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LEFT, RIGHT, INSIDE, OUT: ART AND COMPARISON

Mostafa Heddaya on the comparative complex

Allan Sekula, ***Meditations on a Triptych*****, 1973–78**, three C-prints, reading table, chair, printed booklet, dimensions variable**.**

SOMETIME IN JANUARY 2016, the Instagram profile known as "@whos _ _ _ _ who" went live. Who is who? A big question, in general. Anonymous and prolific, the account places apparently similar images, usually of artworks, in comparative assemblies published as single posts. At minimum, these posts feature two artworks, but often three, four, or more crowd the frame. Offered without explanation by their anonymous comparer, the resulting combos of artworks are blank screens for their beholders' projections. The act signed @whos _ _ _ _ who was inaugurated by a jaunty pairing of two works side by side: one by Nicole Eisenman, the other by Tyson Reeder—both pared-down portraits, bluish and casual in mark, of long-haired sitters identically cropped at the bust. The implications were left unspoken, fodder for the comments section. Was the perception of this formal similitude working historically, suggesting priority or source? Was it only a flash of eyeball cognition or gestalt feeling, a quick play of semblance in the happenstance time of a downward scroll?

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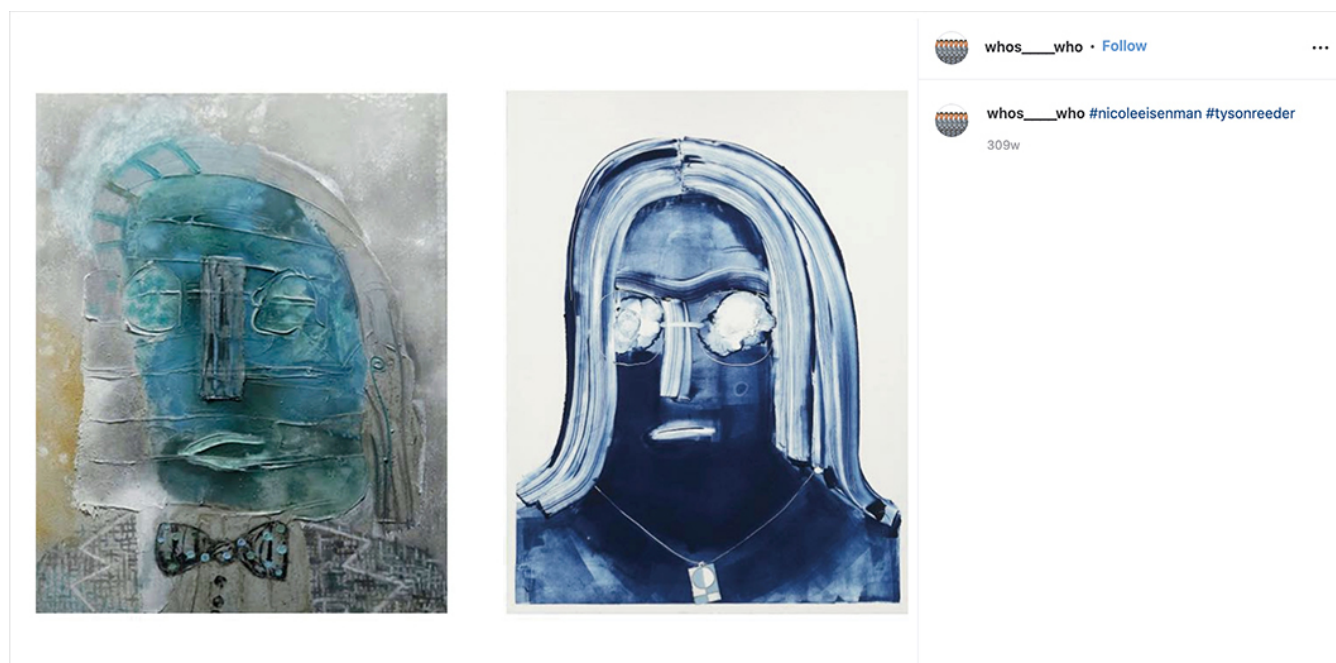


Screenshot of a January 5, 2016, Instagram post by @whos________who. From left: Tyson Reeder, *Untitled*,

2011; Nicole Eisenman, *Untitled*, 2011.

Soon other posts followed: two gingham-tablecloth abstractions by Michelle Grabner and David Stjernholm; a sextuple feature of leaning brooms and mops by, among others, Joseph Beuys and Lynn Hershman Leeson; encased Hoovers from Jeff Koons and (in a dynamite replica of the former) Noah Davis. The account's irreverent formal experiment has since amassed more than fifty thousand followers. Nevertheless, as far as the press has been concerned, @whos _ _ _ _ who would seem to be in the business of so-called callouts: a "vigilante Instagram account" devoted to "shaming the copycats" (or at least "debating issues of appropriation and plagiarism").[1] Such analysis was less diagnosis than projection—beginning with that first post, the account's comparisons have been presented unencumbered by all but individual artists' names, the juxtaposition remaining unexplained. A few years after its founding, in 2020, the account confused matters further, when, in an epiphanic burst, it delved into the realm of physiognomic resemblances, posting drolly paired photographic likenesses of artists and celebrities: Nick Nolte/Mark Grotjahn, Jeff Koons/Mister Rogers, KAWS/Eminem, Jamian Juliano-Villani/Patti Smith, etc.[2] This one-liner of facial recognition could also be read in the context of the psychosocial history of comparison that exists within social media, from Facebook's hot-or-not "FaceMash" genesis to a term that some psychologists have called "negative social comparison." This concept, first proposed in 1954, recently entered the popular consciousness (and the congressional record) through the leak of internal Facebook research into the depressive effects on users of Instagram's image-mediated comparative experience. Per one study in the psychological literature, social media's comparative frame induces "rumination," and "rumination" leads to depression.[3] Though this formulation is too neat to transpose wholesale onto art, the general social process by which image comparison and attention congeal into a depressive position is clearly at work in the production and reception of art's mediated comparative juxtapositions in the present.

