

ART WORKERS

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ART WORKERS

RADICAL PRACTICE IN THE VIETNAM WAR ERA

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Contents

Acknowledgments | 000

Introduction | 000

1 From Artists to Art Workers | 000

2 Carl Andre's Work Ethic | 000

3 Robert Morris's Art Strike | 000

4 Lucy Lippard's Feminist Labor | 000

5 Hans Haacke's Paperwork | 000

Epilogue | 000

Notes | 000

List of Illustrations | 000

Index | 000

Introduction

In 1969 an anonymous letter circulated in the New York art world, declaring, “We must support the Revolution by bringing down our part of the system and clearing the way for change. This action implies total dissociation of art making from capitalism.” It was signed, simply, “An art worker.”¹ A nameless, self-described art worker issues a utopian call, implying that how art is made and circulated is of consequence within the political sphere. The urgent plea suggests that *art work* is no longer confined to describing aesthetic methods, acts of making, or art objects—the traditional referents of the term—but is implicated in artists’ collective working conditions, the demolition of the capitalist art market, and even revolution.

Art in the United States went to work in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as both artists and critics began to identify themselves as art workers—a polemical redefinition of artistic labor vital to minimalism, process art, feminist art criticism, and conceptualism. This book examines the specific social contexts of this redefinition, showing its centrality to artists’ attempts to intervene, through their activism and art making, in a profoundly turbulent moment: the Vietnam War era. My arguments for this new version of artistic labor are developed through four case studies: Carl Andre, Robert Morris, Lucy Lippard, and Hans Haacke. They were core participants in the Art Workers’ Coalition (AWC), founded in New York in 1969, and in the New York Art Strike Against Racism, War, and Repression, which grew out of the AWC in 1970. Together, these two groups vocally agitated to redefine artists as workers. As art critic Lil Picard wrote in May 1970, Andre, Haacke, and Lippard were among the

“faithful and leading personalities of the AWC.”² Though not involved in the AWC, Morris took center stage in activist organizing when he headed the Art Strike.

Rather than write a full-scale history of the AWC and the Art Strike, I look closely at the artistic and critical practices of these four key figures to explore the special power and flexibility of the term *art worker*. These four were far from the only figures to call themselves art workers, but their individual practices, which I attend to along with their collective identity as workers, shed light on the various tensions within that self-identification. I delve into the fraught, often unresolved relationship between the rhetoric of self-declared art workers and the political claims of their art and writing.

The group identity of the art worker exerted pressure on individual understandings about artistic labor within in the AWC and the Art Strike. In addition, though art workers attempted to organize collective political actions, collective artistic practice was not widely embraced or emphasized; this tension is purposefully left unresolved within the structure of this book. Written as a series of monographic case studies—“Carl Andre’s Work Ethic,” “Robert Morris’s Art Strike,” “Lucy Lippard’s Feminist Labor,” and “Hans Haacke’s Paperwork”—the book examines how four influential art workers, each of whom was differently invested in advanced art practices, attempted to confront the adequacy of his or her own labor in a moment of historical turmoil. Each of the case studies brings this narrative into focus in a new way. As a series of case studies, this account does not aim for an encyclopedic scope; rather, it gestures toward the malleability and complexity of these influential artists’ political understandings of artistic work. These art workers were chosen in part because, though each was central to the AWC or the Art Strike, and each plays a major role in postwar art in the United States, those overlapping realms of influence have gone somewhat underexamined.

In addition, I limited my case studies to living artists, thereby acknowledging that we are at an watershed moment in which many contemporary figures are entering history and are pursued for their archives and their contributions to the past, yet are also very much alive (and as reflective and insightful as ever). Memory, however, can be notoriously unreliable, and it has been a challenge to attempt to balance the numerous gaps, inconsistencies, and conflicting narratives as I describe the reimagination of artistic labor through the lens of these individual practices.

I claim that the emergence of the art worker in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States was catalyzed by the AWC and the Art Strike but was also dialectically forged in relation to these artists’ own changing artistic and critical methods. The redefining of art as labor was, I argue, pivotal to the minimal art that preceded and informed

the AWC, the process art that relied upon literally laboring bodies, the feminist politics that understood work as gendered, and the conceptual strategies that emerged through and from notions of art as work.

One persistent narrative about postwar American art is that minimalism fed into institutional critique, with feminism sometimes added only as a footnote; taking a somewhat different route through that argument, I map how the *rise of the art worker* (always gendered) importantly rearticulated each of these practices. Artistic labor was a site where ideas about making art and writing criticism were tested and transformed, thus affecting the shape, form, and look of political art. My own critical investments in art, politics, and labor are driven by my commitment to feminism, as it has provided a way to understand artistic work in its broadest ramifications.³ These feminist concerns are made most explicit in the chapter on Lippard but extend beyond it, since gender configured the relations between male art workers like Morris and their objects and since the burgeoning feminist movement gave many women art workers a productive way to conceive of artistic labor. (Feminism, too, provides a way to theorize connections between militarism and masculinity, as well as to think through the gendering of subjectivity in times of national crisis.)⁴

Attempts to link art and labor have been central to American modernism. In the 1930s artists of the Works Progress Administration, seeking solidarity with the laborers they depicted, organized the Artists' Union. Thirty years later, artists tried to rekindle the progressive identity by naming themselves art workers; however, they manifestly refused the aesthetic dimensions of the WPA's social realism. *Art Workers* tracks the unprecedented formation in the United States of an advanced, leftist art not committed to populism—that is, not primarily concerned with making its images accessible to the very people with whom these artists asserted a fragile solidarity. At the same time, the book attends to these artists' commitment to political change and their belief that art matters—that it *works*.

This study offers the first sustained look at the relationship between the activist art organizations of this period and the emergence of new models of artistic and critical labor.⁵ The story I tell about art and work thus differs from the one chronicled by Caroline Jones in her important book *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist*.⁶ As Jones points out, this era was marked by a concern with artistic identity in which artists such as Frank Stella, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol vacillated between positioning themselves as executives and as blue-collar workers. Jones contends that the widespread effort in the United States in the 1960s to link art making to traditional labor played out in artists' self-fashioning as workers. Build-

ing on her scholarship, I contend that, for the artists of the AWC and Art Strike, the identity of worker was political above all.

As some of the most prominent faces of the movement to redefine art as work, the four art workers I examine understood the meaning of artistic labor differently: for Andre it meant minimal sculpture; for Morris, construction-based process pieces; for Lippard, feminist criticism as “housework”; for Haacke, institutional critique. What is more, their influential artistic and critical practices in the late 1960s and early 1970s were uniquely shaped *in active dialogue* with shifting notions of art as work. The status of artistic work was called into question by the practitioners of minimalism, process art, feminist criticism, and conceptualism. Their forms of making (and not making) both highlighted and undermined conventional artistic labor.

Helen Molesworth has noted that “in the period following World War II, artists came to see themselves not as artists producing (in) a dreamworld but as workers in capitalist America.”⁷ The rise of New Left social movements, including anti-Vietnam War activism and feminism, led artists and critics to debate what kinds of art work mattered politically and what their collective role might be within activist politics. In a time when diverse populations (such as “youth” and “students”) were summoned and discussed as cohesive entities, how and why did artists choose to organize not just as artists but as *art workers*? The yoking of art to labor was especially charged given the changing status of workers within the thinking of the U.S. New Left, which distinguished itself from earlier leftist organizing in part by reoriented energy away from union labor activism.⁸ Rather than believing that only blue-collar workers were the potential agents of revolution, New Leftists began to champion “intellectual laborers” such as students and artists. The specific formations of artistic labor activated by Andre’s minimalism, Morris’s process art, Lippard’s feminist criticism, and Haacke’s conceptualism were bound up in this shift, as well as in the large-scale workplace and economic transitions that inaugurated postindustrialism.

While similar efforts to organize artists were occurring at this time elsewhere—for example, in England and Argentina—this book focuses decidedly on New York City.⁹ New York, with its density of artists living within a rapidly changing urban landscape, its many powerful art museums, its history of an active local Artists’ Union chapter in the 1930s, and its consolidated, well-organized antiwar movement, provided an especially fertile ground for fostering the anti-institutional politics of the AWC and the Art Strike.¹⁰ Other local circumstances that might have provided further momentum for the emergence of the AWC include the collective activities of New York Fluxus and the energized network of dancers affiliated with Greenwich

Village's Judson Memorial Church, especially as both offered alternative ways to think about artistic labor.¹¹ Questions about artistic activism and radical form, however, are relevant for the broader literature on art of the 1960s and 1970s. The four art workers of my case studies were all intimately involved in the AWC and the Art Strike, but their diverse artistic activities in this time period mean that the chapter on each of them opens up distinct issues, from the origins of materials (Andre), for example, to the nature of intellectual labor (Haacke). Mining the shifting relations of labor, artists, and activism, I excavate how complicated fantasies about and identifications with “workers”—a vexed category—lie at the heart of the political aspects of art production in the 1960s and 1970s.

Toward a Radical Practice

“End your silence.” So read the letter published in the *New York Times* in April 1965 decrying U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Signed by over four hundred critics, artists, and novelists involved with the group Writers and Artists Protest, it marks the first collective anti-Vietnam War effort by artists in the United States.¹² As Francis Frascina's useful account demonstrates, this ad was only the beginning of artists' organizing against the war.¹³ In 1966 the Artists' Protest Committee, based in Los Angeles, created the *Artists' Tower of Protest*, also known as the *Peace Tower*, a nearly sixty-foot-high work designed by sculptor Mark di Suvero that stood for three months at the corner of La Cienega and Sunset. Di Suvero's steel-pole construction, a tall tetrahedron, served as a focal point for the over four hundred two-by-two-foot panel artworks installed around the tower in a one-hundred-foot-long wall (Fig. 1). The *Peace Tower* presented a visually pluralistic response to the U.S. military conflict in Vietnam: any artist who wanted to submit a panel was able to, and the panels were later anonymously sold in a lottery organized by a local peace center.¹⁴

The panels, designed by artists including Eva Hesse, Roy Lichtenstein, Nancy Spero, and Ad Reinhardt, were aesthetically diverse—some utilized abstract forms; others depicted figurative, well-known antiwar motifs, such as Alice Neel's skeleton surrounded by flames emblazoned “Stop the War” (Plate 1). They were installed “democratically”—that is to say, in no particular order. As the detail in Plate 1 demonstrates, the wall's expansive visual logic accommodated a cacophony of styles, with panels featuring President Johnson's face, an appropriated fragment from Picasso's *Guernica*, a handwritten signature, and typewritten text pieces alongside more allu-

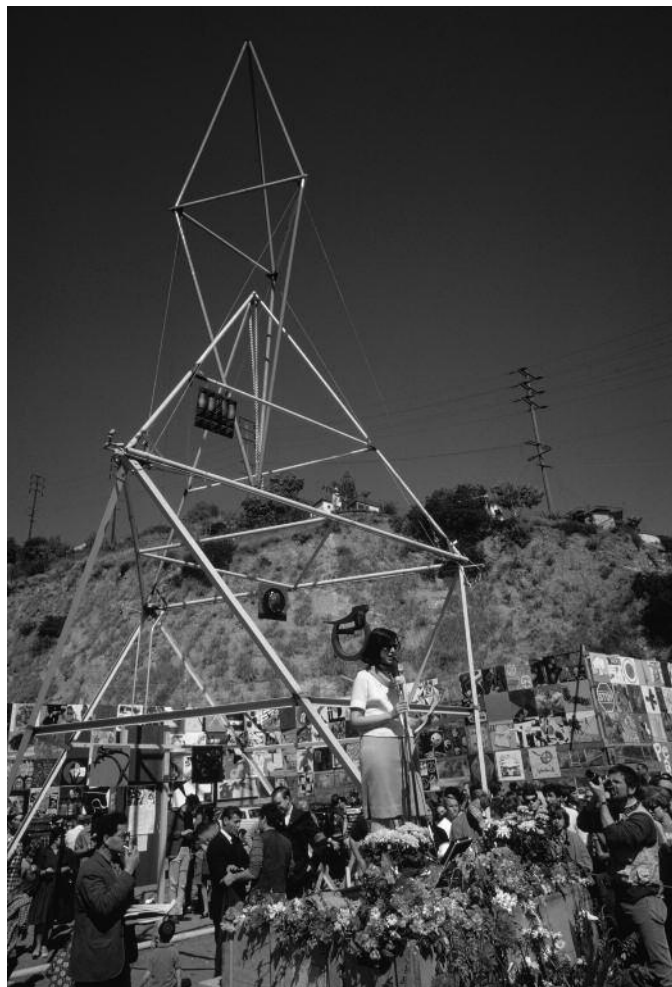


FIGURE 1 Susan Sontag at the dedication of the *Peace Tower*, designed by Mark di Suvero et al., Los Angeles, 1966. Photograph by Annette Del Zoppo. Charles Brittin Archive, Research Library, The Getty Research Institute. Used with permission (2005.M.11).

sive geometric shapes and painted swaths of color. One panel shows a tic-tac-toe game that has resulted in a stalemate and suggests that in war, too, there are no winners. Arranged in a typically modernist grid, the squares, while they shared little formally, attained an overall, quiltlike cohesion. Further, the varied designs were corralled together under the hand-lettered proclamation “Artists Protest the Vietnam War” and thus registered as responses to the war regardless of their content.

