pure War* (Virilio and Lotringer, 1997 [1983]), Virilio developed his dromological investigation to include considerations on pure power — the enforcement of surrender without

engagement. Virilio argues a revolutionary resistance against the militarization of urban space. The only way to monitor cultural developments in the war machine is to adopt a critical theoretical position with regard to the various parallels that exist between war, cinema, and the logistics of perception. This is a view he develops in his trenchant critique of *The Vision Machine* (1994b [1988]).

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Jean-François Lyotard, Ph.D., born 1924 in Versailles, became one of the world's foremost philosophers, noted for his analysis of the impact of postmodernity on the human condition. A key figure in contemporary French philosophy, his interdisciplinary discourse covers a wide variety of topics including knowledge and communication; the human body; modernist and postmodern art, literature, and music; film; time and memory; space, the city, and landscape; the sublime; and the relation between aesthetics and politics. At the time of his death in 1998, he was University Professor Emeritus of the University of Paris VIII, and Professor, Emory University, Atlanta. Former founding director, Collège International de Philosophie Paris, and Distinguished Professor at the University of California, Irvine, as well as Visiting Professor at Yale University, and other universities in the USA, Canada, South America, and Europe. Director of the exhibition "*Les Immatériaux*," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Author of *The Postmodern Condition; Phenomenology; The Differend; Just Gaming; Peregrinations: Law, Form, Event; Heidegger and "The Jews"; The Inhuman; Libidinal Economy; Toward the Postmodern; Political Writings; Lessons on the*

*Analytic of the Sublime; Duchamp's Transformers; Postmodern Moralities;
Signed, Malraux.*

Additional quotes from works from, Greenberg, Fried and Deleuze will be posted directly on to the walls throughout the show further linking the artworks with these philosophical writings and the ground that Minimalism extended in order to demonstrate the prevalence of the ideas that were being investigated at the time of the creation of the art.

Short List of readings

- Husserl: Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology
- Sartre: Being and Nothingness, Nausea, In My Own Words
- Barthes: S/Z, Image-Music-Text; includes essay "The Death of the Author", Mythologies
- Derrida: Politics of Friendship, Ecrire et Difference, Le Voir et Le Phenomonologie, Memoir for Paul de Man, Archive Fever
- Henri Bergson:
- Gilles Deleuze: Difference and Repetition and Expressions, 1000 Plateaus
- Manuel DeLanda: 1000 Years of Non-Linear History