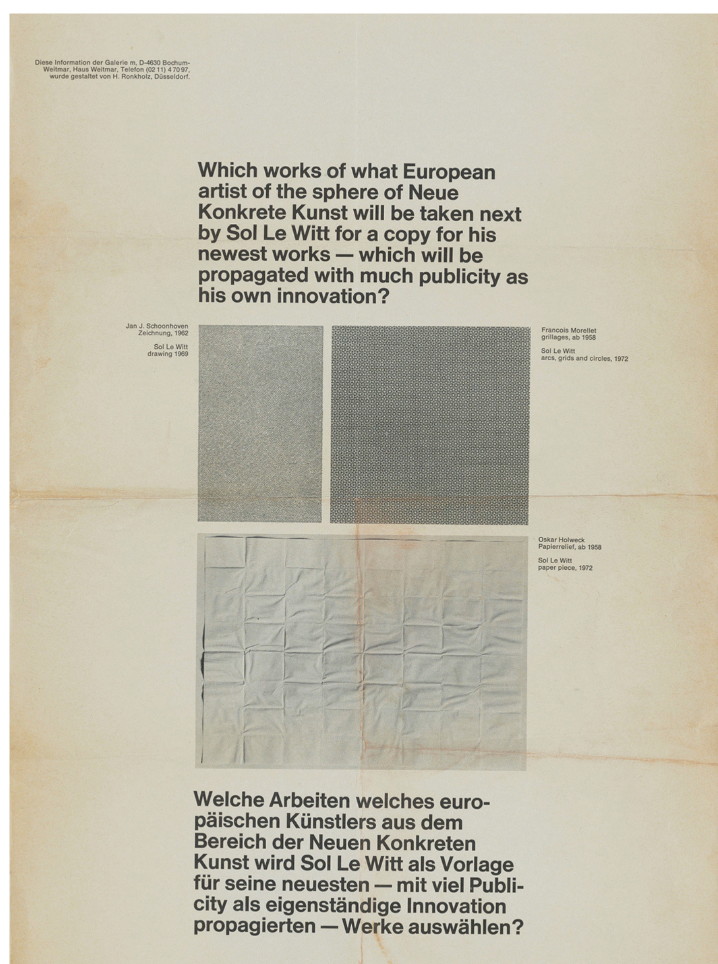
whos____who • Follow

whos____who #bunnyrogers #francestromt #markushofer #josephbeuys #lynnhershmar #liamcrockard

Screenshot of a January 17, 2016, Instagram post by @whos________who. Top row, from left: Liam Crockard, *Broom*, 2014–15; Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Alchemist Wand for the 21st Century* (detail), 2011; Markus Hofer, *Bildträger* (Image Carrier), 2004. Bottom row, from left: Frances Trombly, *Mop*, 2008; Bunny Rogers, *Lady Amalthea (mourning mop)*, 2013; Joseph Beuys, *Silberbesen und Besen ohne Haare* (Silver Broom and Broom without Bristles), 1972.

If deducing some motivating profundity on the part of @whos _ _ _ _ who is impossible, dismissing the operation as a gimmick risks missing the significance of its effects and occasion. Comparison, that unrefined art of getting a grip, has been returned to us again—indeed, the procedure has come to suffuse nearly every facet of art's production and display. It always has, at some level, but now it is as if we have been initiated anew into that lesson of the *Merchant of Venice*: "[E]very discourse that invokes a fundamental similarity . . . is a discourse of revenge."[4] The double trouble of the side-by-side comparison in art is that it is an expressive practice as much as it is a consequence of disciplinary expertise. As

"institutional charisma," it is unruly, dramatic. Disproving a similitude is hard, even with a shared assumption of historical causation, and asserting one is easy: Our world is full of "causeless likeness," as the critic and scholar Paul North recently put it.[5] The appearance and reception of @whos _ _ _ _ whos's posts recalls the accusation of plagiarism leveled against Sol LeWitt in a bilingual advertisement placed by François Morellet's gallery in the February 1973 issue of *Flash Art*. Taking up this controversy in 2015, the art historian Yve-Alain Bois invoked the problem of pseudomorphism, a structurally false—visually accidental—similarity, to exculpate LeWitt of a charge the artist had long dismissed as "petty gossip."[6]



Page from *Flash Art*, February 1973. Galerie m Bochum advertisement.

Increasingly acute, the critical, historical, and curatorial interest in coinciding artworks across time and space has generally pitched such shuffles as expansionary and inclusive, as extending the range of possible connections. In principle, we cancel the distances that

produce historical enclosures in order to broaden the historical and conceptual domain of art. In practice, even if dispensing totally with the internal history of art history, the critical faculty of bringing things together deals in its own material standing in the world, what used to be called "social basis." And if the new vectors of comparison are justified internally—with claims, for instance, to "decolonize" art or exhibition history—they cannot help but point back at the discipline's history, tracing the interior and exterior of its boundaries and capacities.

Comparison has been returned to us again—indeed, the procedure has come to suffuse nearly every facet of art's production and display.