Positioned in an empty lot (“last used for selling Christmas trees”)¹⁵ at a busy intersection, the *Peace Tower* sought to maximize its visibility within West Hollywood; the nearby “gallery row” on La Cienega secured the area as an epicenter of contemporary art. But rather than use the existing spaces for art, the *Peace Tower* became an alternative, public exhibition site outside the art institution. Though it garnered much

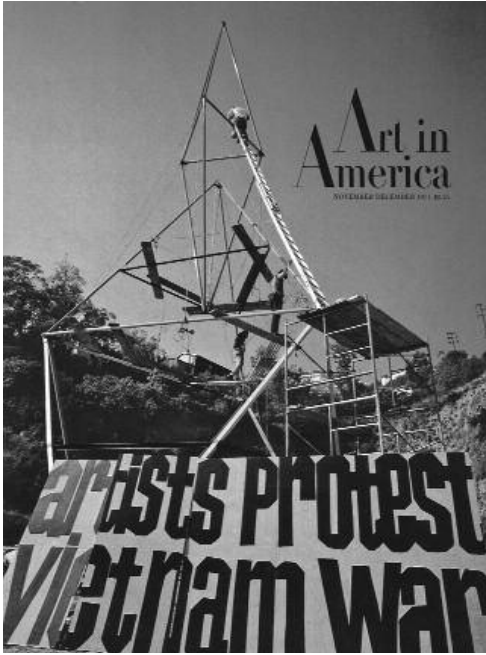


FIGURE 2 *Art in America* cover, November–December 1971, featuring the *Peace Tower*. Photograph by Charles Brittin. Courtesy Brant Publications, Inc.

press attention in L.A. at the time, the *Peace Tower* was publicized nationally only when it was placed on cover of the November–December 1971 issue of *Art in America*; the recent agitations of the AWC and the Art Strike made the tower’s antiwar message freshly relevant and helped pull it from obscurity (Fig. 2). Significantly, though it was six years after the fact, *Art in America* published no photos of the completed *Peace Tower*; instead, it was depicted in progress, with three figures scrambling like construction workers over its gantrylike frame. In the accompanying article, artists were referred to as “artist-builders” and contrasted with the “hardhats and jocks” that reportedly “came around to harass and make trouble.”¹⁶ Such polarization of “artists-builders” against hard-hat laborers is symptomatic of the persistent class tensions embedded in the term *art workers*.

The *Peace Tower* was dedicated in a ceremony on February 26, 1966, with speeches by Susan Sontag, among others, seen in Figure 1 standing atop a makeshift wooden podium laced with flowers. She stated, “We’ve signed petitions and written our congressman. Today we’re doing something else—establishing a big thing to stand here, to remind other people and ourselves that we feel the way that we do.”¹⁷ Sontag, who at her best was one of the most incisive and articulate critics of the twentieth century, calls the tower “a big thing to stand here”; that her eloquence is reduced to monosyllables indicates her uncertainty about what, indeed, the function of such a mon-

ument might be. It does not educate, convince, or persuade, for instance; rather, it reflexively “reminds” or reinforces already-held beliefs. This might be a recognition that for the most part minds were already made up about the war. But Sontag’s unusual, perhaps unconscious ambivalence about the tower betrays a larger anxiety about the role of objects—“big things”—in the mid-1960s.

Many U.S. artists echoed Sontag’s uneasiness about the insufficiency of object-based art, particularly its inability to oppose the media culture of war. A year after this speech, in 1967, Reinhardt, a contributor to the *Peace Tower* (his panel placed the words NO WAR on a plain blue ground), admitted that for him “there are no effective paintings or objects that one can make against the war. There’s been a complete exhaustion of images.”¹⁸ The *Tower* embodied several notions of artistic activism that were rapidly falling out of favor. Not long after, *Peace Tower* designer di Suvero categorically refused to show his work in the United States for the duration of the war “for fear of compromise.”¹⁹ Methods such as assembling an unjuried patchwork of paintings to be sold (even if the profits were donated) would be called into question as art workers strove to bring together their radical politics with their reinvented aesthetic strategies.

The Vietnam War’s effect on artistic production is often illustrated by works whose antiwar message is explicit—Peter Saul’s *Saigon* (1967) or May Stevens’s *Big Daddy* series (1967–75), for instance.²⁰ But how was artistic labor broadly articulated and developed in relation to both politics and advanced art? How did artists shift from action (“artists’ protest” or “artists’ dissent”) to the collective identity of a coalition or a strike? Shifting conceptions of activism and artistic labor spawned an investment in emerging, possibly political, forms of art—forms not legibly antiwar in any conventional way. Hal Foster has cogently observed that the artistic developments of this era (such as minimalism) “must be related to other ruptures of the 1960s—social and economic, theoretical and political.” However, he admits, “the diagram of these connections is very difficult to produce.”²¹ Indeed. Interrogating such ruptures, but by no means resolving them, I examine how artists grappled with the commodification of their own labor within a museum system implicated in the ongoing Vietnam War.

Andre, Morris, Lippard, and Haacke are by now canonical figures, but their embrace of artistic labor as a radical practice—a rehearsal or trial, the refining and trying out of politics—has been overlooked. *Radical practice* is a term drawn from Herbert Marcuse, whose writings on art and work exerted great influence in this moment.²² While Marcuse uses the phrase to describe the bleeding of art into revolutionary politics, it is also associated with performance and as such maps an uneven

field of attempts, rehearsals, and potential failures. By identifying themselves as art workers, these figures gave themselves a stage on which to experiment with their activism and their art and to test how those might intersect. Some of their art was explicitly billed as quasi-theatrical, like Morris's 1970 process pieces of timber, concrete, and steel whose construction was initially supposed to be witnessed by the public. As with many practices, these efforts sometimes fell flat or missed their mark. Yet the many misreadings, thwarted attempts at collectivity, and misrecognitions underlying the term *art worker* also proved incredibly fertile, as the era's redefinition of artistic labor inaugurated new forms of both artistic making and political protest.

The Vietnam War Era

The period that encompasses the late 1960s and early 1970s is often referred to as the "Vietnam War era."²³ How did this periodization matter to the art of the time, and why does it matter now to art historians?²⁴ Recent monographs, anthologies, and major museum exhibition catalogs, along with contemporaneous publications—such as the voluminous art criticism in periodicals like *Artforum*—make these years not only a flourishing subfield of art history but perhaps the most exhaustively discussed in all of post-1945 U.S. art. It has become commonplace to mention the vast cultural changes of this time in relation to the tremendous innovations occurring within art production, and many have made crucial, specific connections between the political and aesthetic practices in this era.²⁵ At the same time, some authors who write about this period—one indelibly marked by the U.S. presence in Vietnam—only glancingly reference the war.²⁶ It has proven especially contentious to conclusively link art movements such as minimalism and conceptualism to the antiwar politics of the era. As Tony Godfrey queries about conceptual art: "Were the artists of the late 1960s political or apolitical? Did they have Utopian aspirations, or were they careerists? Why, if they were so politically motivated, is there so little direct reference in their works to the Vietnam War or the student riots in Paris in 1968?"²⁷ These are fruitful questions, and although adversarial politics were frequently made palpable in the art of this era, those politics could also be veiled or difficult to decipher.

One way such commitments surfaced in art of the 1960s and 1970s was through the politicization of artistic labor. This was made manifest, both overtly and not, in the work of Andre, Morris, Lippard, and Haacke, whose artistic and critical practices in turn redefined what it meant to be an art worker. Art and activism, in other words,

were rehearsed—or *practiced*—through each other, although artists who identified themselves as art workers found that identity increasingly conflicted, if not impossible. Even as art workers considered their aesthetic practice integral to—or autonomous from—their political practice, they felt the discontinuities generated by the reorganization of both art and labor in the late 1960s. Art workers, *as such*, restlessly asked questions about effective modes of protest in the Vietnam War era; specifically through an emphasis on artistic labor these figures made antiwar and other protest politics visible in the art world.

This era continues to be a contested subject whose significance is very much in flux, not least because “Vietnam” has come to stand in for (still pertinent) questions of the validity of foreign military intervention and the function of public protest. The media firestorm about Senator John Kerry’s Vietnam War record during the 2004 presidential election demonstrates that establishing its historical record is an ongoing, volatile project. While many historians view the war as a catastrophic mistake, revisionists rewrite it as a “just cause” or “necessary war”; these contrasting viewpoints underscore how it continues to be framed by opposing interpretations.²⁸

Moreover, this time period seethed with transformative potential as extraordinary numbers of people became politically active, and not simply because of the war. Various social movements—Black Power, Chicano rights, women’s liberation, and gay rights—exploded in the late 1960s and were often met with state-sponsored hostility and violence.²⁹ These liberation movements, as well as waves of cultural innovation and vast numbers of people experimenting with “alternative” lifestyles, opened up possibilities for radical political and social change. In the late 1960s, in nearly every sphere of public and private life, normative culture was being interrogated. Acute political crisis seemed imminent as the Vietnam War became more and more unpopular and skepticism toward the U.S. government escalated. To cite but one statistic, though one that indicates the sheer scope of the growing antistate unrest: by 1970, resistance to the draft was so strong that in some states only half the draftees were enlisting.³⁰ Emboldened by the discord within the United States as well as momentous international events such as the uprisings in Prague and in France of May 1968, many believed that revolution was right around the corner.

This mood of nascent revolution was felt in many ways in the United States, among them the debates about artistic labor and its social value. I take the art workers at their word when they express dreams of transforming (or smashing) the art world, as well as remaking the wider world, though I also recognize the often immature or unformed nature of such political visions. As Fredric Jameson asserts, “One wants

to insist very strongly on the necessity of the reinvention of the Utopian vision in any contemporary politics: this lesson, which Marcuse first taught us, is part of the legacy of the 1960s which must never be abandoned in any reevaluation of that period and our relationship to it. On the other hand, it also must be acknowledged that Utopian visions are not yet themselves a politics.”³¹ Scholars of this era must be wary of succumbing to a nostalgia that sentimentalizes the moment and glosses over its complicated risks, gains, and losses. At the same time, dismissing the art workers as merely naive threatens to diminish the art workers’ lasting contributions to debates about institutional inclusion and the autonomy of art. It is therefore crucial to account for both the hopeful idealism and the bitter, ultimately untenable contradictions of art workers’ desires to reconfigure the role of viewers, market values, commodity-objects, art institutions, and coalitional politics. This entails granting that their “successes” as well as their “failures” might be productive, critically assessing the art workers’ fervent stridency while also acknowledging their troubling inconsistencies and limitations. (To some, this era ushered in a newly self-reflexive method of art making precisely *because of* the “failure” of 1960s utopianism.)³²

Calling themselves art workers gave left-leaning artists a collective identity to rally behind. That identity also brought a sharp focus to their frustration with the war in Vietnam and the increasingly repressive tactics of the U.S. government. The term elaborates the dense meanings embedded in the phrase *art work*—that is, it spells out the relationship between art as an object and as an activity. It also asks, implicitly: What work does art do? How does it put pressure on systems of representation and forms of signification? How does it intervene in the public sphere? How does it function economically; how does it structure relations; how does it put ideas into circulation? The definition of artistic labor in the late 1960s and early 1970s was highly mobile and included writing, curating, and even viewing art. Despite the widely held belief that art of this time effectively dismantled traditional notions of work (as it was “deskilled” or “dematerialized”), it will be made clear that the serialized steel plates of Andre’s minimalism, the spilled timbers of Morris’s process works, the chance-based collages of Lippard’s writing, and the paper ephemera of Haacke’s conceptualism are not a denial of work—an erasure of artistic craft—but forms meant to underscore art’s connections to labor, if ambivalently. This book also demonstrates that artistic labor at this time was not simply a matter of unstable political identification but was structured by its relationship to art institutions as museums became post-studio workplaces, sites of managerial authority, and targets of antiwar activism all at once.

1



From Artists to Art Workers

Coalition Politics

It all started with a kidnapping. On January 3, 1969, artist Vassilakis Takis marched into New York's Museum of Modern Art, unplugged his kinetic piece *Telesculpture* (1960), and retreated to the MoMA garden with the piece in hand. Although the museum owned the work, it was not, in the artist's mind, his best or most representative work, and he had not agreed to show it in their exhibition *The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age*. Takis's protest of its inclusion without his permission became the catalyst for a wider movement. Takis, who had witnessed firsthand the student/worker revolt in Paris in May 1968, tied his individual discontent to a larger, shared perception of artists' collective disenfranchisement with respect to art museums. He issued a flyer announcing his action as "the first in a series of acts against the stagnant policies of art museums all over the world. Let us unite, artists with scientists, students with workers, to change these anachronistic situations into information centres for all artistic activities."¹ The statement calls for cross-class solidarity as it envisions revitalizing the institutional spaces of art viewing. Takis's reclamation subjected the ostensible neutrality of the art institution to scrutiny, a scrutiny that would continue in many artists' actions over the next few years. How does art circulate in a capitalist market system, and what rights do artists have over their work once it enters the museum?

Friends and supporters quickly rallied around Takis, including fellow artists affli-

ated with the Howard Wise Gallery such as Wen-Ying Tsai, Tom Lloyd, Len Lye, Farman, and Hans Haacke. Many of these artists, including Takis, pursued technologically oriented art—hence, perhaps, the urgent need to unite “artists with scientists.” Other concerned artists and critics soon joined the cause, including Carl Andre, John Perreault, Irving Petlin (who was central to the organizing efforts of the Los Angeles *Peace Tower* in 1966), Rosmarie Castoro, Max Kozloff, Lucy Lippard, and Willoughby Sharp. Together, they adopted a group name—the Art Workers’ Coalition (AWC). Within a few months, the AWC was busy telegraphing the need for comprehensive changes throughout the New York art world.

The name Art Workers’ Coalition drew upon several precedents. For one, it echoed the venerable Art Workers Guild, established in England in 1884 as an outgrowth of William Morris’s Arts and Crafts movement, which had sought to reinvigorate handcrafting as a part of an explicitly socialist project to dealienate labor.² Despite the similarity in name, the two groups had little in common; many artists in the AWC emphasized their *lack* of conventional craftsmanship, either by making conceptual art or by having their minimal sculptures made by professional fabricators. A more immediate precedent was found in the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, formed in 1968 in New York to protest the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s *Harlem on My Mind* show.³ This group, whose members had some overlap with the AWC, had recently employed the language of the coalition (and the use of the term *emergency* would later feed into the Emergency Cultural Government of 1970, discussed in Chapter 3). The AWC positioned itself not as a guild, association, committee, or ensemble but as a provisional coalition of disparate individuals. With that moniker, it thrust artistic labor and a tendentious and tenuous collectivity to the center of its identity.

