

Subversive Art as Place, Identity and Bohemia: The San Francisco Bay Area 1945 – 1965



George Herms *The Librarian*, 1960.

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Abstract

This thesis seeks evidence of time, place, and identity, as individualized artistic perspective impacting artists representing groups marginalized within dominant Western, specifically American culture, who lived in the San Francisco Bay Area between 1945–1965. Artists mirror the culture of the time in which they work. To examine this, I employ anthropological, sociological, ethnographic, and art historical pathways in my approach. Ethnic, racial, gender, class, sexual-orientation distinctions and inequities are examined via queer, and Marxist theory considerations, as well as a subjective/objective analysis of documented or existing artworks, philosophical, religious, and cultural theoretical concerns. I examine practice outputs by ethnic/immigrant, homosexual, and bohemian-positioned artists, exploring Saussurean interpretation of language or communicative roles in artwork and iconographic formation.

I argue that varied and multiple Californian identities, as well as uniquely San Franciscan concerns, disseminated opposition to dominant United States cultural valuing and that these groups are often dismissed when produced by groups invisible within a dominant culture. I also argue that World War Two cultural upheaval induced Western societal reorganization enabling increased postmodern cultural inclusivity. Dominant societal repression resulted in ethnographic information being heavily coded by Bay Area artists when considering audiences. I examine alternative cultural support systems, art market accessibility, and attempt to decode product messages which reify enforced societal positioning. Study of subversive art tendencies, or critical expressions of alterity, are contrasted with a backdrop of general cultural period milieu. I utilize textual and California Bay Area archival resources, ethnocentric and other cultural repositories preserving documented period artistic activities. I am seeking personal and cultural histories clouded by temporality and marginalization, mirroring dominant societal dictates of the past and present. Revealed information sheds light on unacknowledged individuals, cultural totality; clarifying the presence of historic, hegemonic value systems, in unquestioned, yet illusory, art historiography.

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The Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley possesses fabulous holdings concerning the art and history of the state of California which were put at my disposal, and the staff took exceptional amounts of time familiarizing me with their archival records and facilities. I am grateful to staff at the Oakland Public Library's Main branch for guiding me through the maze of library holdings, as well as the staff in the Oakland History room (same institution) who put their microfilmed holdings at my disposal.

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Introduction

“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson¹

Project Introduction

This project is entitled: Subversive Art as Place, Identity and Bohemia: The San Francisco Bay Area 1945 – 1965, and examines Bay Area² art produced between the indicated years, giving specific attention to cultural roles played by members of marginalized ethnographic groups. It focuses on contributions by artists of ethnic descent (Asian³), homosexuals, and midcentury bohemians or dissidents generally referred to as ‘Beat’ – all groups commonly marginalized within Western culture. The art in question includes art originally sustained in opposition to

prevailing culture, but also encompasses art created by marginalized societal members, specifically referencing a differing normativity. I am interested in how said art subsequently influences present-day output. Obviously, the initial field of enquiry would be an art historical one; limited by what has been

Figure 1. San Francisco Bay Area Cities.



¹ See: <http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/12080.Ralph_Waldo_Emerson> - accessed 05/August/2012.

² I am from Oakland California, across the bay from San Francisco (please see Figure 1). I define the Bay Area as comprising any of the cities bordering San Francisco Bay. Napa County which contains none, is not important art historically, yet is considered part of the region. San Francisco possesses the most fulsome art history and the majority of developments pertinent to this study occurred within that city's boundaries, in Berkeley, or Oakland. All three possess diverse populations and are home to universities, museums, and art schools.

³ In America, the term 'Asian' refers to persons ancestrally linked to the East Asian countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. The word has broader meaning in Europe. I refer to persons whose lineage is traceable to China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, etc. Essentially, Americans refer to physiognomic traits; excluding such nationalities as Russian, Turkish, Yemeni, or other nationalities commonly acknowledged as 'Asian' by Europeans. See also glossary (Appendix B).

preserved, as much art created by marginalized citizens was unrecorded and considered worthless. The following examination is necessarily broad in scope, but it is my hope that the innumerable factors bearing on art-making and identity creation are indicated. A logical starting place for research would be museum collections as private collections, are often little known. Archival and textual researches also present excellent avenues to discovery. I will argue that marginalized artistic cultural contributions remained invisible until World War II mobilization encouraged inclusivity and the advent of Postmodernist theory. The period, place, and artistic endeavor I study remain under-examined.

Some Notes on Terminology

This author has selected Asians to represent ethnic subgroups and has narrowed original enquiry. Contributions by non-dominant groups were ignored within official art histories reflecting a western or Euro-centric bias privileging white supremacy (white, male, heterosexual). Hegemony⁴ is a means of enforcing conformity. Non-white ethnic identity, cultural dissent, differing sexuality and/or gender orientation are rarely equated with artistic impact. Homosexuality occurs in any marginalized group studied (i.e., any ethnic descent, age, economic background, or political affiliation). I often use the term 'gay' to refer to homosexuals. The word 'dissent' highlights voluntary (and involuntary) non-compliance with presumed societal norms; encompassing border crossing (both real and imaginary) or boundaries imposed by dominant societal groups. I use the word 'dissemination' to refer to both art output and avenues of communication open to both artists and consumers, i.e., galleries, museums, etc. The Beat generation, for example, crossed borders representing American values, in a dissenting move to remake American society. I distilled Albright's (1985) list of roughly 700 Bay Area artists to approximately fifteen; augmenting same with further research. A note on references: Throughout this thesis, I have included several references to authors bell hooks and eric fernie. Those references are not capitalized in the thesis text as hooks has stated that her preference is for a lowercase spelling of her

⁴ Hegemony is a Gramscian term (see chapter one and Appendix B) referring to societal placement and the dominance of privileged cultural values. Non-compliance with hegemonic values ensures societal displeasure and often, economic stricture.

name and fernie's book bears his name and book title in lowercase as well. This appears to the reader as a mistake but it is not. Both however, are capitalized in the bibliography at the end of the thesis.