In recent art, comparison is structured as a polarity. On one end, it might express, by some exposition, the dramatic association of disparate parts—"connecting things which seem unconnected," as I recently heard the artist Michael Rakowitz put it; on the other, it is an assertion of uniqueness, as in the return to realist painting and photography, particularly figurative painting and portraiture, which often derive their pathos from the psychodrama of incomparability.[7] Both are charged by systems of ownership as well as those of classification or taxonomy, and with them modernity's media mechanisms of visual similarity and difference. Camille Henrot's delirious screen-grab anthropology *Grosse Fatigue*, 2013, an inescapable work of the past decade, might be taken as typical of the updated "ethnographic surrealism" of the first position, while the painter Amy Sherald, who describes her portraits as representing noncaricatural "types" with which she means to induce an identification from the beholder, suggests the physiognomic imbrications of the second.[8]

Camille Henrot, *Grosse Fatigue*, 2013, video, color, sound, 13 minutes.

As an operation of the mind and drive in the world, comparison alone is plainly too vast to be encompassed as a "subject." All comparative methods can be seen as special cases of a general "associative faculty," prone to narcissistic overinvestment in seizing and dwelling upon the disparate as one.[9] Yet the comparative frisson nourishing @whos _ _ _ _ who is still, first, cognitive. "Sight . . . perceives similarity in similar forms or properties from its perception of each of the forms or properties and from comparing them with one another," writes Ibn al-Haytham in his eleventh-century *Book of Optics*, a work whose eventual translation into Latin was indispensable to the European Renaissance and the development of perspective.[10] But this "low," i.e., intellectually unelaborated, faculty of perception was generally not how modern art history made use of comparison, at least in its scholarship.[11] Here is how Rosalind Krauss summarized this historical use value in her own moment of polemical comparatism in 1981:

> The comparative method was fashioned to net the illusive historical beast called style, a prey which, because it was transpersonal, was understood as being quite beyond the claims of either individual authorship or intention. This is why [Heinrich] Wölfflin believed the lair of style to be the decorative arts rather than the domain of masterpieces, why he looked for it . . . in those areas that would be the product of inattention, a lack of specific "design"—going so far as to claim that the "whole development of world views" was to be found in the history of the relationship of gables.[12]

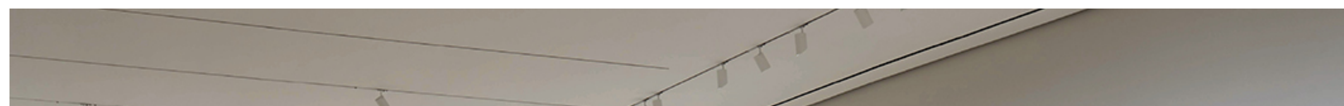
Yet if comparative juxtaposition as a device for giving an account of style can appear

paranoid, it can also serve as an "egotechnics" devised—like a compass or a ship—for making the unknown world navigable.[13] A less elaborate expression of the latter mode can be found in what Caroline A. Jones has called "predicated internationals," referring to double-barreled shorthands like "The Pakistani Picasso."[14] Though those formulations are outmoded, the geohistorical technique of such center-periphery couplings remains operative in the recent popularity of a gambit called "South-South" comparison, in which the critique of Eurocentrism takes the form of a forced methodological provincialism —defined negatively as not-North—by subordinating formal or genealogical analysis to the procedure of pairing.[15] In other words, a once relatively sedate art-historical technique —albeit one long studied by historiographers and media historians—is now an arena for reflexive disciplinary rumblings at the same time as it has begun to command a public charisma of its own.

Amy Sherald, *The Bathers*, 2015, oil on canvas, 72 1/8 × 67".

The sense that art-historical comparatism is undernourished has surfaced with particular intensity in recent years, and with it calls for an art history of (in)comparability.[16] Take, for instance, the prescient 2013 essay "Globalization, Art History, and the Specter of Difference," in which art historian Chika Okeke-Agulu describes the need for a "comparative art history," which, "unlike positivist art history," "demands familiarity with multiple contexts, histories, and geographies of art" and, at the level of the tool kit, "replacing standard units of art-historical analyses."[17] The question then becomes that of whether those replacements, as far as comparative method is concerned, are to be derived internally, via the dialectical reworking of past practices, or externally, by making recourse to the broad texture of vision itself at this historical moment, "a collective assemblage of disparate parts on a single social surface."[18]

What @whos _ _ _ _ who returns us to, ultimately, is comparison's *tertium*, the third term criterial to the joining of two things—that is, the trace of the "comparer," whether that comparer be an individual or a complex of comparison. In our case, that complex of comparison includes the discipline of art history itself, whose origins are bound up in specific techniques for the comparative juxtaposition of images of artworks. And if modern media was cognitively governed without remorse by the "dictatorial vertical" of newsprint columns, film, and advertising, perhaps art history's specific regime of comparative looking has always operated as a place for panning's attentive relay, somewhere between reading and looking, and maybe even more like reading—more table than wall, more horizontal than vertical.[19]



View of "Around *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*," 2019–21, Museum of Modern Art, New York. From left: Pablo Picasso, *Les demoiselles d'Avignon,* 1907; Pablo Picasso, *Woman's Head (Fernande)*, 1909; Pablo Picasso, *Woman with Pears*, 1909; Pablo Picasso, *The Reservoir, Horta de Ebro*, 1909; Faith Ringgold, *American People Series #20: Die*, 1967. Photo: Heidi Bohnenkamp.

NOT SIMPLY A MATTER for inside-baseballers, the waxing of comparison's formal powers is evident to any gallerygoer or Instagram scroller: Paintings new and old now adorn museum walls, where the drama of their arrangement, their pairing or congregation to tell "new stories" or burnish "old histories," has been heightened by the architectural dilation of gallery space long under the influence of massive sculpture, labyrinthine installation, performance, and projection. At some rudimentary level, jarring juxtapositions are just another way the curator can heighten the experience of a wall work;[20] less straightforwardly, such juxtapositions speak to the art-historical renovation of comparison's rhetoric of form.

The museum was daring the beholder to think literally and elliptically.