This book is not a chronological history of the AWC; instead, I focus specifically on how, though it has been seen primarily as a vehicle for artists’ antiwar organizing and struggles against racism and sexism, this group critically transformed the meaning of *art work* in the late 1960s and early 1970s. (Ironically, racism and sexism would become insurmountable internal problems leading to the demise of the coalition.) There are competing accounts of this organization, and I provide only a brief outline of its salient activities here.⁴ Its narrative is especially complicated given the many inconsistencies that attend the term *art worker*—not least, artists’ incompatible moves to identity with and distance themselves from “the workers,” a category itself under great pressure at this time. Primary among the AWC’s ambitions was the public redefinition of artists and critics as workers: these art workers asserted that their practices were located within specific social relations, subject to economic

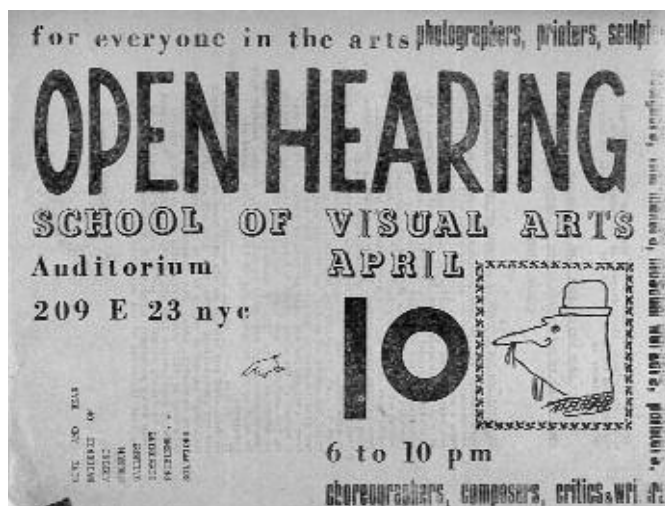


FIGURE 3 Art Workers' Coalition, flyer for the Open Hearing at the School of Visual Arts, New York, April 10, 1969. Image courtesy of the Lucy R. Lippard Papers, ca. 1940–2006, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

imperatives and exacting psychic costs. In some cases, artists took this literally and asserted that their practices were governed by the power differentials (and exploitation) inherent to the rules of employment within the capitalist West. For others, the recognition that art was work had more metaphorical weight and was a move of empowerment rather than degradation; *work* signified serious, valuable effort. (Like so many aspects of “work,” these differences were informed by gender.)⁵ As much as it means to signal synthesis or hybridity, I argue that the term *art worker* would present an intractable conflict in that it connected art to work while also removing artists from labor’s specific class formations.

After Takis’s kidnapping of his sculpture, the AWC issued a preliminary list of demands, many of which emphasized concerns about artists’ rights to control their work, including “copyrights, reproduction rights, exhibition rights, and maintenance responsibilities.”⁶ (Haacke collaborated with Lloyd and Andre to draft this communiqué.)⁷ The artists also requested a conversation with the director of MoMA to discuss museum reform; when that failed to happen, they held their own meeting on April 10, 1969, at the School of Visual Arts, extending an invitation to many categories of art workers beyond visual artists, including “photographers, painters, sculptors . . . museum workers . . . choreographers, composers, critics and writers” (Fig. 3). This early document, with its old-fashioned cartoon figure, its two small, clip-art pointing hands, and its use of outdated fonts to mimic the look of a circus flyer, is reminiscent of the work of Fluxus. Though Fluxus might have offered a recent, local precedent for collective artistic activity in New York, within a few months

such a deliberately anachronistic aesthetic would largely disappear, to be replaced by posters and placards that largely used only text and resonated with the minimal and conceptual practices of many in the coalition. This flyer's faux-naïf design indicates that the stark, language-based look later favored by the AWC had not yet developed.

Several hundred attended the meeting, and over seventy speakers read statements, which addressed artists' rights along with the Vietnam War, racism, and sexism. Transcripts of the speeches read at the meeting—the “Open Public Hearing on the Subject: What Should Be the Program of the Art Workers Regarding Museum Reform, and to Establish the Program of an Open Art Workers' Coalition”—varied in tone, from mild reforms such as having artists serve on museum boards, to suggestions for overhauling the art press, to revolutionary demands to dissolve all private property. Institutional inclusion and access were consistent themes, as some artists called for Black and Puerto Rican representation in museums and others repudiated the corrupt market system. While many spoke of the potential power of artists coming together for a common cause, gushing sentiments of solidarity did not pour forth from every quarter. Feminist artist Anita Steckel castigated the critics in the meeting for not reviewing her shows. She ending her rant by turning on her fellow art workers: “J'accuse, baby!”⁸

Although the AWC had no aesthetic agenda and included artists who worked in a range of styles, from Leon Golub's figurative paintings to Haacke's systems art to Andre's minimal sculpture, the notion of the art worker offered artists an up-to-date, politically relevant model of identity. It enflamed New York artists as they organized for change in the art world and in the wider public sphere. The diverse participants at the open hearing included Andre, Robert Barry, Gregory Battcock, Selma Brody, Frederick Castle, Mark di Suvero, Hollis Frampton, Dan Graham, Alex Gross, Haacke, Robert Hot, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Lippard, Tom Lloyd, Barnett Newman, Lil Picard, Faith Ringgold, Theresa Schwarz, Seth Siegelaub, Gene Swenson, and Jean Toche (this is by no means a comprehensive list). Many were prominent minimalists and conceptualists (including Andre, Barry, Graham, Haacke, Kosuth, and LeWitt) and their curatorial and critical champions (Battcock, Lippard, Siegelaub). Several speeches at the open hearing, such as the one by Graham, emphasized that conceptualism might be one way out of the relentless marketing of art, and questions about autonomy, decommodification, and authorship raised by minimalism and conceptualism fed the antiestablishment ethos of the AWC.

Through the AWC, artists asked basic questions about their working conditions, in particular the uses and misuses of their artworks that they claimed rights over even

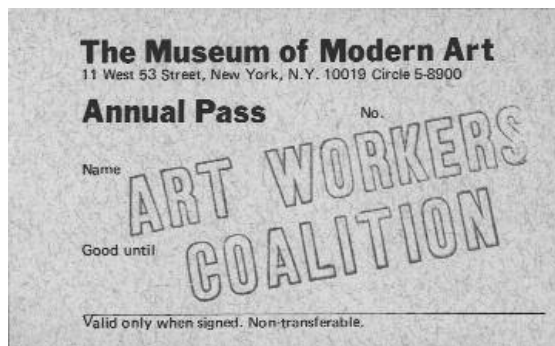
when the objects were no longer under their material ownership. Art's very mobility leaves it open to multiple reframings; some artists sought to thwart the potentially less-than-ideal circumstances of reception by ceasing to make objects (or "products") or by creating only site-specific installations. Artists sought guarantees that might allay their fears about losing control of their works, financially and otherwise. In 1971 AWC member Siegelaub, along with Robert Projansky, formulated an artists' rights contract, still used by a few artists, most notably Haacke, granting artists some financial protection in the reselling of their work.⁹ With the contract, "The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement," art was increasingly folded into the category of intellectual property.

In addition, art workers increasingly understood the *social and political*, not just economic, value of their art. They became aware of how their art circulated, its symbolic and ideological "use" that challenged previous claims of its autonomy. Many art workers felt that as image makers in a time of war dominated by images they might have something unique to offer the antiwar movement. John Perreault, in his statement for the open hearing, said, "We cannot merely follow the techniques of the New Left or the students. These may offer inspiration, but as artists we are in a position to provide new examples for other groups by developing more effective methods of protest."¹⁰ Some became frustrated by the AWC's lack of interest in these "more effective" protests and formed action-based splinter groups and committees, such as the Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG), the Art Strike, the Emergency Cultural Government, and Women Artists in Revolution (all discussed in the chapters that follow).

The open hearing was more than an airing of grievances about museum reform. One of the most extreme, idiosyncratic statements came from Lee Lozano: "For me there can be no at revolution that is separate from a science revolution, a political revolution, an education revolution, a drug revolution, a sex revolution, or a personal revolution. I cannot consider a program of museum reforms without equal attention to gallery reforms and art magazine reforms which would eliminate *stables* of artists and writers. I will not call myself an art worker but rather an art dreamer and I will participate only in a total revolution simultaneously personal and public."¹¹ Read as a foreshadowing of her *General Strike Piece*, which announced her total withdrawal from the art world, this brief paragraph lays out a vision of a revolution so total that it encompasses almost every sphere of life, and it echoes the feminist calls to erase the distinction between the personal and the political.¹² It also highlights an uneasy dynamic of the AWC and its offshoots, which, though they included many of the ris-

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FIGURE 4 Joseph Kosuth, forged Museum of Modern Art Visitor's Pass, designed for the Art Workers' Coalition, 1969. Offset and rubber stamp on card stock, 2½ × 4 in. © 2009 Joseph Kosuth/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



ing stars of an increasingly consolidating art industry and art press—Andre, Morris, Haacke, and Lippard among them—also envisioned the eradication of that industry. Lozano’s denunciation of the term *art worker* in favor of *art dreamer* signals a model of individual rather than collective transformation; she soon followed through with her promise and abandoned art making altogether.

Those at the open hearing adopted a platform of thirteen demands, circulated as a point of debate, revision, and departure during the next few years. The demands—including planks about greater racial and gender diversity within museums—demonstrate how the question of artists’ rights and control over their work in the institution moved rapidly into other activist concerns. From the original issue of museum display, the AWC moved to taking on the war and became the primary anti-Vietnam War outlet for New York artists. The leap between these two issues was not all that great, as artists became concerned with how art was used for ideological and economic ends within a larger political system in which museums served a central role. Disgust with the museum “system” was at the very heart of the AWC, and art institutions were a logical target in artists’ eyes, especially because of their powerful boards of trustees that had members like the Rockefellers. (David and Nelson Rockefeller both served on the MoMA board of trustees; Nelson was at the time the Republican governor of New York State.) The artists and writers of the AWC felt they were waging not only local battles about artists’ rights but battles of global significance. As action artist Jean Toche said succinctly, “To fight for control of the museums is also to be against the war.”¹³

The AWC insistence on “democratizing” museums took several forms. For one, the group called for greater transparency and a larger voice in museum policies such as exhibition schedules and acquisitions. They also wanted to extend the public’s access to the museum and demanded free admission for all. To that end, conceptual-



FIGURE 5 Tom Lloyd's son at the Art Workers' Coalition and Black Emergency Cultural Coalition protest at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, May 2, 1970. Photograph © Jan van Raay.

ist Kosuth designed a forged AWC “annual pass” to MoMA in order to subvert the usual procedures of paid museum admissions (Fig. 4). Drawing on his skills as a word-based artist, Kosuth mimicked the look of a museum pass and emblazoned it with an official-looking stamp reading “Art Workers Coalition” where an individual’s name would usually go, affirming the collective identity of the group. This hijacked pass turned the bureaucracy against itself, appropriating the pass to assert art workers’ declared right to free entry. Mirroring Kosuth’s own linguistic, word-focused art, the card demonstrates that while conceptual art is sometimes cast as unconcerned with functionality, artists in the AWC used their conceptual toolbox to hammer out activist, interventionist objects.

Many of the AWC protests and activities focused on the art world’s racist exclusions. Some agitated for a special Martin Luther King Jr. wing of MoMA, to be dedicated to Black and Puerto Rican artists; others advocated the decentralization of art institutions, calling for branches in Harlem and elsewhere.¹⁴ In one photograph of such a protest in 1970, Lloyd’s son holds a toy gun as a picketer behind him wields a sign that reads, “Racist MoMA!” (Fig. 5). Although softened by his smile and the small scale of the fake gun, the child’s stance recalls images of the militant branch of the Black Power movement, the Black Panthers, a reminder that the politics of racial inclusion had serious stakes and was viewed at the time as connected to revo-

lutionary possibilities. Many photos of AWC protests include family members; these intergenerational demonstrations indicate that it was a training ground not only for artists, writers, and museum workers but for their children, though, as the chapter on Lippard details, the “work” of parenting was not always acknowledged as such.

The AWC was decidedly anarchic in its organization—it had no elected leaders and no set agendas, just meetings on Monday nights generally held at alternative spaces. Ideologically it was also all over the map. Was it merely “middle-class trade unionist”?¹⁵ Or was it subversive, with the potential to “make or break the museum and the entire art world”?¹⁶ Some in the AWC felt that museums should “use their political influence in matters concerning the welfare of artists, such as rent control for artists’ housing, legislation for artists’ rights.”¹⁷ They idealistically proposed a system of universal wages for all artists, to be paid out of a fund generated by the resale value of the art of dead artists. Many within the group believed that by demolishing the art market they would help inaugurate total revolution. As art critic Gene Swenson cried in 1970, “Institutions have already begun to tremble at our mild demands, our thirteen points. Let the state wither away. We have only begun.”¹⁸ Recognizable in these complex, contradictory claims are both a reformist and a revolutionary drive. These factions inevitably came into conflict with each other.

Over the next two years, AWC members undertook many protests, including parades, vigils, and performances urging museums to take a public stand on the Vietnam War.¹⁹ In 1969 they asked MoMA to co-sponsor an antiwar poster that would become the iconic image of the New York art Left in this era (Plate 2). This poster was developed by a subcommittee of the AWC after the U.S. massacre of civilians at My Lai was revealed. It reproduces Ron Haerberle’s photograph of dead women and children on a dirt road with a superimposed, blood-red text, typed in the classic newspaper font—“Q: And babies? A: And babies”—a snippet drawn from a television interview by Mike Wallace with the army officer Paul Meadlo. The poster appropriates two forms of journalistic coverage, documentary photography and televisual utterance, to graphically illustrate the war’s casual attitude to the loss of life.