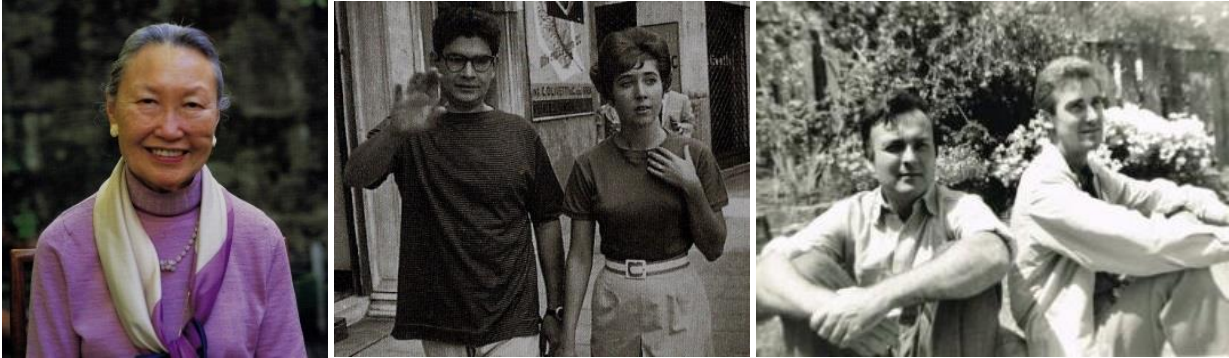


Figure 2. Asian, Beat, and Gay San Francisco artists. L-R: *Jade Snow Wong*; *Manuel Neri and Joan Brown*; *Robert Duncan and Jess (Collins)*.

My research question is: “How does art produced by ethnographic subgroups in the San Francisco Bay Area 1945-1965 reflecting time, place, values/beliefs, and originally opposed by dominant culture, subsequently influence present-day cultures?” I examine representative artists from Asian, Gay, and Beat subgroups (above) and view the condition of alterity⁵ as evidence of (voluntary or involuntary) dissent from hegemonic cultural assumptions; searching for artistic ethnographic coding revealing identity awareness: intended audiences and imposed societal position. I will consider dissemination of difference, critical political stance, temporality, geographical placement, and the experience of period material culture as quotidian reality. *Alterity* is a synonym for *difference* and I define both as the condition of differing from cultural normativity. I also refer to people possessing differing realities as ‘others’ in that they do not possess hegemonic dominance. The hypothesis developed for this project is straightforward, yet deceptively simple. This author believes marginalized societal members in truth compose part of any given cultural totality; helping create that culture whether their contributions are acknowledged by dominant groups or not. This means culture as usually understood is deceptive;

⁵ Alterity is defined as the state of ‘otherness’: of differing from what is accepted, normal, or usual by the dominant group. For my purposes, this is anyone not male, straight, or white. See Appendix B.

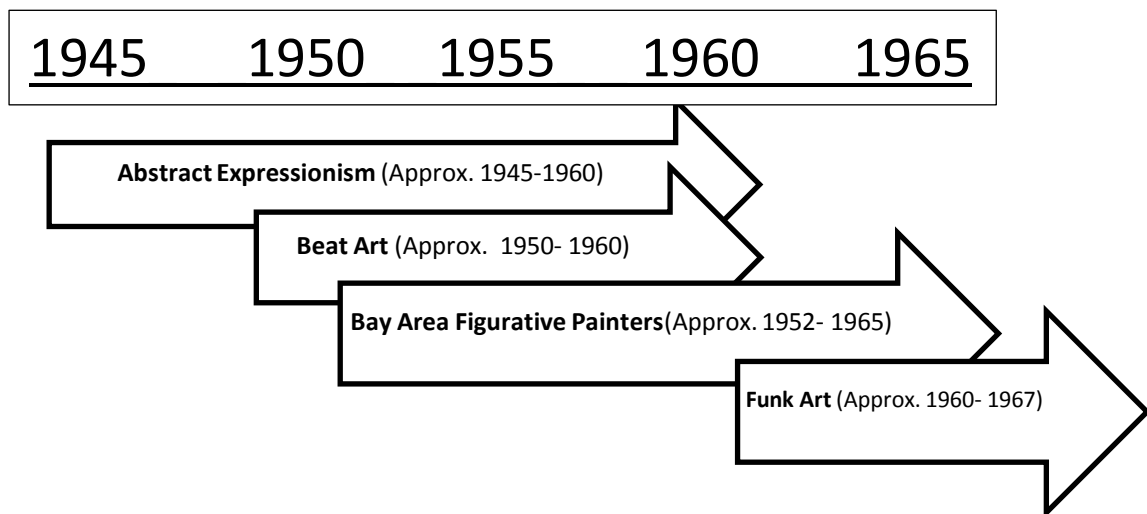
reflecting a hegemonic privileging of that culture's dominant groups. For artists marginalized by a dominant mainstream, contributions are often unacknowledged because their presence destabilizes dominant cultural cohesion; disproving cultural self-myth. This thesis contributes to understanding the true nature of western cultural composition. In America, social mores are predicated on hierarchies of the Christian Church, the privileging of white males, and economically, Capitalist ethos, which structurally necessitates placement of certain individuals/groups at lower rungs of the economic ladder. I sometimes refer to Lévi-Strauss' concept of the 'bricoleur' as pertinent to art production in that bricoleurs create with available materials. The term is basically untranslatable but translation has been approximated by situating bricoleurs as persons constructing 'mythical thought' (Lévi-Strauss. 1969: 16-17). Ceramic historian Garth Clark adds 'shaman,' (Pagliaro, 2003: 70) implying magical abilities. Artists are bricoleurs in that they illustrate differing mythologies with everyday materials.