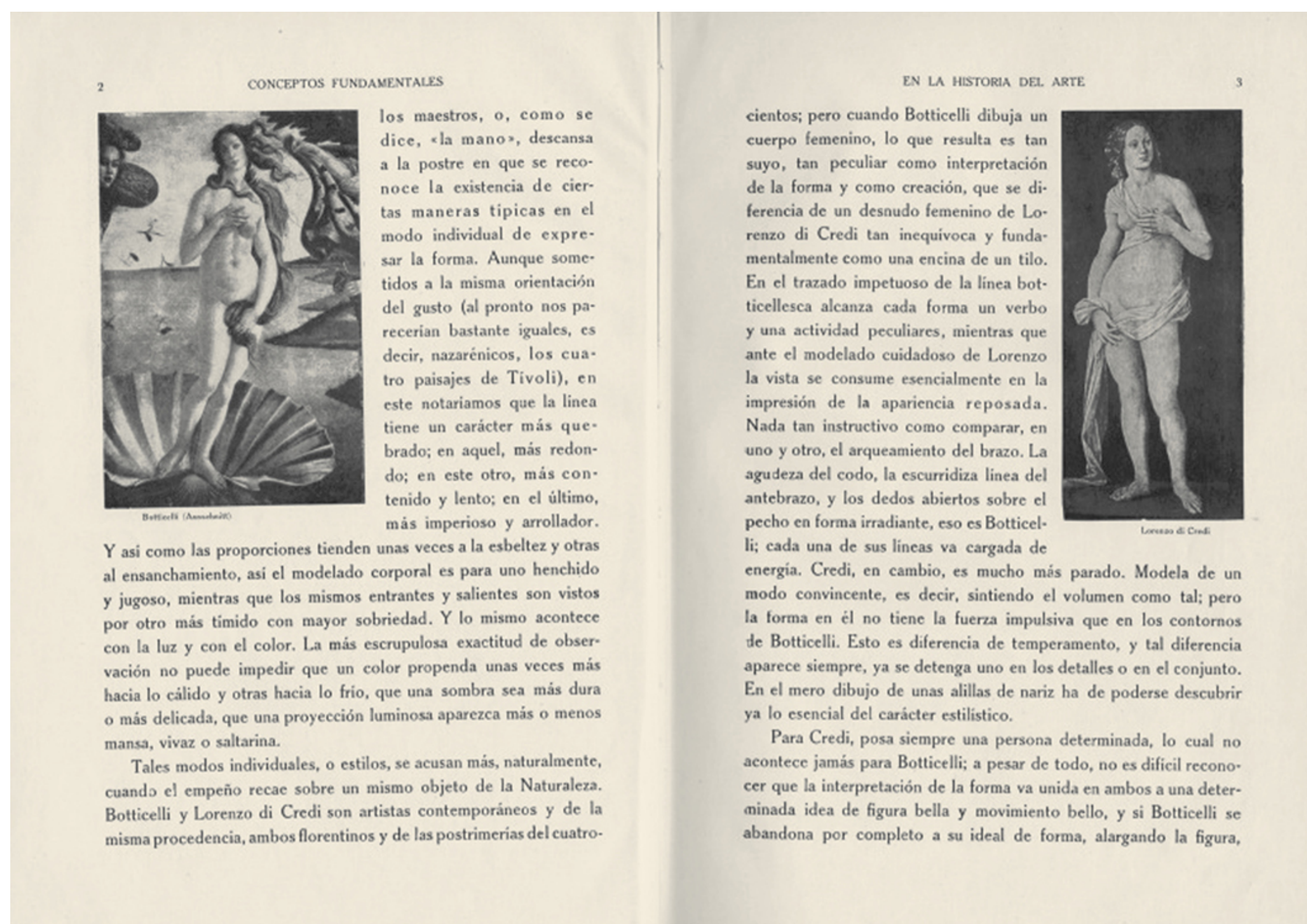
In the fall of 2018, I organized a symposium at Princeton University and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, called "Fake Friends." The purpose was to draw attention to how similarity was being refigured by nascent comparative practices driven by a supposedly more "inclusive"—i.e., geographically or temporally diffuse—art history, not to mention a shifting image public.[21] Soon, the reopening hang of New York's Museum of Modern Art seemed to confirm the nature of the dilemma. The museum's approach was most notoriously registered by critics for its jarring juxtaposition of Faith Ringgold and Pablo Picasso, a pairing that appeared to conflate art-historical genealogy and ethical disgorgement: Was it dully presenting Ringgold as Black Picasso, an American Picasso? Or

was it suggesting that Picasso's primitivism made him liable for colonial violence in Africa, or at least connected him socially to it, and so—here's where things become interesting—his penumbra of negative ethical content (category: violence against people of color) had to be balanced out by the opposite message (category: denunciation of violence against people of color)? Consider that the museum's curators did not feel any obligation at all to massage the formal terms of the comparison. These include the stated fact that Ringgold's link to Picasso was in *Guernica*, 1937, a work installed three thousand miles away and executed three decades after *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907, installed in the position of chronological priority to the left of Ringgold's *American People Series #20: Die*, 1967.[22] It was as if the museum was daring the beholder to think literally and elliptically, to look at Picasso's brothel and Ringgold's massacre as if the Spaniard's salonnière, Gertrude Stein, had interceded with a mandate from *The Making of Americans*: "I know them as resembling . . . in every way that any one can see any one of them."