In the end, the museum did not support the poster financially or otherwise, and the AWC printed and distributed it without their assistance. (Though careful to use a union printing shop, the art workers were rudely reminded of their political distance from other types of workers when many in the shop were openly hostile to the project.)²⁰ The incident with MoMA disheartened many within the AWC who felt that the museum had yielded to board members’ political pressure, in particular the objections of CBS president William S. Paley. As the most important museum for con-



FIGURE 6 Art Workers' Coalition demonstration in front of Picasso's *Guernica*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1970. Photograph © Jan van Raay.

temporary art and as a former employer of many art workers who had worked there as pages, clerks, and guards (including LeWitt and Lippard), the one “closest to [their] hearts,”²¹ the MoMA became the primary target for antiwar actions. In January 1970, art workers held a protest in front of Picasso's *Guernica*. Members of the action-oriented AWC offshoot GAAG clustered together in front of the painting holding the poster, drawing parallels between U.S. crimes like My Lai and the bombing of innocents during the Spanish Civil War while also sharpening the distinction between the large, painted mural and the freely given protest posters (Fig. 6). The two artists in the center of this photograph—Lloyd and Toche—hold the poster nearly flush against the surface of the painting, stretched between their extended arms. It hovers just above the fist of the fallen soldier—the same figure that appeared in the *Peace Tower*—and the artists' hands, gripping the corners of the paper, echo its grasping clutch.

While the demonstration claims that the Vietnam war crime grimly reflects *Guernica*'s carnage, the poster's visual relationship to the painting is one of inversion rather than symmetry. Picasso's muted palette of gray shades emphasizes a shardlike fragmentation of the bodies, some of which hurl across the space to flee the destruction. Its jumble of broken and upright figures stands in contrast to the full-color yet tragically inert, dead villagers depicted in the photograph. In addition to wielding their posters, the protesters placed funeral wreaths under the painting, and Joyce Kozloff

sat down on the ground, holding her eight-month-old baby in her arms; his live body was meant to vivify the dead children in the poster.²² In the wake of their disappointment to have MoMA co-sponsor the *And Babies* poster, the AWC unsuccessfully petitioned Picasso to remove *Guernica* from MoMA until the Vietnam War ended.²³ This use of the painting as both a metaphoric and a literal backdrop says much about the art workers' strained relationship to the politics and aesthetics of the historic, modernist avant-garde. The term *avant-garde*, viewed as antiquated and irrelevant, had largely fallen into disrepute among U.S. leftist artists by the late 1960s. Picasso's failure to heed the art workers' boycott all but confirmed such a devaluation; as art historian Paul Wood has observed, by 1970 the integrity and prestige associated with avant-garde status had all but evaporated.²⁴

While conducting antiestablishment protests, the AWC also went through conventional channels to secure its goals. In 1969 it received a \$17,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the New York State Council of the Arts "for research activities in order to establish Community Cultural Centers in eight black and Spanish speaking and poor sectors of greater New York."²⁵ The grant was refused, yet the irony of seeking Rockefeller money—associated with companies manufacturing military munitions and with Gov. Rockefeller's prowar views—is striking, and this recourse to such grant money was deemed unsavory, as demonstrated by an AWC-designed flyer featured a hand-drawn, fake bill—"One Blood Dollar"—that substituted an image of Rockefeller in the place of George Washington (Fig. 7). "Not valid for Black, Puerto Rican, or Female Artists," and "All power to the museums!" read its disclaimers; the bill is signed by Henry Geldzahler (curator at the Metropolitan Museum) and Paley (chief of CBS and MoMA trustee). The collusion between state and cultural power is summed up in this satire, and it illustrates the AWC's persistent complaints about art museums: their exclusionary practices, their corporate affiliations, and their elitist management. Although the "blood dollar" caricature is itself part of a long lineage of older forms of activist art such as political cartooning, one persistent claim of this book is that art workers' protest documents such as posters, placards, and flyers were frequently in dialogue with their evolving aesthetic forms.

By 1971 applying for Rockefeller's money was unthinkable, and museum boards were further cast as the art worker's enemy. An AWC flyer issued in the wake of the Attica prison riots of 1971, which ended with a bloody attack by the New York state police, expressed the artists' anger: "We demand that the butcher of Attica resign as a trustee from the Museum of Modern Art. It is a mockery that Rockefeller supports the arts. It is intolerable that Rockefeller uses the art of the 20th century to gild his



FIGURE 7 Art Workers' Coalition, "One Blood Dollar," ca. 1970. Fake photocopied bill, offset on paper, 6 × 2½ in. Image courtesy of the Lucy R. Lippard Papers, ca. 1940–2006, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

prison." A poster for a demonstration was more succinct and pointed to the governor's power in both state policy and the museum: "At Attica and at the Modern, Rockefeller calls the shots" (Plate 3). The black and white text is placed on a dark ground splattered with bloody red bullet wounds. With its almost abstract-expressionist use of paint, this poster mimics a gestural brush stroke to drive its point home. It seems to ask: What better visual language than repurposed action painting is there to address, and attack, MoMA, the very temple of such painting's sanctification?

Along with its anti-institutional and antiwar demonstrations, the AWC had a significant proto-union component that should not be discounted; members voted to form a union on September 23, 1970.²⁶ In lieu of support from private monies such as the Rockefellers, art workers were at a loss for how best to generate the wages they agitated for. Their somewhat untenable ideas on this matter were not lost on skeptical commentators. When the AWC demanded subsidies for universal employment, Hilton Kramer queried, "From what untainted sources should the necessary funds be drawn? The Federal Government, which is conducting the war in Vietnam?"²⁷ This question had no satisfactory answer, though some looked seriously to artist's guilds in countries such as Holland and Denmark as models. As art critic and AWC member Alex Gross wrote, "It may be that a free-wheeling undogmatic artists' union of the type that has existed in Holland for the last 25 years may provide a few optimistic answers for the future."²⁸ Many tensions accompanied this drive, not only because the underlying convictions of AWC were notoriously heterogeneous, but also given the New Left's contentious, sometimes strained, relationship with union labor.

Further, the AWC emerged in a distinct political and economic climate: art workers saw their organizing as countering the corrupt free-market capitalism of the United States. The international artists' unions (which also existed in many eastern

European countries like Poland) that interested Gross, however, flourished in socialist climates or under the aegis of state-funded arts programs that provided wages for artists. Some members of the AWC at the time who called for unionizing poorly understood these structural differences, and it is doubtful that they would have been interested in adhering to the requirements that can come with such state support. Still, others, such as Swenson, with his desire for the state to “wither away,” advocated for the full-scale transformation of the United States toward such socialism. The formation of a progressive artists’ union seemed to many to potentially herald—if not actively catalyze—that change.

Paradoxically, it was primarily those artists who did not “work” in the conventional sense—minimalists, whose work was made in factories; performance/action artists, who did not make objects; and conceptualists, whose work was dematerialized and did not evidence traditional skills—who gestured toward affiliation with blue-collar workers. As my case studies demonstrate, this tension shadowed the identity of the AWC throughout its history. Some in the coalition sought to align themselves with union labor and demonstrated for artist/worker solidarity—as in the March 18, 1970, protest supporting the postal workers’ strike, which included GAAG co-founder Toche and Gross (Fig. 8).²⁹ Toche, an emissary from the community of art workers, holds a flyer that places the words “Support Postal Workers Strike” next to an image of J. M. Flagg’s 1917 poster of Uncle Sam, shorn from its familiar context of military recruitment. According to Toche, such a public protest was central to his larger project to move the AWC away from its art world focus into the realm of “on the street” labor politics; his invitation for the postal workers to join the art workers’ museum demonstrations, was not, however, reciprocated.³⁰

Toche’s and Gross’s show of support was somewhat unusual, as many art workers, and U.S. leftists more generally, were in the process of abandoning long-held ideas about the revolutionary potential of workers. Influenced by thinkers like C. Wright Mills and Herbert Marcuse, Tom Hayden’s “Port Huron Statement” of 1962 (the seminal manifesto of the New Left) bemoans “indifferent” rank-and-file unionists and the “quiescent labor movement.”³¹ Both Mills and Marcuse urged the Left away from its union roots; Marcuse, for his part, saw organized labor sharing “the same stabilizing, counterrevolutionary needs of the middle classes.”³² The working class, seduced by what Marcuse termed “one-dimensional society,” which “delivers the goods, guns and butter, napalm and color TV,” had turned into a conservative force seeking to preserve its materialistic way of life.³³ Marcuse was chastised for his “crabby elitism” when it came to blue-collar labor; many labor historians insisted that work-

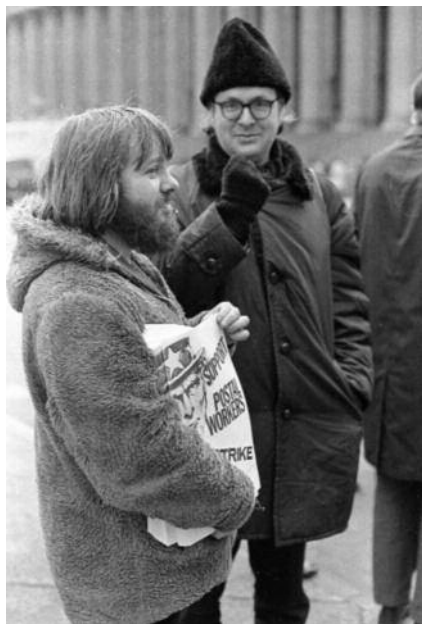


FIGURE 8 Jean Toche (left) and Alex Gross (right) supporting the New York postal worker strike, March 18, 1970. Photograph © Jan van Raay.

ers were not “one-dimensional” but “varied, dynamic, contradictory.”³⁴ Hayden, like many in the New Left, recognized the importance of coalitions of students and labor and saw great promise for reinvigorating the labor movement if it could become responsive to the needs of black workers.

Still, in 1969 Carl Oglesby, then president of Students for a Democratic Society, wrote, “‘You are nothing without the workers,’ advises a grand old revolutionary warhorse who won the colors in the anti-fascist resistance . . . [, he] who cannot fathom why his sons should now say, ‘who precisely are they?’”³⁵ Who *were* the workers? Oglesby answers his own question, saying, “The composition of the work force has been significantly altered by the massive assimilation of industry and technology. Students and workers are from now on one and the same. . . . The factory of the postindustrial state is the multiversity. Students are now the working class.”³⁶ In fact, leftist art workers often turned to students as their models; in 1970 Lawrence Alloway noted that the AWC was “in spirit closer to student protest than to earlier artists’ commitment to communism.”³⁷ In resonance with this trend, some art workers distanced themselves from blue-collar labor by embracing “deskilled” art or turning to scholarly methods such as data gathering.

The AWC dissolved after less than three years, partly because of its inability to recognize structural inequalities—including racism and sexism—in its own organization. “By the end of 1971,” wrote Lippard, “the AWC had died quietly of exhaustion, back-

lash, internal divisions . . . and neglect by the women, who had turned to our own interests.”³⁸ Haacke further reflected back on the short-lived nature of the AWC, proclaiming that the individualistic nature of Western art making was at odds with collective organizing. He commented on the group’s pronounced, and fatal, lack of “coherence of ideas”: “What one wants, the other objects to strenuously; e.g. one wants to destroy museums, the other wants to reform them or to use the museums as they are for his own artistic ends, and the third simply wants a piece of the pie.”³⁹ Haacke’s retrospective clarity about the conflicting nature of the AWC with regard to privilege, status, and access to power maps several of its major fault lines.

The AWC’s significance extended beyond its short life span, as it brought together a disparate group of artists to rethink the role of the institution and the autonomy of art in a time of social crisis. It advocated for a host of causes, some of which have persisted, including the artists’ rights contract and the institution of museum free days. (First started in February 1970, the free day was a direct result of the art workers’ agitations.)⁴⁰ In addition, the AWC validated artists’, critics’, and curators’ claim to the label *worker*; in doing so, it provided momentum for the drive to unionize museum staff.⁴¹ In 1971 the MoMA staff voted to form the Professional and Administrative Staff Association (PASTA), redirecting some of the organizational energies that were waning within the AWC. However, as Andrea Fraser has noted, if the AWC helped clarify these art workers’ need for a union, it also signaled the beginning of a new trend toward the professionalization of art.⁴²

Art versus Work

How is the making of a sculpture any different from the making of some other kind of commodity? At the heart of this question lies several critical issues: the division of labor under capitalism, the importance of skill or *technē*, the psychic rewards of making, the weight of aesthetic judgments, and the perpetually unfixed nature of the artist’s professional status since roughly the fifteenth century. The history of Western art is marked by the unstable distinction between artistic, “creative” production and the economics of “true” labor. The social value of making art has been in flux since the Renaissance, when the “author” of a work as a concept was born. The transition of art making from a mere manual occupation to an inspired vocation has been the subject of much literature, including Michael Baxandall’s key work on the separation of art from craft in the Renaissance and artists’ assumption of a specialized

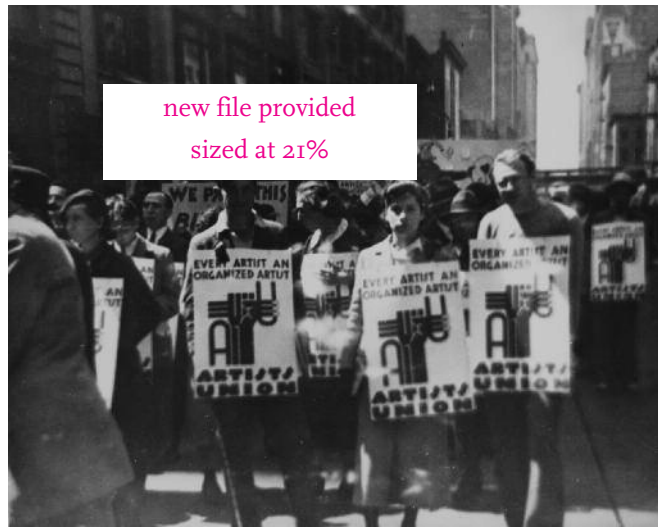
class position.⁴³ Objects such as paintings were no longer the products of anonymous craftsmen but the singular creations of named individuals, and artists' earnings began to rise along with their status.