The Common Pool Artists draw From

What makes art by others 'subversive'? In America, the midcentury period saw reorganization of western societal mores, in part due to the advent of World War Two era acceptance of formerly marginalized citizens as necessary to the war effort: in part because dominant economic systems (Capitalism) preyed upon a more inclusive demographic in an effort to survive in a new societal configuration. Attempts by others to insert awareness of differing realities into societal consciousness challenged and subverted dominant hegemonic assumptions of cohesive supremacy. Artistically, non-normative presence was reified by alteric representations. The late 1940s ascent of Abstract Expressionism enabled perceptions of abstraction as inscrutable, yet indicative of current existence. The dissenting Beat era art disseminated values at odds with accepted cultural expression, and the perceived fragmentation of individuals and society. Mythical thought (a kind of bricolage according to Lévi-Strauss, 1969: 17) was being reassessed. Subversion of previously unquestioned values manifested artistically in an assertion of difference.

Chart one (below) illustrates prevailing midcentury art world trends encompassing prevailing styles that period regional artists would have been exposed to and influenced by. I have chosen arrows to illustrate my points as the stylistic tendencies indicated are still actively pursued. The arrows' placement corresponds roughly to the years of trend dominance. Postwar America saw Abstract Expressionism rise to international art world dominance and social institutions, beliefs, etc. reified fashionable existential mythos. In the late 1940s, the later-named 'Beat generation' ascended in prominence, in part artistically reacting to, yet influenced by, prevailing societal code, quotidian thought and media culture. The Bay Area played a role in dissemination, additionally developing groups of artists ideologically descended from prior movements and later discerned to reify distinct regional schools of creative thought: as the Bay Area Figurative painters and the Funk artists reveal.

Chart One. San Francisco Regional Art Movements by Year.



Study Parameters

The paradigmatic beginning of my study is 1945, significant as the year the Second World War ended, ushering in an American prosperity boom and a remarkable reworking of the average U.S. citizen's mentality. American World War II mobilization in which previously marginalized citizens were rendered valuable and necessary, sowed seeds of alterity awareness seeing fruition during the current

postmodern period. Existential self-awareness may also be traced to 1940s era Philosophical developments and 1930s Marxian-inflected labor movements valuing the individual. In the post-war era, Abstract Expressionism was influenced ideologically by Surrealism (itself descended from Dada). America emerged as the victorious power post WWII, but failed to display a distinctly American art form.⁶ The end point for my study is 1965: the year in which American legislation promising more equitable civil rights and for ending immigration quotas was enacted. American society became more acutely aware of pluralism. Also, after 1965, the rise of what was later called the Hippie movement or 'counterculture' (predicated upon previous cultural dissent) becomes a distracting cultural influence. Although I do not deal directly with Hippies,⁷ it should be noted that they altered dominant western cultural values, placing same at the forefront of dissent, yet the movement had roots in the Beat 1950s era. By 1965, Los Angeles (initially lacking art infrastructure), replaced San Francisco as California's

Table One: Population by Decade.

Bay Area Population by County and Decade					
	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
Alameda	474,883	513,011	740,357	908,209	1,073,184
Contra Costa	78,608	100,450	298,984	409,030	558,389
Marin	41,648	52,907	85,619	146,820	206,038
Napa	22,897	28,503	46,603	65,890	79,140
San Francisco	634,394	634,536	775,357	740,316	715,674
San Mateo	77,405	111,782	235,659	444,387	556,234
Santa Clara	145,118	174,949	290,547	642,315	1,064,714
Solano	40,834	49,118	104,833	134,597	169,941
Sonoma	62,222	69,052	103,405	147,375	204,885
Bay Area Total	1,578,029	1,734,308	2,681,364	3,638,939	4,628,199

From: *Population, Population Research Section, Budget Division, Department of Finance. State of California, 1971. Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990 - Compiled and edited by Richard L. Forstall - Population Division, US Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233 - 27 March 1995. Adapted from Stoddard, 1998: 161.*

⁶ Abstract Expressionism supposedly filled that vacancy: art and ethos were essentially imported from Europe.

⁷ The 1960s term 'Hippies' refers to people (usually young), rejecting dominant societal values by seeking lifestyle and valiative alternatives to hegemonic society. Hippies were/are the direct cultural descendants of the Beats and more tolerant of difference than normative Americans.

cultural capital by virtue of money flowing into L.A.-based industries such as the aerospace industry (started during the war) and that of entertainment. San Francisco's previous dominance was primarily due to fortuitous gold rush geographical placement. I do not assert that San Francisco ceased making cultural contributions post-1965.

Table 1 above shows period population in the nine Bay Area counties. I am interested in artists labeled by the U.S. Census Bureau (in 2003-2005) as 'Fine Artists, art directors and animators', as this occupation group includes 'painters, sculptors, illustrators and other visual artists.'⁸ As of 2003-2005, artists within this group nationally were estimated to comprise over 10% of the occupational category or approximately 1.4 % of the population total.⁹ By 1970 and during the period of this study (1945-65), the estimated per cent of occupation by national population total was considered to be less than 1% and therefore I will assume that the same percentage (less than 1%) applies to the number of artists within any given group¹⁰ of mid-century regional residents.