> *Wölfflin, the master of extemporaneous speaking, places himself in the dark and together with his students at their side. His eyes like theirs are directed at the picture. He thus unites all concerned and becomes the ideal beholder, his words distilling the experiences common to everyone.* —Franz Landsberger, 1924[23]

First one projection, then two at once. Side by side, in light, a machine of comparison assumed life in the dark. It all happened with relative speed. As the discipline of art history took shape in the late nineteenth century, it needed only a few decades to make double-barreled slide projection a mainstay of its lecture halls.[24] Art history was, after all, a humane science unlike any other in the fin-de-siècle Germanophone world, or such was its magisterial self-image. The discipline was lofty in its ambition to raise—over the scattered objections of the hidebound in its ranks—the low art of the magic lantern into a crucial medium of its tool kit.[25] The slide lecture's powers to clarify and enrapture were real: Its upgrade of the professorial monologue into narrative soundtrack increased the informational quantity and attentive power of the lecture at a time when, thanks to the swelling enrollment of the middle classes, the humanistic formation of students could no longer be assumed. That is, the development of the disciplines of art history and aesthetics

coincided with a "meritocratic" opening up that had been underway for more than a century in German universities. Attendant to this shift was an intense pedagogical interest in cultivating a balance between "powers of comprehension" and "powers of sensation," such that a student's "individual soul was conceived as a particular cluster of commonly shared and readily comparable 'powers,' not an organic whole animated by a unique and inimitable vital force."[26]



2 CONCEPTOS FUNDAMENTALES

los maestros, o, como se dice, «la mano», descansa a la postre en que se reconoce la existencia de ciertas maneras típicas en el modo individual de expresar la forma. Aunque sometidos a la misma orientación del gusto (al pronto nos parecerían bastante iguales, es decir, nazarénicos, los cuatro paisajes de Tívoli), en este notaríamos que la línea tiene un carácter más quebrado; en aquel, más redondo; en este otro, más contenido y lento; en el último, más imperioso y arrollador. Y así como las proporciones tienden unas veces a la esbeltez y otras al ensanchamiento, así el modelado corporal es para uno henchido y jugoso, mientras que los mismos entrantes y salientes son vistos por otro más tímido con mayor sobriedad. Y lo mismo acontece con la luz y con el color. La más escrupulosa exactitud de observación no puede impedir que un color propenda unas veces más hacia lo cálido y otras hacia lo frío, que una sombra sea más dura o más delicada, que una proyección luminosa aparezca más o menos mansa, vivaz o saltarina.

Tales modos individuales, o estilos, se acusan más, naturalmente, cuando el empeño recae sobre un mismo objeto de la Naturaleza. Botticelli y Lorenzo di Credi son artistas contemporáneos y de la misma procedencia, ambos florentinos y de las postrimerías del cuatro-

EN LA HISTORIA DEL ARTE 3

cientos; pero cuando Botticelli dibuja un cuerpo femenino, lo que resulta es tan suyo, tan peculiar como interpretación de la forma y como creación, que se diferencia de un desnudo femenino de Lorenzo di Credi tan inequívoca y fundamentalmente como una encina de un tilo. En el trazado impetuoso de la línea botticellesca alcanza cada forma un verbo y una actividad peculiares, mientras que ante el modelado cuidadoso de Lorenzo la vista se consume esencialmente en la impresión de la apariencia reposada. Nada tan instructivo como comparar, en uno y otro, el arqueamiento del brazo. La agudeza del codo, la escurridiza línea del antebrazo, y los dedos abiertos sobre el pecho en forma irradiante, eso es Botticelli; cada una de sus líneas va cargada de energía. Credi, en cambio, es mucho más parado. Modela de un modo convincente, es decir, sintiendo el volumen como tal; pero la forma en él no tiene la fuerza impulsiva que en los contornos de Botticelli. Esto es diferencia de temperamento, y tal diferencia aparece siempre, ya se detenga uno en los detalles o en el conjunto. En el mero dibujo de unas alillas de nariz ha de poderse descubrir ya lo esencial del carácter estilístico.

Para Credi, posa siempre una persona determinada, lo cual no acontece jamás para Botticelli; a pesar de todo, no es difícil reconocer que la interpretación de la forma va unida en ambos a una determinada idea de figura bella y movimiento bello, y si Botticelli se abandona por completo a su ideal de forma, alargando la figura,

Lorenzo di Credi

Spread from the 1924 Calpe edition of Heinrich Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History*, 1915. From left: Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus* (detail), ca. 1484–86; Lorenzo di Credi, *Venus*, ca. 1490.

It was not slide projection but the opposing pages of a book which were the key supports for art-historical comparatism in scholarship,[27] and photography was the shared vessel for images thereby printed or projected. The key figure of this move is Heinrich Wölfflin, successor to Hermann Grimm at the University of Berlin, who had enthusiastically adopted photogram slide projection in an 1885 course on Renaissance art. Approaching the turn of

the century, Wölfflin began building on the comparative principle he teased in his 1888 study *Renaissance und Barock*. His "comparative vision," as Zeynep Çelik Alexander—on whose scholarship this account relies—put it in her pathbreaking 2017 study, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*, was a way of putting two images alongside each other, especially on opposing pages of a book, in dynamic rather than simply "causal" relation. Wölfflin, his queasiness about the unreliable Baroqueness of photography notwithstanding, did not so much reinvent visual comparison as domesticate the technique for the historical study of art and architecture. (By 1912, he had adopted the double-barreled slide lecture.[28]) To compare for Wölfflin meant simply to put A before B—not to determine whether A was "like" B or "as" B, but to see if there was a thread that joined them historically and could be clarified formally.[29] The artwork's traits and traces can be understood "kinesthetically," as he put it, not only as singular and enframed by specific contents and contexts, but also as porous enough to other artworks that these qualities can be read with a look. *Reading* here is crucial: Hence the variation, in the translations of *Principles of Art History*, in the position of the images depending on the direction of the language of the translation.

To compare for Wölfflin meant simply to put A before B—not to determine whether A was "like" B or "as" B, but to see if there was a thread that joined them historically and could be clarified formally.