In the 1960s art workers theorized how modes of human making are affected by specific economic strictures, the aestheticization of experience, and the production of sensibilities.⁴⁴ What makes the coherence of the phrase *art worker* challenging—even oxymoronic—is that under capitalism art also functions as the “outside,” or other, to labor: a nonutilitarian, nonproductive activity against which mundane work is defined, a leisure-time pursuit of self-expression, or a utopian alternative to the deadening effects of capitalism. While his writings on the matter vary over time and are by no means unified, Karl Marx's contributions to this subject have been among the most influential.⁴⁵ He makes many explicit connections between artistic making and labor, writing, for instance, “A writer is a productive laborer in so far as he produces ideas, but in so far as he enriches the publisher who publishes his works, he is a wage-laborer for the capitalist.”⁴⁶ Because of the erosion of patronage models, the artist is often *more* subjected to the tastes of the market and its deadening effects than other wage laborers are. This casts art not as “play” or nonwork but as another part of the capitalist division of labor. Yet Marx holds out the hope for expression or production beyond the market that might be unalienated, if still requiring skill: “Really free labor, the composing of music for example, is at the same time damned serious and demands the greatest effort.”⁴⁷

Drawing on Marx's theoretical work, and prompted by a desire to make art legitimate, necessary, and meaningful, artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tried to erode the distinction between art and labor by insisting that their actions, and the products of those actions, were indeed work. These efforts were often specifically socialist, even as their products ranged from high-priced luxury goods (as in the utopian craftsmanship model of William Morris) to laboratory experiments and functional design (as in the productivist art undertaken in the wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution).⁴⁸ The Mexican muralists of the 1920s identified themselves as workers, founding the Revolutionary Union of Technical Workers, Painters, and Sculptors in 1922 and attempting to create new iconographies that would be legible to the working class.⁴⁹ (In contrast to the muralists' depictions of greedy industrialists and heroic laborers, however, the art workers of the late 1960s and early 1970s did not, by and large, take a populist stance or insist that their art itself was “for the workers.”)

In the 1920s and 1930s in the United States, artists formed revolutionary cultural organizations in attempts to “forge links between them and the proletariat,” as An-

FIGURE 9 Artists' Union Rally, ca. 1935. Left to right: Edward "Deyo" Jacobs, Winifred Millus, and Hugh Miller. Photograph by Irving Marantz. Courtesy of the Gerald Monroe research material on Works Progress Administration, American Artists' Congress, and Artists' Union, ca. 1930–71. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



drew Hemingway has phrased it.⁵⁰ Hemingway's nuanced account provides documentation of the ideological, economic, and social factors that led to the formation of the Artists' Union in 1933. Having taken part in the state-funded projects of the Works Progress Administration, the artists in the Artists' Union were literally wage laborers, and on that ground they agitated for workers' rights and demanded better pay (Fig. 9). "Every artist an organized artist," proclaimed the posters at a 1935 rally, featuring their signature logo in which an upraised fist wielding a paintbrush is reminiscent of the Soviet hammer and sickle. The Artists' Union produced a newsletter (the *Art Front*), went on strike, and organized themselves like the industrial unions that were increasingly influential. In 1938 they voted to affiliate with the CIO. The New York branch was especially militant, demanding employment of all artists by the federal government. Taking their cues from the sit-down strikes and picket lines in the Midwest, the New York Artists' Union held violent demonstrations to protest the steady dismantling of WPA funding by the local administrator Colonel Brehon Somervell, who "had a profound conviction that to create 'pictures' was not 'work.'"⁵¹

Artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s—working under distinctly different economic conditions—looked back to the 1930s as the moment of the most ardent championing of art and/as labor in the U.S. context. Robert Morris recollects a widespread interest in the Artists' Union's organizing efforts, citing Francis O'Connor's recently published book *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* (1969), which was circulated in the AWC.⁵² O'Connor used this study to make recommendations

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to the National Endowment for the Arts regarding federal funding: lauding the WPA, the report promoted state support for the arts and countered the prevailing wisdom that such a system would necessarily impose formal restrictions on artists. Encouraged by these findings, some AWC artists supported a wage system for artists, even as the artists proved difficult to organize in any systematic way. As Lippard admitted, “Advocates of a tighter structure, of a real dues-paying union, have reason but not reality on their side.”⁵³ Some art workers worried that governmental oversight would rob aesthetic production of its transgressive status. While admiring the Artists’ Union for its solidarity and collective energy, Jim Hurrell, in an article for the *Artworkers Newsletter* entitled “What Happened to the Artist’s Union of the 1930s?” declared that the New Deal state’s “sterile prerequisites” had defanged the art⁵⁴ (even though, in fact, the WPA artists experienced some degree of artistic freedom in their projects). Few artists in the 1960s and 1970s wanted to return to making socialist realist works under the auspices of the state; instead they sought new forms of oppositional art that were in concert with, yet not subsumed under, their politics.

One of the legacies of Marx’s thought is his assertion that art is a mode of skilled production—a form of work—much like any other and as such is open to categories of analysis that attend to its production, distribution, and consumption. Within this rubric even purportedly “autonomous” abstraction practiced by artists of the 1940s and 1950s came under scrutiny by the art workers. As early as 1965, Barbara Rose stated that “art as a form of free expression is seen as a weapon in the Cold War.”⁵⁵ The Left, haunted by the specter of Stalinism, had seen abstraction as one way out of doctrinaire socialist realism. By the early 1970s, however, in no small part because of the efforts of Max Kozloff, an AWC member, artists had become acutely aware of how avant-garde art in the United States had been made to serve state power abroad.⁵⁶ According to these accounts, abstract expressionist artists, who, for some, embodied the romantic ideal of working free from the pressures of the market, had, however unwittingly, been marketed and sold as part of an ideological program in which the American government trumpeted artists’ freedom to create works seemingly unrelated to politics, in distinction to Soviet socialist realism. The Cold War era’s volatile entanglements of abstract form, ideology, and politics cast a lingering shadow on artists in the late 1960s, and some pursued “difficult” artistic practices that were consciously removed from “expression.” As witnesses to the morphing of culture into what Theodore Adorno termed “the culture industry,” art workers understood how their efforts could become caught up in regimes of commodification as well as in the larger machine of the military-industrial complex.⁵⁷ In the face of this instrumen-

talization, some sought to assert art's "unsaleability and functionlessness," to quote Rose's assessment of the radical promise of minimal art, while at the same time organizing as workers to puzzle through their shared role in protest culture.⁵⁸

Thus the Vietnam War–era generation of leftist artists were influenced by numerous factors, including a rejection of previous forms of artistic labor within the United States. They were also aware—if unevenly—of contemporary international developments, not least the climate of radicalism of May 1968. As Guy Debord wrote about the Situationist International: "An international association of Situationists can be seen as a union of workers in an advanced sector of culture, or more precisely as a union of all those who claim the right to a task now impeded by social conditions; hence as an attempt at an organization of professional revolutionaries in culture."⁵⁹ Debord drew upon Marx's conceptions of how art is itself *productive*, for he understood aesthetics as formative to the education of the senses—art, that is, helps create social subjects. In fact, relatively recent translations of relevant texts by Marx emphasized the psychic effects of alienated labor, self-estrangement, and negation—useful concepts to apply to the psychologically dense act of producing art.⁶⁰ One writer in 1973 provides a summary of Marx's notions that circulated at the time: "The similarity between art and labor lies in their shared relationship to the human essence; that is, they are both creative activities by means of which man produces objects that express him, that speak for and about him. Therefore, there is no radical opposition between art and work."⁶¹

As T. J. Clark noted in 1973, within the fine arts, "for many reasons, there are very few images of work."⁶² In the late 1960s and early 1970s, representations of work were increasingly interesting to art historians like Clark. More to the point, the question of how artistic making might be understood as a category of labor was, when Clark was writing in the early 1970s, just beginning to be thought through with rigor via the new field of social art history.⁶³ Much of the art examined in this book does not provide easy visual proof that the artist "works" and is instead somewhat resistant to such imaging, either because the labor in question is performed by other hands or because it is primarily mental. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, that is, many laboring artistic bodies were displaced: they yielded to the body of the viewer or to the body of the installer, or they were somewhat effaced in a move toward intellectual work.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the publication of English editions of texts by Antonio Gramsci, the influence of Debord, the importation of Frankfurt School writers such as Adorno and Marcuse, and the appearance of contemporary writings by Louis

Althusser (both in French and in translation) also drove a reevaluation of how art and labor might be considered together.⁶⁴ Marcuse in particular exerted considerable influence on art workers. In his early writings, he fostered a utopian conception of how work might function. He believed that once erotic energies were no longer sublimated, work would be transformed into play, and play itself would be productive: “If work were accompanied by a reactivation of pre-genital polymorphous eroticism, it would tend to become gratifying in itself without losing its *work* content.”⁶⁵ Moreover, in the late 1960s Marcuse turned his attention to artistic making and often explicitly connected it to his ideas about work. In books such as *An Essay on Liberation* and *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, he saw the merging of art and work as the ultimate aim of any revolution.⁶⁶

The class mobility conferred on artists makes for a complex story, and artists’ identification with, dependency on, and estrangement from the bourgeoisie are long-standing issues—for Renaissance art historians as well as for theorists of modern art. The artist’s ambiguous class position raises a series of questions about both art and work: How can art be a profession if there is no employer? To count as “work,” need the effort involved be paid? Need it be, as Harry Braverman has defined it in 1974, “intelligent and purposive”?⁶⁷ What, then, does this mean for artists whose work goes, intentionally or not, unseen or unsold? Or is work simply, as Studs Terkel put it in 1972, “what people do all day”?⁶⁸ Is “work” an activity, or is it a spatial designation, a place or site? And how does the art itself function—how does it produce meanings, representations, and social relations? What mode of production is art making, and how does it mediate between the political economy of exchanged goods and, to use Jean Baudrillard’s phrase, the “political economy of the sign”?⁶⁹ That is, how does art, as an object and a system of signification, circulate as both commodity and sign?

Precisely these questions were at stake for artists in the 1960s and 1970s, along with others: How might art operate in and upon the public sphere, and how might it serve as a kind of political activity? What was new about the conception of the art worker was not only the turn away from an explicitly unified aesthetic but also the art workers’ almost single-minded focus on the art museum as their primary antagonist. Because artists in this period did not receive wages from a socialized state or a government program in any systematic way, they viewed the museum as the primary gatekeeper of power, prestige, and value.

By calling themselves art *workers*, artists in the late 1960s meant to move away from taints of amateurism (or unproductive play) and to place themselves in the larger arena of political activity. This is the connotation summoned by the British political

theorist Carole Pateman in the definition of work she offers in her 1970 book *Participation and Democratic Theory*:

By “work” we mean not just the activity that provides for most people the major determinant of their status in the world, or the occupation that the individual follows full time and that provides him with his livelihood, but we refer also to activities that are carried on in co-operation with others, that are “public” and intimately related to the wider society and its (economic) needs; thus we refer to activities that, potentially, involve the individual in decisions about collective affairs, the affairs of the enterprise and of the community, in a way that leisure-time activities usually do not.⁷⁰

Art is often understood as an essentially solitary, individual act, but Pateman’s term provides one way to configure a broader terminology for artistic identity; it also suggests that “leisure-time activities” are usually—but not always—opposed to art. Pateman’s definition of work is useful, especially as it encompasses questions of the public and of the collective.

While *labor* and *work*, as near-synonyms, are used somewhat interchangeably, it is important to recognize that they are not exact equivalents. Instructive evidence of the distinctions between the terms that operated in the late 1960s and early 1970s can be found in mainstream and scholarly texts on employment, trends in the workplace, managerial styles, and human production, from sociological studies, government reports, and congressional testimonies to trade paperbacks and business handbooks. In these texts *work* and *labor* are by no means transposable. *Work* refers to jobs and occupations in the broadest sense; *labor* designates organized labor or union politics. Two books from the era illustrate the point: one, titled *Work in America*, is a governmental report assessing employment trends, productivity, and worker satisfaction; the other, titled *Labor in America*, brings together conference papers regarding the challenges of unionization and the possibilities of raising class consciousness.⁷¹

As Raymond Williams notes, *work* stands in for general doing or making, as well as all forms of paid employment, while *labor* is more explicitly affiliated with the organization of employment under capitalism. As “a term for a commodity and a class,” *labor* denotes both the aggregate body of workers as a unit and “the economic abstraction of an activity.”⁷² Williams further comments on the slightly outmoded and highly specialized nature of labor; the phrase *art worker*, meant to signal class affiliations even as those affiliations were frequently disavowed, thus activated a much wider sphere of activity than *art laborer* and was used to encompass current concerns such as process and fabrication.

U.S. Labor in the Late 1960s and Early 1970s

Artists were developing into art workers within a specific historical context. The late sixties and early seventies witnessed widespread uncertainty about the value of work in an emerging information-based economy, including feminist calls for pay equity and an intensification of strikes unprecedented since the 1930s. The very definitions of *work* and *labor* in the Vietnam War era were undergoing massive shifts that called their contours relentlessly into question. *Labor* was being stretched to encompass more and more territory (as feminists defined household chores as work, and new categories of laborers organized, such as Chicano farmworkers). By the late 1960s, moreover, attitudes toward work were changing as many young people dismissed, scorned, and otherwise devalued regular wage labor.⁷³

More substantive changes being wrought in global and national economies forced a reevaluation of what it meant to work, what work should look like, and who counted as a worker. From 1962 to 1969, real wages (after taxes and adjusted for inflation) dropped significantly.⁷⁴ In addition, work became increasingly hard to find, as rising inflation due to the cost of the war swelled unemployment rates, especially among blacks in urban areas. Work in the United States is marked by stark gender and race inequalities. The unemployment rate in the mid-1960s for blacks was double that of whites; education levels were also lower, and proportionally twice as many blacks worked in low-paying manual or service jobs.