This Introduction explains the nature of the project and presents a necessarily brief history of the complicated setting I study, as well as indicating regional conductivity to difference. In Chapter One, I examine literature pertinent to understanding regional cultural context and the avenues of study uncovered. I argue that the locality displays a Marxist concern for the accommodation of diverse citizenry lacking in other American areas and examine the tangential philosophical issues uncovered. In Chapter Two, I detail methodologies employed to reveal knowledge of the period, why they were utilized, and speculate as to how they might inform aspects of this study. Chapter Three presents temporal contextual considerations and work of marginalized artists, organized by ethnographic group, whom I consider to embody the period, place, and groups surveyed. Chapter Four evaluates the information uncovered and draws conclusions as to the influence of marginalized art and artists upon

⁸ In 1910, the category was listed as 'Artists, sculptors, and teachers of art.' The category was expanded by 2003-5.

⁹ See: <www.nea.gov/research/ArtistsInWorkforce.pdf> *Chairman's Preface*: iii - accessed 01/January/2013.

¹⁰ See: <www.nea.gov/research/ArtistsInWorkforce.pdf>:7 - accessed 01/January/2013.

the Californian, national, and global art worlds, and traces Bay Area artistic influence into the future. I additionally present two Appendices detailing the history of legislation affecting marginalized ethnographic groups both in America and California (Appendix A), as well as a glossary of possibly obscure terminology implemented throughout this thesis (Appendix B). A third Appendix consists of applicable GSA forms pertinent to advanced research degrees. The appendices are followed by a selected bibliography of consulted textual sources. In the next chapter, I examine regional cultural approach to accommodation, social organization, and textual evidence of marginality.

Chapter One – Literature Review

'... Instead of being founded on ritual, it (art) is based on a different practice: politics.'

- Walter Benjamin (2008: 25)

I have read extensively. As an artist I am familiar with accepted art history, and in the course of this project, have explored the lives and works of numerous ethnographically affiliated regional artists little known, even in the area, and unrecorded by official art world historiography. Many textual sources supply clues as to midcentury marginalized and artistic motivations, from which I have pieced together a portrait. My research question is: "How does art produced by ethnographic subgroups in the San Francisco Bay Area 1945-1965 reflecting time, place, and values/beliefs, originally sustained in opposition to dominant culture, subsequently influence present-day cultures?" I have addressed literature pertinent to my research question while considering contextual Bay Area culture and residence. I examine conceptions of political allegiance, philosophy, spiritual traditions, popular culture plus histories of immigration, and marginalization: all involving perceptions of class, economic status, ethnicity, and deviance from 'normative' values.

Unravelling the myriad cultural motivations underlying midcentury Bay Area artwork creation led me to examine the work of Sardinian/Italian writer Antonio Gramsci (1891-1938) (Jones, 2006: 27-28) and his contributions to Marxist theory. Acknowledgement of diversity implies acceptance of population plurality and the Bay Area's vaunted tolerance implies socialistic attitude towards societal organization. Gramsci's premise theorizes that revolution and democracy are not incompatible concepts or processes. The Bay Area encompasses both, but neither communism nor capitalism make allowances for diversity or aesthetic framework, i.e., they have no 'adequate theory of representation' (Owens, 1992: 261); lacking tolerance for deviation from assumed norms. If representation is taken to refer to artistic production, both major organization systems lack concern for individual idiosyncrasy. As Gombrich says: 'All art is image-making, and all image-making is the creation of substitutes' (Gombrich in Owens, 1992: 182). Gombrich's substitutes may be seen as explaining midcentury insertion of

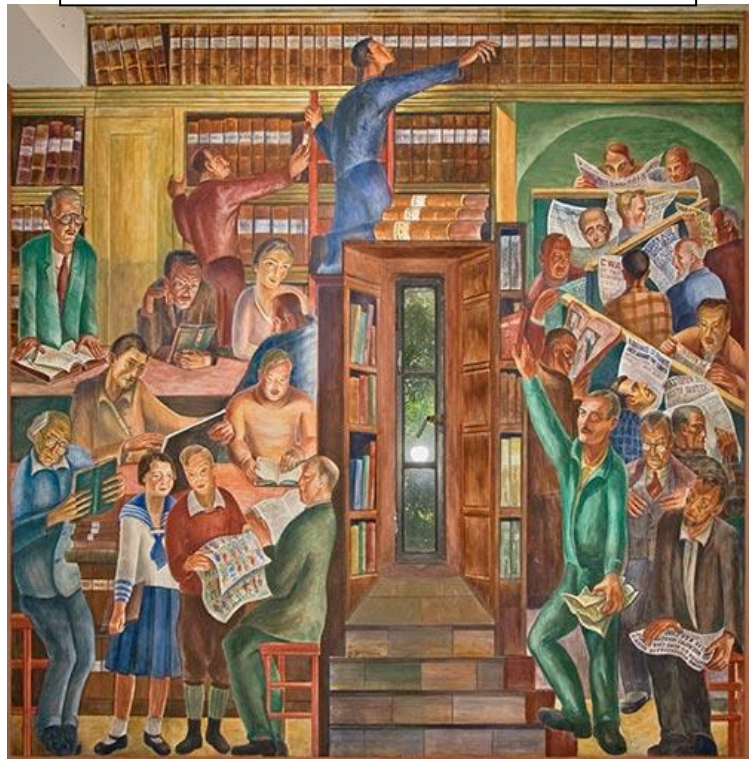
difference into contemporary culture. In other words, the replacement of previous cultural identity with an inclusive revelation, reflects the necessitated WW II societal reorganization which originally masked a totalizing global reality whose unmasking threatened to destabilize dominance. Gombrich speaks of representation as facsimile of reality, and postwar culture was intended to sustain a wartime economy albeit with a reconstituted definition of identity, and with societal understanding predicated upon prewar supremacies. Identity was ubiquitously dictated to populations by dominating agencies via media (TV, print, etc.), indicating study of popular culture, however, marginalized identity was invisible to the dominant culture. I have searched tangential sources for information relating to non-dominance. Malouf sees westernization as impacting the non-western world stating that some see globalization as synonymous with Americanization; stating that many non-westerners perceive modernization as a 'trojan horse' (Malouf, 2000: 62). McEvilley saw modernism as an 'ideological totality' (McEvilley, 1992: 13). Whether colonization is intended or not, it speaks of attempts by America (or westerners) to colonize the mindset of the non-western world (Malouf, 2000: 59-61), by instilling ideological conformity and cultural uniformity. I will not address the issue of world colonization (although this opinion warrants further study). I am concerned with art production in the western world. As Gombrich says: 'You cannot create a faithful image out of nothing.' (Gombrich, 2008: 73) meaning identity reflected differing realities yet was perceived as intrinsically mirroring prewar culture. In the developed western world, the influence of TV, film, and print fostered abbreviated midcentury American communication patterns. These patterns compounded by current philosophical theory and the willingness of individuals to accept truncated facsimiles of themselves, reiterated the fragmentation most individuals identified with new contexts. Most artists create from the 'existing repertoire of cultural imagery' (Owens, 1992: 180). To paraphrase both Owens and Gombrich: all art, whether representational or abstract, presents idiosyncratic individual perception.