It would seem, then, that the order of language cues the order of looking, but for Wölfflin himself, it was not so pat. In his recently translated 1928 essay "On Right and Left in Images," Wölfflin squares the cognitive problem of comparison by reducing its operation to the viewing of a simple image. The thought experiment motivating the essay is extraordinary; in fact, it is not a thought experiment at all, but a commonplace projection error: a glass slide inserted by the projectionist in reverse, thus laterally flipping the image of an artwork. So Wölfflin enters into some of the operations of looking's reading, the specific rove of its move along the "emotional," rather than "objective pull" along the horizontal axis of left to right within a single object.[30]

Park Chan-Kyong, *Sets*, 2001, slide projection of 160 35-mm slides, 13 minutes 40 seconds. Installation view, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2019. Photo: Hong Choelki.

Artists, for their part, are not only projected; they have been projectionists, too. “So much for art history,” Allan Sekula asides in his *Meditations on a Triptych*, 1973, a work pairing a trio of found photographs with a table and booklet in which Sekula engages in their social-historical interpretation (the piece debuted the same year Morellet’s callout of LeWitt appeared). Little has been said of the ethnographic special case of the artist as art historian.[31] Inasmuch as such a minor tradition in modern art can be isolated, it is traceable, variously, in the work of a transnational cadre formed in the 1970s and ’80s—including Sekula, Frederico Morais, Park Chan-Kyong, and Lorraine O’Grady—as well as in the earlier postwar projects of Eduardo Paolozzi and Marcel Broodthaers.[32] All of these artists could be described as writerly (if not as artist-critics). All are somehow present, intentionally or not, to the Wölfflinian definition of art history: “the development of modern seeing.” Morais, especially, looked to Wölfflin and to art-historical techniques, producing a Wölfflinian genealogical chart of modern art in 1967 and, in 1973, presenting, in São Paulo, his first solo exhibition of “Áudio-visuais,” or slide-lectures, which “emerged in the interstice between the concepts of art and criticism.”[33] Since the ’90s in South Korea, Park has directed his attention toward the conjuncture of media, art, and history, creating theoretically informed works of art and writing that are attentive to the structures of resemblance and comparison, such as his *Sets*, 2001.[34] In a 2014 interview, Park described his work as motivated by what he calls “double meaning,” in which certain historical forms in Korean culture seem unfamiliar even though they “should” not be. “This double sensibility,” he adds, “is a really interesting aesthetic in film and art.”[35] So thrown into

relief, such forms appear new again, old for the first time—as does comparison itself.

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NOTES

1. Rachel Corbett, “Is This Painting by Josh Smith or Mose Tolliver? A Vigilante Instagram Account Is Shaming the Copycats of the Art World” Artnet News, June 5, 2018, news.artnet.com/art-world/josh-smith-or-mose-tolliver-a-popular-instagram-account-is-subtly-shaming-the-copycats-of-the-art-world-1295255.

2. While this was not the account’s first foray into photographic portraiture, photography (and sculpture) are lesser media for @whos _ _ _ _ who. It is painting that is decisive to its act, which cannot be imagined apart from the return of the medium in recent art—as will be discussed below.

3. B. A. Feinstein et al., “Negative Social Comparison on Facebook and Depressive Symptoms: Rumination as a Mechanism,” *Psychology of Popular Media Culture* 2.3 (2013), 161–70

4. Jalal Toufic, “If You Prick Us, Do We Not Bleed? No,” *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1998), 169.

5. Paul North, *Bizarre-Privileged Items in the Universe: The Logic of Likeness* (New York: Zone Books, 2021), 274. North’s usage of “causeless” is after the Lamarckian biologist Paul Kammerer.

6. This is an art-historical genealogy largely associated with Erwin Panofsky’s adaptation of “pseudomorphism” as a genealogical technique for distinguishing between related and unrelated forms of similarity. This he defined in the lectures published in 1964 as *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, as “the emergence of a form A, morphologically analogous to, or even identical with, a form B, yet entirely unrelated to it from a genetic point of view.” Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, in their 2010 book *Anachronic Renaissance*, consider pseudomorphism alongside

their preoccupation with anachronism, linking Panofsky's first usage of the term, in 1939, to an uncited parallel in Oswald Spengler's "historical pseudomorphosis." Spengler, in turn, applied "historical pseudomorphosis" analogically to his diagnosis of the (under)development of cultures from the geological principle of "pseudomorphosis" tout court, crystals with "distorted forms . . . whose inner structure contradicts their external shape, stones of one kind presenting the appearance of stones of another kind." The medieval historian Caroline Walker Bynum made her renewed critique of morphology a key element of her recent book *Dissimilar Similitudes: Devotional Objects in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2020), joining recent art-historical contributions to the subject by Amy Knight Powell and Aden Kumler, among others.

7. If the former seems distantly descended from the procedures of James Clifford's "ethnographic surrealism," these connections are accorded documentary verisimilitude and can occupy an expository register of juridical or forensic truth, as in the work of Cameron Rowland or Eyal Weizman.

8. *Black Art: In the Absence of Light*, directed by Sam Pollard, aired February 9, 2021, on HBO, www.hbo.com/documentaries/black-art-in-the-absence-of-light. This affirmatively "typological" position has its more unreliable double in comic mode(s), for instance of the poet and novelist Paul Beatty. His debut novel *The White Boy Shuffle* (London: Picador, 1996) opens with an ersatz eschatological scene in which the whole "iconographic array" of Black Americans is represented, and it is otherwise riveted by satires of genealogy and morphology.

9. For Freud, "similarity and contiguity are the two essential principles of processes of association." Sigmund Freud, "Totem and Taboo" (1913 [1912–13]), trans. James Strachey, in *SE*, ed. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), 13:82–95.