Nationally, agitation against labor conditions reached a boiling point at this time. In 1972 General Motors workers in Lordstown, Ohio, went on strike for twenty-two days, not to protest low wages or increase benefits, but to insist that working in factories was fundamentally inhumane. The workers objected to the punishing pace of the assembly line, GM's push for "industrial speed-up," and the constant monitoring and regimentation that characterized the Taylorized shop floor. In other words, they rebelled against industrial work itself. As Gary Bryner, the Lordstown union president said in 1972, "There are symptoms of the alienated worker in our plant. The absentee rate, as you said, has gone continually higher. Turnover rate is enormous. . . . [The worker] has become alienated to the point where he casts off the leadership of his union, his Government. He is disassociated with the whole establishment. That is going to lead to chaos."⁷⁵ The alarmist tone suggests that alienation at work undermines a worker's obedience not only to factory managers and union leaders but also to the state, leading to an unraveling of society. Bryner was careful to note that this alienation stemmed from the systemic problem with factories and un-

just conditions of labor rather than from individual workers' declining work ethic. Discontent in the workplace led to a great wave of strikes known as the Vietnam War-era "Labor Revolt."⁷⁶ Strike activity reached a peak unseen since the 1940s, climaxing in a dramatic number of shutdowns from 1970 to 1972. Labor historians have traced this wave of strikes to low wages and to "a widespread increase in strike-proneness" as a more strident workforce became more willing to engage in extreme actions.⁷⁷

Even outside organized labor, dissatisfaction with work was widespread enough to prompt a Senate subcommittee hearing in 1972 dedicated to the perceived crisis of "worker alienation."⁷⁸ This remarkable deployment of the Marxist concept of alienation within official U.S. governmental discourse demonstrates how widespread the language of alienation was at this time. The crisis—the threat the union leader called a brewing "chaos"—seemed all the more dangerous as it sent ripples out beyond the circle of unionized labor. Large numbers of students went on strike to protest the Vietnam War, and groups like the Chicano Moratorium demanded an end to work as usual. The strike and its cousin the moratorium extended the focus of protest from working conditions to demand nothing less than the withdrawal of citizens from the nation. As Marcuse said in 1972, "In spreading wildcat strikes, in the militant strategy of factory occupations, in the attitude and demands of young workers, the protest reveals a rebellion against the *whole* of working conditions imposed, against the *whole* performance to which one is condemned" (italics in original).⁷⁹

No longer did industrialization promise an end to the worker's misery, as some had proclaimed in the immediate post-World War II era. The days of cheerily optimistic tracts such as *Industrialism and Industrial Man* (1960), which predicted that technology would lead to less work and more leisure for virtually the entire workforce, had passed.⁸⁰ By the mid-1960s pessimism began to set in; with real wages declining and unemployment increasing, it was commonplace to assert that as technology took over, alienation in the workplace increased. Books like Bertell Ollman's *Alienation: Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (1971) and István Mészáros's *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (1970) sharpened an interest in alienation as *the* central problem of capitalism.⁸¹

It is not overstating the case to suggest that the popular attitude toward work in this decade was summed up in the very first sentence of Terkel's best-selling oral history of 1972, *Working: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do*: "This book, being about work, is, by its very nature, about violence—to the spirit as well as the body."⁸² Terkel took this bleak assumption as

his starting point; in the United States in 1972, work was violence. The explicit connection between work and violence was also made in 1972 when members of a special task force, formed by Nixon's secretary of health, education, and welfare, decried the degradation of work in America because of industrial manufacturing processes, the numbing effects of the division of labor under Taylorism, and the exclusion of both blue- and white-collar workers from decision making: "Significant numbers of American workers are dissatisfied with the quality of their working lives. Dull, repetitive, seemingly meaningless tasks, offering little challenge or autonomy, are causing discontent among workers. . . . As a result, the productivity of the worker is low—as measured by absenteeism, turnover rates, wildcat strikes, sabotage, poor-quality products, and a reluctance by workers to commit themselves to their work tasks."⁸³ Even white-collar workers felt the toll of Taylorism as dissatisfaction permeated all levels of employment. To cite the government task force's report: "The office today, where the work is segmented and authoritarian, is often a factory. For a growing number of jobs, there is little to distinguish them but the color of the worker's collar: computer keypunch operations and typing pools share much in common with the automobile assembly line."⁸⁴ The report notes that the line between blue- and white-collar workers was porous, a comment that suggests the possibility of an unexpected alliance between different sectors of workers if they recognized their common oppression. The resistance to current conditions of work was waged on multiple fronts, from organized labor to the women's movement, which, inflected by socialist theories, analyzed the gendering of labor and promoted nothing less than a total restructuring of everyday life. For example, feminists redefined household chores as work—possibly remunerative—and advocated for equal pay for women in the workforce.⁸⁵

At the bodily rather than the psychic level, workplace dangers were being exposed by Ralph Nader, who reported that in 1968 "a total of 14,300 people died in industrial accidents in our country—almost exactly the same as the number of American servicemen who died in Vietnam that year."⁸⁶ Because the working class was disproportionately fighting in the Vietnam War, the parallel with the wartime body count is notable.⁸⁷ These juxtaposed statistics signaled that working-class bodies were being treated as expendable, whether they were crushed on the factory floor or gunned down in Southeast Asia.

Postindustrial Professionalization

Just as artists increasingly embraced manufactured objects as part of their work process, such manufacturing was being broadly reconfigured. In addition to being framed by the Vietnam War, the late 1960s and early 1970s initiated economic and cultural changes known in shorthand as postindustrialism.⁸⁸ In this time, the composition, tenor, and manufacturing base of work in the United States shifted measurably, as did the international economy. Hallmarks of the changing order include a growing emphasis on technological information and knowledge, the decline of skilled manufacturing jobs, and a transition away from a goods-producing economy to a service economy. This break was noted at the time in texts such as Alain Touraine's *Post-industrial Society, Tomorrow's Social History* (1969) and Daniel Bell's *Coming of Post-industrialism* (1973).⁸⁹

Furthermore, the postindustrial society is characterized by an increasingly complex interweaving of the economic and the cultural. That is, the postindustrial is connected with the postmodern (as a culturally dominant style, a mode of capitalism, and a historical period). Art historians have suggested that the 1960s, in its artistic and political ruptures, represented, as Hal Foster has written, “a paradigm shift towards postmodernist practices.”⁹⁰ The economic, social, and political crises of the late 1960s and early 1970s were loosely bracketed, in the U.S. context, by the Vietnam War; indeed, Fredric Jameson called Vietnam the “first terrible postmodernist war.”⁹¹ At the threshold of this new economic order, and in a time of political turmoil, work—and art—was both ruthlessly redefined and reorganized. In other words, there was a complex interface between the war, postmodern forms, and postindustrial labor conditions.

This turn to postindustrial labor generated further class anxieties for artists. Art workers understood themselves to be a marginal population, underpaid and undervalued—especially if they did not make marketable art. Sometimes, instead of identifying themselves as the downtrodden proletariat, they turned to racial metaphors. Andre in 1976 referred to his position in relation to the museum as “slave practice.”⁹² This statement is shocking, as artists have privileges, choices, and opportunities that slaves do not; such claims of righteous victimhood and powerlessness verged on the ludicrous. The New York artistic Left was fraught with problematic exclusions with regard to race even as it espoused and attempted inclusiveness. Black artists such as Lloyd, Ringgold, Al Coppedge, and Benny Andrews, as active members of the AWC, made highly visible, widely supported demands for racial equity in museum exhibitions;

it was one of the primary planks of the AWC's thirteen demands. But comments about the "enslaved" status of artists indicate that the cross-racial solidarity claimed by the AWC was itself laced with racism. Ringgold, who was arrested along with GAAG founders Hendricks and Toche for her participation in the antiwar *Flag Show* at Judson Church in 1970, later recalled the impressively quick integration of race-related issues into the AWC's platform but also denounced the Art Strike of 1970 as a platform for "superstar white artists."⁹³ Likewise, black scholar Michele Wallace (Ringgold's daughter) recounts that the Art Strike was her mother's first and most visible encounter with the racism of the art world.⁹⁴ Dissatisfied with the lack of attention to racial inequities among art workers, she and Ringgold defected from the AWC and formed a splinter group, Women Art Students and Artists for Black Artists' Liberation (WASABAL).

Art workers' dubious connections with "slaves"—and with the conventional working class—were made all the more pronounced by the inauguration at this time of an unprecedented boom market for art. Thomas Crow writes of this paradox: "It will emerge that the story of art within the new politics of the 1960s is one of considerable ambivalence, as artists attempted to reconcile their stance of opposition with increasing support for their activities in a new and aggressive global marketplace."⁹⁵ Artists were supported by patrons and institutions as never before, giving them increased opportunities to receive grants, sell their works, and garner press attention. Harold Rosenberg commented in 1967 that minimalism "reflects the new situation of art as an activity that, having left the rebellious semi-underworld of bohemia, has become a profession taught at universities, supported by the public, discussed in the press, and encouraged by the government."⁹⁶

In other words, in the 1960s occupational prestige for artists increased greatly. One factor in this, as Howard Singerman has documented in his *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*, was the large number of artists receiving formal training in universities, which legitimized art making as a field of study and emphasized artists' "employable" skills.⁹⁷ Brian Wallis posits that another factor in this professionalization was the formation, in 1965, of the National Endowment for the Arts, which actively encouraged artists to "market" themselves and offered seminars on "the business of being an artist."⁹⁸ The NEA began granting awards to individual artists in 1967 and quickly became a source of income; included on the list of NEA grant recipients from 1967 and 1968 were Andre, Jo Baer, Dan Flavin, Robert Huot, and Morris.⁹⁹

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, new marketing tools aimed at young artists—for example, a series of workshops run by the management consultant Calvin J. Good-

man, “The Artist’s Own Business” (Fig. 10)—promised to teach artists and dealers how to “develop new markets, improve their pricing policies, and earn more income through increased art sales.” One seminar promised to address “the artist as an independent businessman.” The cover of Goodman’s promotional brochure makes his agenda clear: on it a tube of Grumbacher oil paint squeezes out a dollar sign. Similarly, *The Artist’s Guide to His Market*, published in 1970, suggests that artists approach banks and furniture stores and offer to show their work in lobbies and showrooms.¹⁰⁰ (Unsurprisingly, the title reads “his market”—feminist artists were seeking alternatives to a gallery system that mostly excluded them.)

In 1967 Rosenberg commented that “instead of being . . . an act of rebellion, despair or self-indulgence, art is being normalized as a professional activity within society.”¹⁰¹ Diana Crane, in her quantitative account of the explosion of the New York art world from 1940 to 1985, tracks broadening governmental, corporate, and foundation support, as well as growing numbers of individual patrons who were buying larger numbers of artworks. Galleries and dealers increasingly turned a profit, and corporate art collections expanded at an astounding rate, from sixteen founded in 1940–59 to nearly eighty established in 1960–79.¹⁰² Using Bureau of the Census statistics, Crane also indicates how the ranks of those who identified themselves as “working artists” swelled considerably (in 1970 that number was six hundred thousand).¹⁰³ The number of art dealers in New York more than doubled between 1961 and 1970.¹⁰⁴

Simultaneous with the NEA’s boosterism and the explosion of corporate support for art, reports appeared that forecast the end of the gallery system, the collapse of the art market, and the dire economic position of artists. One 1969 report called “The Economic Crisis in the Arts” reported a “glum outlook” for the arts, saying that despite the “myth of a cultural boom” the situation was bleak.¹⁰⁵ An article in the *Saturday Review* in 1970 admitted that despite the much-lauded increase in arts patronage artists still scrambled for money, lived in poor conditions, and had scant resources.¹⁰⁶ It cited a report issued by the MacDowell Colony that found that only one in ten painters or sculptors “was able to support himself and his family on what he earned from sales of his work.”¹⁰⁷ Lippard finds even that small fraction inflated—“Almost nobody could pay rent from art.”¹⁰⁸ As Gross wrote in 1970: “We are on the brink of a genuine state and national emergency situation in the arts. . . . An emergency will have to be declared in Washington and Albany within the next six months if the art world is to survive in any form at all and if thousands of artists are to escape eviction, starvation, or the total annihilation of their profession.”¹⁰⁹

It is hard to get a handle on these competing claims—the art market is booming

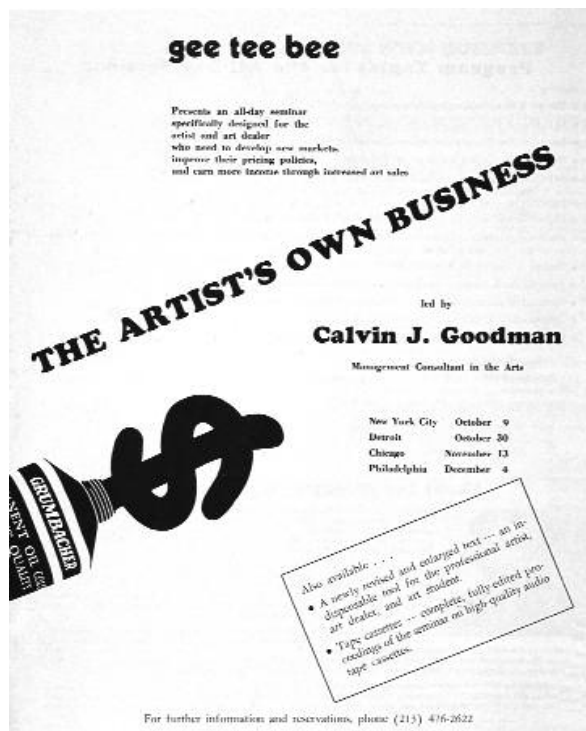


FIGURE 10 “The Artist’s Own Business,” brochure for a seminar led by Calvin J. Goodman, 1971. Courtesy Calvin J. Goodman and Gee Tee Bee.

but most artists are starving—but this contradiction is exactly the point. The art market was (and still is) predicated on a “star system” that elevates only a small number of individuals. Most others struggle to pay the rent, take up adjunct teaching positions, or work day jobs. By the mid-1960s some artists were acknowledged professionals making decent livings, but they nonetheless many felt themselves to be disenfranchised workers who demanded greater control over their working conditions. The rising number of educated artists, it could be argued, raised artists’ sense of the value of their artistic labor. Art workers’ unionizing efforts ignited precisely when market forces legitimized artists’ desire for status and money.