1.1 Political Organization

This thesis concerns art as it reflects the social construction of identity: formulated within the context of systems of social organization i.e., capitalism or communism, which govern societal placement and temporal socioeconomics. However, individuals are consciously influenced by quotidian mass-culture, their own contemporary colleagues as well as temporality and regionality. Classical Marxism recognizes both a social *base* and *superstructure*, with the base configuring employee/employer relations. The superstructure (influenced by the base), comprises a society's cultural institutions and/or citizen relations. Hegel's (1770-1831) thoughts and de Tocqueville's (1805-1859) predicted rise of consumerism¹¹

informed Marx, who considered equality as achievable only by worker revolution against dominant, manufacturing classes. Hegel understood law as the foundation of human culture, believing free will is illusory and that Kant's rational citizen maintained idealism towards mankind (i.e., evolution based on prior lessons). Marxism was heavily drawn on by social

Figure 3. Bernard Zakheim: *Library*. 1930s. Coit Tower mural.



justice theorists in the Bay Area. A Socialistic¹² viewpoint (Zakheim and Beatty, 2009: 27-29) is revealed in the illustration (above) displaying a 1930s San Franciscan¹³ egalitarian, 'democratic' utopia assuming

¹¹ In 1835 and 1840, de Tocqueville's two volume *On Democracy in America*, discussed American equality (he believed equality rose with declination of aristocracies) and predicted an industrial gentry, anticipating consumerism.

¹² Socialism posits social ownership of production means as the only avenue to equality among societal classes. Marx viewed Socialism as a developmental stage of his economic thought. He anticipated Gramsci's hegemony but makes no allowances for difference within a reversed dominance: de Tocqueville does.

equal access, yet tellingly, excluding obvious racial or sexual difference. The illustration reveals Marxist-inflected social concerns prevalent in America after the equalizing economic depression of the 1930s.

Gramsci's radicalized democratic process¹⁴ presupposes original equality between all members of democratic bodies (Forgacs, 2000: 380). Allowances for non-majority cultural participation exist within Strinati's concepts of mass-culture which sociologically examine popular culture,¹⁵ through the deterministic lens of economistic lineage. Strinati claims the 'cultural studies' perspective on popular culture fails to recognize 'different traditions, theoretical assumptions, empirical and historical concerns, methodologies, ... which prevent them from being simply and effortlessly integrated into an overarching "interdisciplinary" perspective' (Strinati, 2000: 13-14). Gramsci's revolutionary intent also presupposes both proletarian alterity and that obstructing dominance could be modified by political education. He states:

Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (... political consciousness) is the first stage towards a further progressive self-consciousness ... it must be stressed that the political development of ... hegemony represents a great philosophical advance as well as a politico-practical one. For it necessarily involves and supposes an intellectual unity and an ethic in conformity ... a critical conception. (Forgacs, 2000: 334)

That 'hegemonic force' would be notions of culture and identity dictated to populations, inhibiting hegemonic host cultural development. Postmodernism fetishizes difference, in opposition to modernism which fetishized 'sameness' (McEvelley, 1992: 11). Arguably, the midcentury shift in cultural consciousness summarizes late-modernism, both artistically and in the privileging shift from genuine cultural identity to Gombrich's facsimile image. Poststructuralism (often synonymous with

¹³ San Francisco's Coit Tower's social realist decorations were created by SF artists and reflected 1930s era leftist, pro-working class, Marxist concerns with social entitlement.

¹⁴ Gramsci espoused cultural construction based on 'people's actual cultural experience' e.g., form grows out of content (Forgacs, 2000: 395). American war mobilization created new cultural landscapes. New art forms and artists emerged to reflect change (Albright, 1985: xvi).

¹⁵ Strinati's 'mass culture' arises from economic and theoretical societal impositions reflecting both economic organization and majority held moral values. Jones indicates 'popular culture' is created by actual citizens influenced by mass culture, reflecting quotidian life and demanding 'correct' behaviors compliant with mass culture (Jones, 2006: 27,32) and states Gramsci referred to superstructure as 'civil society'.

Postmodernist thought), dispels Structuralist myths, attempting to read cultural shifts more inclusively, seeking origins and classification, yet searching for underlying reasons and meaning. It is indicative of midcentury political and philosophical thought, enabling a cultural (and personal) redefinition and created a fundamental shift in cognition. Poststructuralism is not synonymous with Postmodernist theorization, but reflects, rather, late modernist interpretation.