10. *The Optics of Ibn al-Haytham*, trans. A. I. Sabra, books I–III, *On Direct Vision* (London: Warburg Institute, 1989), 207. The definition of dissimilarity is the mirror of this one.

11. A comprehensive disciplinary backdrop cannot be attempted here, but sensory

perception and philosophy of depiction have been relatively marginal to American art history at least since the "visual culture" debates of the '80s and '90s, if not the apogee of Ernst Gombrich before that. Still, there have been many worthy historical investigations of "vision" since, and nor should the efforts of eminent "image-scientists" like W. J. T. Mitchell and Horst Bredekamp or the work of Barbara Maria Stafford, a former student of Gombrich's, be ignored. Stafford's *Visual Analogy: Consciousness as the Art of Connecting* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999) is a wide-ranging engagement with the problem of resemblance after difference (poststructuralism). For an account of these disciplinary negotiations, see Hal Foster, "Antinomies in Art History," in *Design and Crime (and Other Diatribes)* (New York: Verso, 2002), 83–103. The other side of the slide lecture is the intellectual history of art history, and a renewed interest in internalist investigation has prompted some fresh historiographic fervor, as in the journal *Selva* (founded 2019) or Christopher S. Wood's *A History of Art History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

12. Rosalind Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," *October* 19 (Winter 1981): 7.

13. Peter Sloterdijk, *In the World Interior of Capital: Towards a Philosophical Theory of Globalization* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013), 120–21. In the history of modernism, fissures in "egotechnics" tend to be associated with moments of artistic advance, as in the following by Leah Dickerman in the catalogue for the Museum of Modern Art's *Inventing Abstraction, 1910–1925*: "By the eve of World War I, artists producing abstract works could be counted in the dozens. This shift in the frontier of possibility moved so suddenly as to shake the foundations of art as it had been practiced. Observers spoke of the exhilaration and terror of leaping into unknown territory, where comparison with the past was impossible. . . ."

14. Caroline A. Jones, *The Global Work of Art: World's Fairs, Biennials, and the Aesthetics of Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), xii.

15. For one summation of this burgeoning if not yet thoroughly defined methodological tactic, consider the following language attending a recent seminar on "Comparative Conceptualisms" pairing Latin America with the Middle East at the University of

California, Berkeley: "Throughout, we pursue a strategy of critical comparative studies that pivots on a Global South/Global South axis . . . as a decentered inquiry."

16. On the project of "comparative art history," see, illustratively, Chika Okeke-Agulu, "Globalization, Art History, and the Spectre of Difference" in *Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present*, ed. Alexander Dumbadze and Suzanne Hudson (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), and Kobena Mercer, "Art History After Globalization: Formations of the Colonial Modern," in *Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016). On commensurability and art history, see C. Oliver O'Donnell, "Revisiting David Summers' Real Spaces: A Neopragmatist Interpretation," *World Art 8*, no. 1 (2018): 21–38, and Shigemi Inaga, "Is Art History Globalizable? A Critical Commentary from a Far Eastern Point of View," in *Is Art History Global?,* ed. James Elkins (Milton Park, UK: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 278–79. For a more recent survey of some of these matters in European art and historiography, see *Comparativism in Art History*, ed. Jas Elsner (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2019).

17. Okeke-Agulu, "Globalization, Art History, and the Spectre of Difference," 454.

18. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 6. This is the oft-cited precis of Crary's position on the spectacular contingency of vision, which for him exceeds determination by an "economic base." Nevertheless, certain moves of vision, like comparison, can, depending on their objects, be more concretely materialized than vision in general. (Even abstractly, consider Paul North's Marxian suggestion: "An economic process nourishes itself on likeness, and in order to be economic, it has to produce at the very least a likeness of itself." North, *Bizarre-Privileged Items in the Universe*, 263.)

19. If for Horst Bredekamp (see note 24 below) there was an "autopoetic" aspect to slide projection for its professors, it was no surrealist "operating table." Even Aby Warburg, an art historian favored by the image-oriented historians and subject to a revival in recent decades, spoke of working, with his assistants, in a "veritable arena" of tables "on which to lay out the documents . . . so that we can compare them, and these books and images must be easily and instantly within reach." Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion* (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 233.

20. The close, quantitative study of visitor attention, and their cueing by the relative density of hangs, is hardly a new preoccupation of museum administrators and is historically coterminous with the "kinaesthetic" implications of fin-de-siècle art history to be discussed below. See Arthur Melton, *Problems of Installation in Museums of Art* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 1935).

21. Some of our contributions—such as Joan Kee on "corroborators-in-arms" Melvin Edwards and Ronald Miyashiro, or Shira Brisman's exploration of the comparative relationship of recto and verso—have since appeared in print. The title of the keynote lecture has also reappeared as Bynum's *Dissimilar Similitudes*. The symposium included Caroline A. Jones, Jaleh Mansoor, Tanja Michalsky, Saul Nelson, Julia E. Robinson, Roko Rumora, and Andrew Norman Wilson. Its components at Princeton University and the ICA Philadelphia were realized in collaboration with Christopher Barrett-Lennard and Tausif Noor.

22. Partially declassified correspondence between Alfred Barr, Nelson Rockefeller, and Allen Dulles, July–August 1957, archives of the Central Intelligence Agency. Refracting elements of the North Atlantic art history with which it has been contemporary, MoMA has of course always been Madonnish to modernism's children, grafting family trees (as in Barr's notorious flowcharts) and playing at likeness, as in the traveling Edward Steichen–curated exhibition "The Family of Man" (1955–63) or the Peter Selz–curated "New Images of Man" (1959).

23. Franz Landsberger, *Heinrich Wölfflin* (Berlin: Elena Gottschalk, 1924), 93–94, cited in Robert S. Nelson, "The Slide Lecture, or the Work of Art 'History' in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 419.