Although the AWC and the Art Strike as organizations effloresced and quickly folded, their legacies—including a complex investment in art as work—endure. The reimagining of artistic labor dramatically altered how art was made and circulated in the United States, as well as how its forms and aesthetics were theorized. Conceptions of artists as workers were not monolithic and were often unpredictably deployed, as the case studies that follow demonstrate. But the major redefinition of artistic identity vis-à-vis class, protest politics, and the art institution was unprecedented in the United States.

Notes

The following abbreviations are used throughout the notes:

AAA	Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
AWC	Art Workers' Coalition
GAAG	Guerrilla Art Action Group
GRI	Getty Research Institute Library, Los Angeles
MoMA	Museum of Modern Art, New York
RMA	Robert Morris Archive, Gardiner, New York
TGA	Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Gallery Archive, London

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Typed flyer signed "An art worker," June 1969, New York, Lucy Lippard Papers, Museum of Modern Art file, AAA.
- 2 Lil Picard, "Protest and Rebellion," *Arts Magazine*, May 1970, 18–19.
- 3 These feminist interventions—both U.S. based and not—include the writings found in Mary Kelly, *Imagine Desire (Writing Art)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), and Martha Rosler, *Decoys and Disruptions, Selected Writings, 1975–2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).
- 4 For one clarion call that includes many of the significant feminist scholars working in this vein, see the statement "Transnational Feminist Practices against the War—A Statement," by Paola Bacchetta, Tina Campt, Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan, Minoo Moallem, and Jennifer Terry, issued in October 2001 and later published in *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 2 (2002): 302–8.
- 5 Francis Frascina has helpfully charted many antiwar art activities of this time in his *Art, Politics, and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America* (Manchester: Manchester

- University Press, 1999). Artist Andrea Fraser has written about the AWC in terms of service economies and artistic autonomy; see “What’s Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere, Part II,” in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alex Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 55–80. Gregory Sholette has also written extensively about collectivity and new models of work; see his “State of the Union,” *Artforum* 46 (March 2008): 181–82.
- 6 Caroline Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- 7 Helen Molesworth, “Work Ethic,” in *Work Ethic*, exh. cat., ed. Helen Molesworth (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 25.
- 8 For an early, influential articulation of this shift, see C. Wright Mills, “Letter to the New Left,” *New Left Review* 1 (September–October 1960): 18–23.
- 9 An account of the 1972 formation of British Artists’ Union can be found in John A. Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002); for more on Argentine artists’ organizing in the 1960s, see Andrea Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics*, trans. Peter Kahn (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). While the membership of the AWC was primarily limited to the New York, the group went on to inspire similarly named organizations in Boston and Atlanta in the late 1970s.
- 10 Other regional U.S. histories regarding art and politics have been explored by Patricia Kelly, *1968: Art and Politics in Chicago* (Chicago: Depaul University Art Museum, 2008), and Peter Selz, *Art of Engagement: Visual Politics in California and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
- 11 For more on Fluxus in this regard, see Robert E. Haywood, “Critique of Instrumental Labor: Meyer Schapiro’s and Allan Kaprow’s Theory of Avant-Garde Art,” in *Experiments in the Everyday: Allan Kaprow and Robert Watts—Events, Objects, Documents*, ed. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Judith F. Rodenbeck (New York: Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, 1999), 27–46; and Hannah Higgins, *Fluxus Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Sally Banes’s look at Judson dance is an invaluable chronicle of the city that slightly predates the moment I am looking at; *Greenwich Village, 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). Catherine Woods’s smart, focused study on Yvonne Rainer insightfully investigates questions of labor; *Yvonne Rainer: The Mind Is a Muscle* (London: Afterall Books, 2007).
- 12 “End Your Silence,” *New York Times*, April 18, 1965, sec. 4, E7.
- 13 Frascina, *Art, Politics*.
- 14 An in-depth account at the 1966 *Peace Tower* is found in Francis Frascina, “‘There’ and ‘Here,’ ‘Then’ and ‘Now’: The Los Angeles Artist’s Tower of Protest (1966) and Its Legacy,” in his *Art, Politics, and Dissent*, 57–107.
- 15 Art Berman, “Sunset Strip Project: Art Tower Started as Vietnam Protest,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 28, 1966, 3.
- 16 Therese Schwartz, “The Politicization of the Avant-Garde,” *Art in America* 59 (November–December 1971): 99.
- 17 Susan Sontag, “Inventing and Sustaining an Appropriate Response (Speech at the Artists’ Tower Dedication),” *Los Angeles Free Press*, March 4, 1966, 4.
- 18 “Ad Reinhardt: Art as Art,” interview by Jeanne Siegel, broadcast on WBAI, New York, June

- 13, 1967, published in Jeanne Siegel, *Artwords: Discourse on the 60s and 70s* (New York: De Capo, 1985), 28.
- 19 Quoted in James Aulich, “Vietnam, Fine Art, and the Culture Industry,” in *Vietnam Images: War and Representation*, ed. Jeffery Walsh and James Aulich (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 73.
- 20 Lucy Lippard, *A Different War: Vietnam in Art* (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1990), is the most comprehensive account of Vietnam War–related visual art. Other exhibition catalogs include C. David Thomas, ed., *As Seen by Both Sides: American and Vietnamese Artists Look at the War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991) and Maurice Berger, ed., *Representing Vietnam, 1963–1973: The Antiwar Movement in America* (New York: Hunter College, Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery, 1988).
- 21 Hal Foster, “The Crux of Minimalism,” in *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 68.
- 22 Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 122.
- 23 The military conflict between the United States and North Vietnam from 1959 to 1975 is known colloquially as the Vietnam War. However, an official declaration of war was never issued, and the conflict’s deadly impact was felt far beyond Vietnam throughout Southeast Asia, including Laos and Cambodia. (In Vietnam, it is known as “the American War.”) For a basic history, see David Elliot, *The Vietnam War: Revolution and Change in the Mekong Delta, 1930–1975* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2003). For more on the antiwar movement, see Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance during the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Peace Now! American Society and the Ending of the Vietnam War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); and Tom Wells, *The War Within: America’s Battle over Vietnam* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994).
- 24 The challenge of periodization is addressed by Fredric Jameson’s “Periodizing the Sixties,” in *The 60s without Apology*, ed. Sohnya Sayres et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 178–209.
- 25 Numerous useful overview texts address these subjects, including Thomas Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1996); Erika Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Patricia Hills, *Modern Art in the USA: Issues and Controversies of the 20th Century* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001); David Joselit, *American Art since 1945* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003); and Anne Rorimer, *New Art in the 60s and 70s: Redefining Reality* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001). In addition, new monographic studies have thought through the connections between the artistic forms and politics of the 1960s; for instance, Branden W. Joseph, *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage* (New York: Zone Books, 2008); Carrie Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); and Pamela Lee, *Chronophobia: On Art in the Time of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004). Recent exhibition catalogs have also contributed to this literature; see Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer, eds., *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965–1975* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995); Ann Goldstein and Lila Gabrielle Mark, eds., *A Minimal Future? Art as Object, 1958–1968* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); and Cornelia H. Butler and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, eds., *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

- 26 For instance, Carter Ratcliff, *Out of the Box: The Reinvention of Art, 1965–1975* (New York: Allworth Press, 2000).
- 27 Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), 15.
- 28 See Michael Lind, *Vietnam, The Necessary War: A Reinterpretation of America's Most Disastrous Military Conflict* (New York: Free Press, 1999).
- 29 The literature on this era is immense. Its memory has been reconstructed, rehearsed, and rehabilitated in academic writings, television, film, and fiction. For some examinations of the decade that emphasize its battles both overseas and within U.S. culture, see David Anderson and John Ernst, eds., *The War That Never Ends: New Perspectives on the Vietnam War* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2007); Terry Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Alexander Bloom, ed., *Long Time Gone: Sixties America Then and Now* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); M. J. Heade, *The Sixties in American History, Politics, and Protest* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborne, 2001); David Maraniss, *They Marched into Sunlight: War and Peace in Vietnam and America, October 1967* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003); and Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 30 David Steigerwald, *The Sixties and the End of America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 108.
- 31 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 159.
- 32 Joseph Kosuth argues that the collapse of 1960s idealism led to an increasingly critical engagement with the commodity; see his "1975," *Fox*, no. 2 (1975): 94.

1. FROM ARTISTS TO ART WORKERS

- 1 Flyer reproduced in AWC, *Documents 1* (New York: AWC, 1970), 1.
- 2 The Marxist basis of William Morris's conceptions of aesthetics and art production is explored in Caroline Arscott, "William Morris: Decoration and Materialism," in *Marxism and the History of Art: From William Morris to the New Left*, ed. Andrew Hemingway (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 9–27.
- 3 Members of both the BECC and the AWC included Faith Ringgold, Benny Andrews, and Tom Lloyd. The *Harlem on My Mind* exhibition was criticized by Black artists and Harlem residents, not least because it was organized with no community input. For more on the BECC, see Benny Andrews, "Benny Andrews' Journal: A Black Artist's View of Artistic and Political Activism," in Mary Schmidt Campbell, *Tradition and Conflict: Images of a Turbulent Decade, 1963–1973* (New York: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1985), 69–73. For an especially detailed look at the debates about the Metropolitan Museum show, see Bridget Cooks, "Black Artists and Activism: *Harlem on My Mind* (1969)," *American Studies* 48 (Spring 2008): 5–39.
- 4 More detailed—and not entirely compatible—histories include Julie Ault, ed., *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Alex Gross, "The Artists' Branch of the 'Movement,'" unpublished manuscript; Francis Frascina, *Art, Politics, and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America* (Manchester: Manchester Uni-

versity Press, 1999); Lucy Lippard, “The Art Workers’ Coalition: Not a History,” in *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1984), 10–20; Beth Anne Handler, “The Art of Activism: Artists and Writers Protest, the Art Workers’ Coalition, and the New York Art Strike Protest the Vietnam War” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2001); Bradford Martin, *The Theater Is in the Streets: Politics and Public Performance in Sixties America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004); and Alan W. Moore, “Artists’ Collectives: Focus on New York, 1975–2000,” in *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, ed. Blake Stimson and Greg Sholette (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 192–221.

- 5 Lippard’s awareness of her critical writing as work, discussed in Chapter 4, is a case in point.
- 6 “Statement of January 5, 1969,” reproduced in AWC, *Documents* 1, 5.
- 7 Hans Haacke, interview, April 21, 2007.
- 8 Transcripts of the AWC hearing are printed in AWC, *An Open Hearing on the Subject: What Should Be the Program of the Art Workers Regarding Museum Reform and to Establish the Program of an Open Art Workers Coalition* (New York: AWC, 1970).
- 9 Alexander Alberro’s *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003) discusses the artist’s rights contract at length and cogently maps the emergence of conceptual art as intellectual property.
- 10 Perreault, in AWC, *Open Hearing*, statement 52.
- 11 Lozano, in AWC, *Open Hearing*, statement 38.
- 12 Lozano, however, rejected any identification with the women’s movement; after leaving the art world altogether, she subsequently moved to Dallas and commenced a project in which she refused to speak to women. For a persuasive reading of this rejection, see Helen Molesworth, “Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out: The Rejection of Lee Lozano,” *Art Journal* 61 (Winter 2002): 64–73.
- 13 Jean Toche, in GAAG, *GAAG, the Guerrilla Art Action Group, 1969–76: A Selection* (New York: Printed Matter, 1978), n.p.
- 14 To some extent, this branching into communities happened without the participation of museums—the Studio Museum of Harlem opened in 1970 with a show featuring Tom Lloyd, an active participant of the AWC. Ralph Ortiz, another artist affiliated with the AWC, was central to the founding of El Museo del Barrio in Spanish Harlem in 1969.
- 15 Robert Katz, *Naked by the Window: The Fatal Marriage of Carl Andre and Ana Mendieta* (New York: Atlantic Press, 1990), 229.
- 16 Alex Gross, “Black Art-Tech-Art-Prick Art,” *East Village Other*, April 2, 1969, 12.
- 17 Lippard, “Art Workers’ Coalition,” 20.
- 18 Gene Swenson, “From the International Liberation Front,” ca. 1970, Lucy Lippard Papers, AAA, Swenson file.
- 19 These include the AWC’s symbolic funeral procession through the streets of New York carrying banners with the names of Vietnamese and American casualties; Tosun Bayrak’s three-block-long street theater that was a riot of fighting, sex, animals, food, and bodily excretions; and Yayoi Kusama’s naked peace protests in the MoMA sculpture garden. These events are recounted in Lippard, *Get the Message?* and Martin, *Theater*.