According to Owens, the Frankfurt School philosophers posited that as modernism drew to a midcentury close, photography's veracity created an illusion of 'truth' replacing the historical function or definition of art which viewed art as necessary to culture. To extend this thought train, midcentury citizens sought to discover inner-truths they believed to be certainty. This conundrum becomes apparent with 1950s production of Beat era Dada-derived 'anti-art', refuting prewar American values. In the later 1970s, dissent is institutionalized or appropriated and named 'postmodernism' by established theorists; well before the advent of people like Lyotard or Derrida who gave Postmodernism legitimacy as explanatory dialogue. The official art coming out of galleries or discussed in journals (Owens, 1992: 300) represents the dominant and privileged 'official' art. In other words, the usurpation of 1950s dissenters, when artists bypassed official gallery system modes of production and distribution, led to a theorized art stream more attuned to reception by society or Marx's 'common people' i.e., art was taken out of the hands of official culture, and made available to individuals, not unlike depression-era Socialist-inflected art (Social-Realism – see Figure 3 above), which reaffirmed the widespread experience of economic deprivation.

Art can critique and defy civil discourse; reestablishing itself as cultural commentary, however, marginalized societal members can desire assimilation within dominating frameworks. Midcentury Bay Area artists synthesized disparate realities into what Smith calls an 'irrational' identity (Smith, 1995: xviii-xix): their Gramscian mythopoeia and self-narration expressed identities validated by period societal reorganization, subverting a confining 1950s conformity. Post-war Beats possessed Marxian-

tinged values formed by depression era labor disputes, and World War; questing after new values and a revamped societal privileging which dominant supremacist society attempted to silence with discredit. Beat utopian culture represented to dominant Americans a Communist threat, and Beat art blended dissenting and creative (Phillips, 1995: 23-28) period cultural influences.

Paulo Friere grew up poor and hungry in Brazil where he learned to equate his problem with his social class. He culturally validated dissent and postulated all societal classes as useful to societies, saying: 'The current movements of rebellion, especially those of youth ... manifest in their essence this preoccupation with people as beings in the world and with the world' (Friere, 2005: 41). His *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* may be viewed as extension of Fanon's thought in *The Wretched of the Earth*, with both calling for overthrow of systems of oppression. Fanon said: 'The people will thus come to understand that national independence sheds light upon many facts which are sometimes divergent and antagonistic...' (Fanon, 1963: 144), in other words, inclusivity furthered broad independence (Axner, N.D.). Americans demeaned Communism after the Second World War in an attempt to promote 'American' values (Elinson and Yogi, 2009: 221) and discredit threats to dominance. Asians as an ethnic group were not dismissed due to sexual inclinations or political dissent, but were instead dismissed as non-dominant and of no particular importance despite their desire to be accepted as societal components.

1.2 Philosophical Trends

Jean-Paul Sartre's 1940s Existentialist philosophy resonated globally; emphasizing the essential aloneness of individuals and dovetailing with Gramsci's egalitarianism, necessitating familiarity. In the multicultural Bay Area, art reflecting utopian Beat ethos portrayed diversity as culturally inherent. Existentialism is Sartre's summation of midcentury life¹⁶ and reiterates Marxist calls for ending oppression but Sartre departs from Hegelian godliness (culture) by denying divinity and placing

¹⁶ Sartre's writings are heavily influenced by Marxist thought and preoccupations with equality.

responsibility upon individuals. *Being And Nothingness* (Sartre, 2001), posits people searching for satisfactions inherent in individuality, when in actuality, conceptions of autonomous self-direction can isolate individuals seeking a unity. Sartre insists people not define themselves in terms of social identity, defying cultural dictate. His presence without limits allows unfettered self-definition, locating individuality or ‘Being’ as created out of the ‘Nothingness’ of existence. Following this thought, humans are ultimately responsible for their own actions, reaffirming the Buddhist conception of the adherent as responsible for self-salvation. Understandably, conceptions of self-responsibility resonated with freethinking Bay Area populations

Figure 4. Paul Wonner: *Two Men at the Shore*. 1960.



steeped in Buddhism, tolerance of idiosyncrasy, and the DIY individuality inherent in American Manifest Destiny (see Appendix B). Paul Wonner’s Bay Area Figurative painting (above right) depicts two men, seemingly coupled, yet isolated in a bleak world, speaking of cultural invisibility experienced by mid-century gay men. Reminiscent of photography’s veracity, the painting’s isolated coupling defies cultural sexual dictates, yet shows us citizens defying conformity to pursue individual satisfaction.

In 1947, Adorno and Horkheimer¹⁷ viewed Western culture, particularly American, as intertwined with ‘entertainment’ (film, radio, magazines, etc.) or escapist ‘play’. In reality the culture at

¹⁷ The 1930s Frankfurt Philosophical School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Benjamin, Eric Fromm, Jürgen Habermas, among others) is associated with the Institute for Social Research at Goethe University in Frankfurt Germany. Their predilection for Marxist teachings influenced subsequent textual productions and they examined society from Sociological, Psychoanalytical, Existentialist, viewpoints in addition to other perspectives. Adorno and Horkheimer disdained the culture of consumption as a

'play' was the privileged culture of heterosexual white males. For Benjamin, photography destroyed art's sovereignty and reduced art to political acts, moving from appreciated beauty to Marxist reiteration of experienced quotidian reality. Bay Area midcentury art often positioned difference within traditional frameworks yet also revealed a radically new (albeit utopian) social structure in which individuals enjoy paramount importance. Marcuse defies Adorno and Horkheimer, specifically rejecting Benjamin's assertion that art entails politicization, writing: '... art creates the realm in which the subversion of experience proper to art becomes possible: the world formed by art is recognized as a reality which is suppressed and distorted in the given reality...' (Marcuse, 1978: 18-19), suggesting the necessity for an art divorced from politicization. Marcuse wrote during the late 1960s/early 1970s and whether knowingly or not, based conclusions upon midcentury thought, continuing the Beat legacy of social critique. True understanding lies between the two extremes –art employing identity emphasizes diversity, but often does so within conventional tradition, which is a political act. Artists frequently express differing realities in defiance of dictated realities.