24. "[S]lide projection, which by 1900 had become standard in academic art history, was not only used as a didactic instrument but as an autopoetic guide to research. For [Hermann] Grimm the multiplying projection had the same analytic approach as the microscope. He valued the slide projection over the naked eye for its higher standard of representation of the artist's originality. How much Grimm relied on slides to construct art history as *Bildwissenschaft* can be demonstrated by the fact that he hardly cared for books. When Heinrich Wölfflin succeeded Grimm as the chair of art history in Berlin in 1901, he

found 1,300 publications, but 15,000 slides. . . . Using these slides, Wölfflin was able to demonstrate and at the same time reflect upon his bipolar *Kunstgeschlichtliche Grundbegriffe* [*Principles of Art History*] through his magical style of double projections. By developing his categories from examples of high art, Wölfflin meant them to be helpful in understanding the visual culture of whole epochs in the broadest sense. He never used the term *Bildgeschichte*, but he did call art history 'the development of modern seeing,' which is in fact a broader and deeper concept." Horst Bredekamp, "Art History as *Bildwissenschaft*," *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (2003): 421–22.

25. Zeynep Çelik Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing: Aesthetics, Epistemology, Modern Design* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), esp. chapter 2, "Looking: Wölfflin's Comparative Vision."

26. Anthony J. La Vopa, *Grace, Talent, and Merit: Poor Students, Clerical Careers, and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, UK: University Press, 1988), 259.

27. "[S]cholarship in the field of art demands a vast wealth of historical, and indeed very detailed, facts," Hegel observed of the contextualist task of erudite (read: readerly) looking early in the nineteenth century, in his *Aesthetics*. Unlike "other fields," the study of art, he continued, needs not only "a memory of facts, but also a keen imagination to retain pictures of artistic forms in all their varied details, and especially to have them present to the mind for comparison with other works of art." Not everyone was taken by the majesty of this breadth. In *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34), Carlyle parodied Hegel and his (German) contemporaries in the guise of a review of a book serialized, without fictional disclaimers, in *Fraser*'s magazine, by a "Professor der Allerley-Wissenschaft, or as we should say in English, 'Professor of Things in General.'"

28. Wölfflin understood the 111 images in *Principles of Art History* as amplifying the diacritical structure of his text and was careful to substitute engravings in cases where he believed that they represented the essential features of a work better than photography could.

29. "One could think that our art—like our writing—must always have the tendency to

display an objective pull of movement [*Bewegungszug*] (marching soldiers, running horses) from the left to the right. It is not so. But it is surely the case that the right side of the image has a different emotional value [*Stimmungswert*] from that of the left. The outcome on the right side determines the affect [*Stimmung*] of the image. The final word is spoken there, as it were." Heinrich Wölfflin, "On Right and Left in Images," trans. Marlo Alexandra Burks, *Grey Room* 73 (2018): 91. Notice how a certain vocabulary of power appears in Wölfflin's language, as if such looking alone had an authoritative élan, perhaps even an "institutional charisma."

30. Unlike the porous disciplinary relationship with Claude Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology, it is little discussed by art historians (one exception, again, is Horst Bredekamp) that it was a comparative study by one of Wölfflin's generationally removed colleagues, Erwin Panofsky, that proved decisive to the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's influential development of his concept of *habitus*. This he adapted from the art historian's usage of *modus operandi* to describe how a situated set of historical practices and beliefs led to a formal "homology" between the structure of scholastic writing and the design of Gothic cathedrals. Bourdieu, in the postface to the translation he wrote of *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* for Editions Minuit in 1967, undertook the inclusion of a technique that Panofsky himself had not used in the printed illustrations for his lecture, which is the printing of two images in direct side-by-side comparison. And that side-by-side comparison by Bourdieu, explicitly in dialogue with Panofsky's architectonic argument if not his method, was not of text and architecture, or two cathedrals, but of two subsequent scholastic texts, a kind of paleographic homage-parody of Panofsky's pull away from that scriptive medium to the domain of pure (architectural) form.

31. The "artist as art historian" is meant not in the sense of the artist "as scholar of the history of art" (as Henry Geldzahler put it in 1965) nor as ethnographer or sociologist, but narrowly and hermeneutically as an elaborator of its disciplinary "modi operandi" (see note 30).

32. In the first meeting of the "Young Group," a forerunner of the Independent Group, at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1952, Paolozzi is said to have presented his "Bunk" collages for the first time, projecting them overhead. Those present described

Paolozzi as frustrated by his projector, “grunting” (Richard Lannoy) or issuing “heavy sighs” (Nigel Henderson) as the apparatus ruined his collages. As for Broodthaers, I am thinking especially of his 1973 film *Analyse d’une peinture*. The latter figured in a 2017 conference at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, titled *Pour une histoire de l’art projetée* (For a Projected History of Art).

33. Sonia de Laforcade, “Click, Pulse: Frederico Morais and the Comparative Slide Lecture,” *Grey Room 73* (Fall 2018): 100–107. See also de Laforcade’s exemplary doctoral dissertation, “Áudio-Visual: The Slide as Medium in Brazilian Art” (Princeton University, 2020).

34. “[O]ne could also say,” he has written on the repetition-compulsion’s relationship to images, “that the kind of déjà-vu triggered by television is actually caused by the images’ resemblance to the many photographs one has encountered in the past.” Park Chan-Kyong, “Black Box: The Memory of Cold War Images,” trans. Minna Lee, in *Park Chan-kyong: Red Asia Complex* (Seoul: National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Korea, 2019), 92. I thank Lee for this reference.

35. Park Chan-Kyong, interview by Hangul Celluloid and Mini Mini Movie, Hangul Celluloid, November 12, 2014, www.hangulcelluloid.com/parkchankyonginterview.html.

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