- 20 Francis Frascina, “My Lai, *Guernica*, MoMA, and the Art Left, 1969–70,” in *Art, Politics and Dissent*, 117.
- 21 Lucy Lippard, phone interview, September 14, 2004.
- 22 “Guerilla Art Action in Front of *Guernica* on 3 January 1970,” in GAAG, GAAG, n.p.
- 23 For more on the controversy surrounding the AWC poster, see Frascina, *Art, Politics, and Dissent*, 160–208, and Amy Schlegel, “My Lai: ‘We Lie, They Die’ or, a Small History of an ‘Atrocious’ Photograph,” *Third Text* 31 (Summer 1995): 47–66.
- 24 Paul Wood, “Introduction: The Avant-Garde and Modernism,” in *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 13.
- 25 Lil Picard, “Protest and Rebellion,” typed draft manuscript, 5. Lil Picard Papers, AAA.
- 26 Grace Glueck, “Artists Vote for Union and Big Demonstration,” *New York Times*, September 23, 1970, 39. These unionizing efforts would continue past the demise of the AWC; see, for instance, Howard Ostwind, “We Need an Artists Union,” *Art Workers News*, May–June 1974, 2–3.
- 27 Hilton Kramer, “About MoMA, the AWC, and Political Causes,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1970, 107.
- 28 Alex Gross, “Anti-Culture Day: October 20,” *East Village Other*, October 13, 1970, 13.
- 29 This major strike involved over 150,000 government employees; see Stephen C. Shannon, “Work Stoppage in Government: The Postal Strike of 1970,” *Monthly Labor Review* 101 (July 1978): 14–22.
- 30 Jean Toche, interview, September 21, 2001.
- 31 Tom Hayden, *Port Huron Statement* (Ann Arbor: Students for a Democratic Society, 1962). See also Philip S. Foner, *U.S. Labor and the Vietnam War* (New York: International Publishers, 1979); Peter Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).
- 32 Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 15.
- 33 *Ibid.*, viii.
- 34 Michael Harrington, “Old Working Class, New Working Class,” in *The World of the Blue-Collar Worker*, ed. Irving Howe (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972), 135; and Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).
- 35 Carl Oglesby, “The Idea of the New Left,” in *The New Left Reader*, ed. Carl Oglesby (New York: Grove Press, 1969), 13.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 37 Lawrence Alloway, “Art,” *Nation*, October 19, 1970, 381.
- 38 Lippard, *Get the Message?* 24.
- 39 Hans Haacke, statement in “The Role of the Artist in Society Today,” *Art Journal* 43 (Summer 1975): 328.
- 40 On the first free day at MoMA the museum tripled its attendance, and, as reported in the *New York Times*, “the crowd . . . was ‘younger and less white’ than usual, and included many family groups,” “Art Notes,” *New York Times*, February 11, 1970, 51. The free day still exists today, though for many museums it has been limited to a free evening, often branded by corporate sponsors, as in MoMA’s “Target Free Friday Nights.”

- 41 See Therese Schwartz, “AWC Sauces Up MoMA’s PASTA,” *New York Element*, November–December 1971, 2–3, 16. PASTA MoMA officially affiliated with Distributive Workers of America, Local 1, Museum Division, in May 1971. Their 1971 strike, which lasted from August 20 to September 3, focused on a wage increase, job security, and a greater voice for staff in policy decisions.
- 42 Andrea Fraser, “What’s Intangible, Transitory, Mediating, Participatory, and Rendered in the Public Sphere, Part II,” in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alex Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 73.
- 43 Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in 15th Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972). In addition, Deborah J. Haynes’s fascinating book *The Vocation of the Artist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) connects religious history to theories of artistic production and the ethics of visionary imagination in order to analyze artistic work in relation to the notion of a “call.”
- 44 This long-standing theoretical problematic can only be alluded to here; it has been most recently and intelligently mapped by John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art after the Readymade* (London: Verso, 2007).
- 45 See especially Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*, ed. and trans. David McLellan (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).
- 46 Karl Marx, “Productivity of Capital/Productive and Unproductive Labor,” in *Theories of Surplus Value*, pt. 1 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969), 401.
- 47 Karl Marx, “Labour as Sacrifice or Self-Realization,” in *Grundrisse*, 124. Jean Baudrillard critiques Marx’s reliance upon a binary of work and nonwork (or play), insisting that nonwork is just “the aesthetic sublimation of labour’s constraints.” Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1975), 35–51.
- 48 The Russian precedent is explored in more depth in Chapter 2; see Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and Christina Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).
- 49 Two studies that consider this movement are Leonard Folgarait, *Mural Painting and Social Revolution in Mexico, 1920–1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Anthony W. Lee, *Painting on the Left: Diego Rivera, Radical Politics, and San Francisco’s Public Murals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
- 50 Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926–1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 20. Other indispensable accounts of the 1930s in particular are Patricia Hills, “Art and Politics in the Popular Front: The Union Work and Social Realism of Philip Evergood,” in *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*, ed. Alejandro Anreus, Diana Linden, and Jonathan Weinberg (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Helen Langa, *Radical Art: Printmaking and the Left in 1930s New York* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and A. Joan Saab, *For the Millions: American Art and Culture between the Wars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
- 51 Quoted in Francis O’Connor, *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1969), 47.
- 52 Robert Morris, interview, May 26, 2006. His marked concern circa 1970 with labor history

- stands in contrast to his previously disengaged attitudes, as when in 1968 he claimed to have no interest in politics; Robert Morris, interview by Paul Cummings, March 10, 1968, AAA.
- 53 Lippard, “Art Workers’ Coalition,” 17.
- 54 Jim Hulley, “What Happened to the Artists Union of the 1930s?” *Artworkers Newsletter*, May–June 1974, 3.
- 55 Barbara Rose, “ABC Art,” *Art in America* 53 (October–November 1965): 69.
- 56 Max Kozloff, “American Painting during the Cold War,” *Artforum* 11 (May 1973): 43–54. Eva Cockcroft followed up on Kozloff’s work in her “Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War,” *Artforum* 12 (June 1974): 39–41. These debates are most extensively, and elegantly, chronicled by Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).
- 57 This term first appeared in Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1991), 120–67.
- 58 Rose, “ABC Art,” 66.
- 59 Guy Debord, “Theses on Cultural Revolution,” *Internationale situationniste* 1 (June 1958): 21; trans. John Shepley, reprinted in Tom McDonough, *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 62.
- 60 *The Grundrisse* (1857–58) was known primarily in the United States only in excerpts until it was translated by David McLellan and published by Harper and Row in 1971. Martin Nicolaus discussed the work in his widely read article “The Unknown Marx,” *New Left Review* 48 (March–April 1968): 41–61, reprinted in Ogelsby, *New Left Reader*. Works by Marx that were available in English included *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, trans. Martin Milligan (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959); *Precapitalist Economic Formations*, introd. Eric Hobsbawm (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1964); and *Capital*, vol. 1, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969).
- 61 Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics* (London: Merlin Press, 1973), 63. A further way to map artistic labor in a Marxian vein is to understand art objects as paradigmatic fetishes. Although they lack an instrumental use, they accrue surplus value and as such are *wr*-commodities that circulate smoothly in market economies.
- 62 T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (1973; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 80. Linda Nochlin, however, offers a counterpoint that crucially pushes labor in gendered directions that Clark overlooks; see her “Morisot’s *Wet Nurse*: The Construction of Work and Leisure in Impressionist Painting,” in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 37–56.
- 63 While writers such as Max Raphael, Arnold Hauser, and Meyer Schapiro practiced versions of Marxist art history before the 1960s, social art history as a movement was consolidated with the publication of works such as T. J. Clark, “On the Social History of Art,” in *Image of the People*, 9–20, and his “Conditions of Artistic Creation,” *Times Literary Supplement*, May 24, 1974, 561–62. See Max Raphael, *The Demands of Art* (London: Routledge, 1968); Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, trans. Stanley Goodman (New York: Vintage Books,

- 1951); and Meyer Schapiro, “The Social Bases of Art,” first presented at the First American Artists’ Congress in 1936 and reprinted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory, 1900–1990* (London: Blackwell, 1992), 506–10.
- 64 For example, Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, trans. Louis Marks (London: New Left Books, 1957); Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” first published in *La Pensée* (1970) and reprinted in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), and *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Allen Lane, 1969).
- 65 Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955; repr., Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 196.
- 66 Marcuse, *Essay in Liberation*, and *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972).
- 67 Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the 20th Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 38.
- 68 Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).
- 69 Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981).
- 70 Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 55.
- 71 U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Work in America: A Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973); Lafayette Harter and John Keltner, eds., *Labor in America: The Union and Employer Responses to the Challenges of Our Changing Society* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1966).
- 72 Raymond Williams, “Work,” in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 284; see also his “Labour” entry, 145–48.
- 73 See, for instance, the various commentaries that decry the younger generation’s lack of a work ethic in the glossy coffee-table book *200 Years of Work in America: Bicentennial Issue, Think: The IBM Magazine*, No. 3, July 1976 (New York: IBM, 1976).
- 74 Patricia Cayo Sexton and Brandon Sexton, *Blue Collars and Hard-Hats: The Working Class and the Future of American Politics* (New York: Random House, 1971), 35.
- 75 Gary Bryner, testimony, Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower and Poverty, *Worker Alienation: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1972, 8. For more on the Lordstown strike, see Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness*, rev. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991).
- 76 Details about the frenzy of strikes in 1970 are in Chapter 3.
- 77 P. K. Edwards, *Strikes in the United States, 1887–1974* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981), 174.
- 78 U.S. Senate Subcommittee, *Worker Alienation*.
- 79 Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, 21. Marcuse cites several mass media articles that note rising rates of worker absenteeism and sabotage.
- 80 Clark Kerr et al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960).

- 81 Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); István Mészáros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (London: Merlin Press, 1970).
- 82 Terkel, *Working*, xi.
- 83 U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Work in America*, xv–xvi.
- 84 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 85 The International Wages for Housework Campaign was founded in 1972; feminist writers such as Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millett examined the devaluing of women's work in the early 1970s. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: Morrow Press, 1970); Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970).
- 86 Sexton and Sexton, *Blue Collars and Hard-Hats*, 103.
- 87 Christine Appy, *Working Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
- 88 The precise phrase and exact periodization are a matter of much debate. Ernest Mandel argues that late capitalism is not “post.”—that is, after—industrialism but “constitutes generalized universal industrialism for the first time in history.” Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (1972; repr., London: Verso, 1978), 387. While he dates the arrival of this new era to about 1945, most other theorists place it in the 1960s and 1970s. See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (London: Blackwell, 1989); Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1986); Krishan Kumar, *Prophecy and Progress: The Sociology of Industrial and Post-industrial Society* (London: Penguin Press, 1978); Perry Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1998).
- 89 Alain Touraine, *The Post-industrial Society, Tomorrow's Social History* (New York: Random House, 1971, originally published as *La société post-industrielle* (Paris: Denoël, 1969); and Daniel Bell, *The Coming of the Post-industrial Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).
- 90 Hal Foster, “The Crux of Minimalism,” in *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 36.
- 91 Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 44. For more on the Vietnam War era and postmodernism, see Michael Bibby, ed., *The Vietnam War and Postmodernity* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999); and Marianne DeKoven, *Utopia Unlimited: The Sixties and the Emergence of the Postmodern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 92 Printed postcard sent by Andre in 1976, David Bourdon Papers, Andre file, AAA.
- 93 Faith Ringgold, *We Flew over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold* (Boston: Bullfinch Press, 1995), 176.
- 94 Michele Wallace, *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (London: Verso, 1990), 195.
- 95 Thomas Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1996), 12.
- 96 Harold Rosenberg, “Defining Art,” *New Yorker*, February 25, 1967, reprinted in Gregory Battcock, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (1968; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 303.
- 97 Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

- 98 Brian Wallis, “Public Funding and Alternative Spaces,” in Ault, *Alternative Art, New York*, 174.
- 99 These artists received grants averaging \$7,500 each. “Individual Artists Who Have Received Awards from the NEA through November 20, 1968,” Misc. Correspondence file, Lucy Lippard Papers, AAA.
- 100 Betty Chamberlain, *The Artist’s Guide to His Market* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1970).
- 101 Harold Rosenberg, *The Anxious Object: Art Today and Its Audiences* (New York: Horizon, 1967), 13.
- 102 Diana Crane, *The Transformation of the Avant-Garde: The New York Art World, 1940–1985* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 6.
- 103 Cited in *ibid.*, 4.
- 104 Sophy Burnham, *The Art Crowd* (New York: David McKay, 1973), 31.
- 105 Richard F. Shepard, “Ford Fund Glum on Arts Outlook,” *New York Times*, March 2, 1969, 47.
- 106 Russell Lynes, “The Artist as Uneconomic Man,” *Saturday Review*, February 28, 1970, 25–28, 79.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 26.
- 108 Lippard, phone interview, September 17, 2008.
- 109 Alex Gross, “Arts Disaster Kills Thousands,” *East Village Other*, November 17, 1970, 1.

2. CARL ANDRE’S WORK ETHIC

- 1 Colin Simpson, “The Tate Drops a Costly Brick,” *Sunday Times* (London), February 15, 1976, 53.
- 2 Laura Cumming, “A Floored Genius,” *Guardian*, July 6, 2000, 23.
- 3 Robert Semple Jr., “Tate Gallery Buys a Pile of Bricks—Or Is It Art?” *New York Times*, February 20, 1976, 70.
- 4 Sandy Ballatore, “Carl Andre on Work and Politics,” *Artweek*, July 3, 1976, 1, 20.
- 5 Untitled, unsigned opinion column, *Western Daily Press*, February 21, 1976, “Tate Bricks” file, TGA.
- 6 Keith Waterhouse, *Daily Mirror*, February 19, 1976, quoted in Carl Andre, “The Bricks Abstract: A Compilation by Carl Andre,” October 1976, reprinted in *Minimalism*, ed. James Meyer (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), 251.
- 7 Carl Andre, letter to the editor, *Artforum* 11 (April 1973): 9.
- 8 These biographical facts are repeated in most interviews with Andre; see David Bourdon, “The Razed Sites of Carl Andre,” *Artforum* 5 (October 1966): 15–17; Jeanne Siegel, “Carl Andre: Artworker,” *Studio International* 179 (November 1970): 175–79, reprinted in *Artwords: Discourse on the 60s and 70s* (New York: De Capo Press, 1992), 129–40 (all further page citations are to reprint); and David Sylvester, *Interviews with American Artists* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). Andre’s biography proves complicated because of his connection to death of his wife, Ana Mendieta, an important feminist Cuban-born artist. Mendieta’s death has haunted Andre’s reputation—as well as hers, of course—and continues to frame many discussions of his work in the United States. For more on their relationship, see Laura Roulet, “Ana Mendieta and Carl Andre: Duet of Leaf and Stone,” *Art Journal* 63 (Fall 2004): 80–101.