Figure 5. Wally Hedrick: *Fred's TV*. 1956.

form of worker oppression, positing that the culture of entertainment extended work environments (the culture of power) into leisure time.

De Tocqueville's consuming culture (although possessing precedent) found its fullest expression in America's postwar years. Hine (1987) and Marling, (1999), discuss the plethora of objects obtainable by Americans: labor-saving devices extolled as necessary by advertisers which diverted active cognition from more easily politicized concerns, i.e., the Gramscian dissent from hegemonic societal privileging of whites. Marling relates art appreciation to the classless influence of TV, positioning both television and art as framing images: 'break(ing) down ... the welter of shifting images.' (Marling, 1999: 81), i.e., fragmenting information to enable understanding and cohesive behavior. Hedrick's illustration (above right) comments obliquely, inserting pictographic images (picture) above technological dials and a red-lipped mouth, presumably dispensing oracular information. Hedrick's TV is monolithic and evil, leaving



no doubt as to Hedrick's Beat-inflected, dissenting opinion of official culture. TV is substituted for genuine cultural information, yet has selected exposure, thus promoting censorship. Hampered art awareness was one result. Midcentury residents experienced isolation both culturally and personally as suburbs separated privileged white residents from non-white city populations, and from self (reflected by cultural enjoinders to acquire diverting hobbies, like painting-by-numbers): replacing experience with substitution. Marling averred paint-by-numbers kits allowed novice art production, or kitsch facsimile of 'high' culture (Ibid: 84), supposedly producing a pacifying satisfaction, and diverting cognizance. Substitution enabled self-censure.

Figure 6. Jose Ramon Lerma: *Mendocino Storm*. 1956.

1.3 Mass-Culture and Bay Area Art

Hine quotes a 1954 *Life* magazine article as saying 'Never before, so much for so few' (Hine, 1987: 15), noting that consumption trickled-down to society's lower classes (Ibid: 12), but reality reserved financial ability to consume, for the dominant; advertisers illusorily extended that dominance to lower classes. The mentioned 'so few' reifies elitist favoring. Television functioned as the contemporary internet allowing theoretically classless information distribution, yet actually serving to affirm favoring. Bay Area cultural aims asserted dominant American privileging, yet pursued different direction from those of the larger nation (Albright, 1985: xv-xvi) with Gramscian egalitarian social concerns accommodating diverse regional realities. Lippard defines identity as important to art production,¹⁸ examining a 'new art' reflecting new identities but fails to consider midcentury economic effects of marginalization as impacting (or inhibiting) cultural development. Lippard's book considers recent art by formerly marginalized artists from a poststructuralist perspective, which does little to inform of prior obstructions. Lerma (above left) states: 'We were all doing real emotional art ... we were involved with the earth and the landscape' (McChesney, 1973: 157). Lerma relates his work to environmental factors. Psychological topography was confronted.

Gibson examines Abstract Expressionism, from a multicultural perspective which was culturally impossible prewar; exploring changes in societal valuation, arguing that the style was not solely created by white males (as popular mythos indicates and which negates actual history). To dissent, one consciously lives life in opposition to normative values and/or exhibits characteristics at odds with dominant dictates. Proscriptions can consist of skin color, sexuality, gender – traits not sanctioned as desirable by the ruling class or 'enterprise society' (Jones, 2006: 71-72).¹⁹ Artworks created by marginalized societal members constitute pedagogic/political attempts by artists to subvert hegemonic

¹⁸ Lippard's book title, *Mixed Blessings* refers to the mixing of unacknowledged cultures into one American homogeneity reflecting war mobilization and cultural plurality, i.e., *Mixed* identities. The word *Blessings* refers to benisons assumedly bestowed upon the resulting multicultural society.

¹⁹ 'Enterprise Society' is the term Jones gives to consumerist culture.

institutions: reaffirming non-compliance, yet Lerma's abstract work (above left) reveals only homogenous, if tumultuous human inner states. Alternative Bay Area cultural states existed a priori to midcentury (Albright, 1985: xv-xvi; Brook, et al., 1998: viii-ix), yet Albright disavows regional variation from mainstream artistic activity. Conversely, he identifies regional identity as an output motivational factor (Ibid: xvi). It is convincingly documented that a San Francisco School of Abstract Expressionism existed (Landauer, 1996: 1-4, 13-14, 70-75) and subsequent regional developments reflected defiant deviation from normative postwar mass-cultural elaboration currents. Information can be extrapolated to understand regional artistic difference. Gechtoff's painting (right) showcases non-linear, rounded forms and darker, softer colors more prevalent in San Francisco than typical postwar Abstract Expressionist works to which were ascribed a cohesiveness unseen in historiography.



Figure 7. Sonia Gechtoff: *Death of a Child*. 1957.

Difference characterizes Bay Area deviation yet local painters rejected 'local identity' (Ibid: 14). In McChesney, artists themselves reject regional

identity whilst simultaneously acknowledging influence of recent history and period mass-culture (Berman, 1992: 82).²⁰ McChesney explores contributions of regional artists directly involved with the movement (most were CSFA students²¹) who helped produce a local Abstract Expressionist variation;

²⁰ San Francisco's Jess said: '... you don't have to bow down to everything that was done before' (Berman, 1992: 83).

²¹ The California School of Fine Arts (CSFA) was San Francisco's premier art school. In addition to schools such as the CSFA, the Bay Area is also home to numerous art museums which exhibited the latest period art trends, disseminated information, and served as incubatory ground.

often voluntarily situating themselves within a dissenting Beat culture, creatively influencing area infrastructure and communicating artistic milieus. *Made in California* examines state contribution to American cultural production through artwork and a supplemental volume *Reading California*, examines alteric identity via essays, reaffirming unmentioned ethnographic cultural contribution to self-definition and culture. Hidden histories emerge reflecting realities differing from dominant national society and introducing an initial dissenting dissemination of difference to midcentury popular national culture. This initiates a national discourse designed to accommodate regional discrepancies in period cultural dissolution and paves the way for a more pluralistic American society – ultimately defying European feudal models of social control.

1.4 Redefinitions

Current art perception would not exist without the 1950s ceramic developments at Los Angeles' Otis Art Institute and subsequently at Berkeley's University of California – both locations overseen by Peter Voulkos who, with his students, revolutionized art conception and creation (discussed later in chapter three). At Otis, they applied Abstract Expressionist ideals and midcentury cultural influences (Pagliaro, 2003: 265) to the field of ceramics and later sculpture; revolutionizing form and content and questioning the nature of art and reality. Clay is malleable and conducive to Abstract Expressionist gestural treatment. Foley says:

The opportunity for sculpture to convey the aesthetic of painting with the psychological presence of the object was the incentive for artists to develop ceramic sculpture as a new area of expression ... When the problems they set for themselves went beyond the handling of materials to show technical achievement and addressed problems of perception, scale, inherent energy, implied human presence, or psychological challenge, the work transcended craft, and became a force in painting and sculpture. (Marshall and Foley, 1981: 11)

Dispensing with the functional aspects of traditional pottery inadvertently altered parameters for art creation by questioning the traditional roles of imagery (function) and iconography. Perchuk and Taft say: '... the visual experience they (Otis artworks) present is, like the temporality of their manufacture, not cohesive but additive and aspectual...' (Peabody et. al. 2011: 56). Ensuing painting



Figure 8. John Mason: *Orange Cross*. 1963.

and sculpture employed new materials and approached creation from primary experiential positions. Ceramics was first influenced by spontaneous painting (Slivka in Marshall and Foley, 1981: 13) and in turn influenced painting (and sculpture). Mason's *Orange Cross* (left) departs from, yet adheres to, the accustomed vessel dynamic; it serves a sculptural function reflecting Beat iconoclasm, Duchampian object autonomy, and Japanese concepts (wabi, sabi, yugen²²). Krauss says: '...categories like sculpture and painting have been kneaded and stretched and twisted in an

extraordinary demonstration of elasticity, a display of the way a cultural term can be extended to include just about anything...' (Krauss, 1979: 2).

Otis' artistic dissent first affected art aesthetics and quickly translated to global influence (Slivka in Clark, 1978: 133). As midcentury American work mirrored period culture, international creative work came to reflect western cultural developments dictated in part by period dialogics, which still govern the nature of art and the questions asked today. Given the nature of the change, and the passage of time, people currently often experience difficulty in understanding the radicalism of the period. Increased inclusivity, personal experience, and redefined language were revolutionary at the time. The history of ceramic developments has, like much of the art I examine, remained invisible in official art historiography. Yet, Otis's theoretical innovations remain prevalent; its creations merged 'craft' with 'art', questioning prior privileging and blurring distinctions. Coplans said:

In modern art all conventions including this hierarchy of media have been under attack. What distinguishes a work of art from that of craft is qualitative. A work of art is not concerned with the utilitarian, the rational, and the logical. Its purpose is expressive, that is, to aim new

²² See Appendix B for explanation of the three Japanese concepts.

questions about the nature of existence. In short, it is concerned with the aesthetic experience in its purest form. (Coplans in Clark, 1978: 153)

1.5 Constructing New Identities

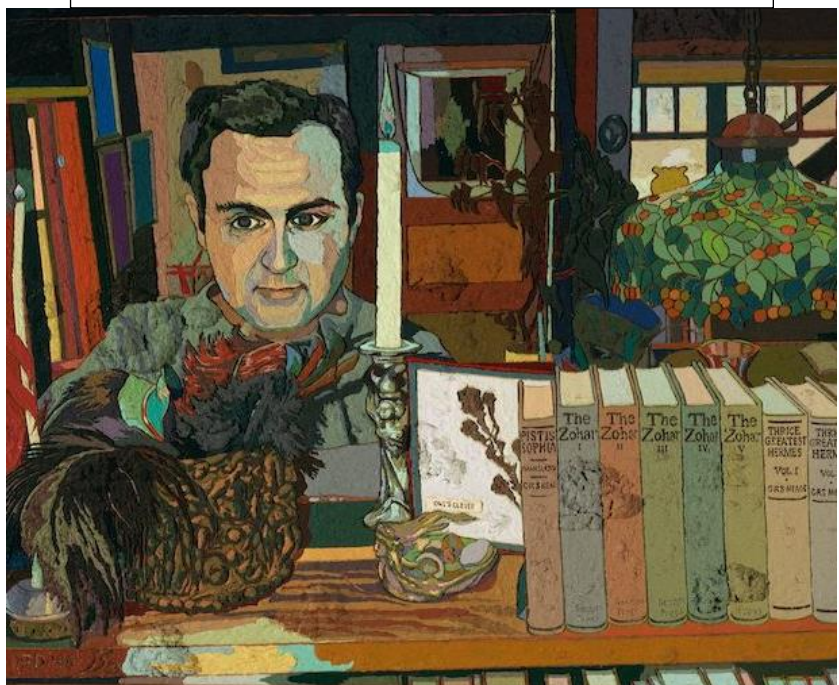
Postwar, historically marginalized peoples employed the civil rights movement as a model to demand the ongoing acknowledgement and sense of importance tasted during American war mobilization (triggering the rise of the gay and the Asian rights movements among others), destroying hegemonic distinctions between citizens. In the wartime armed forces, homosexuality was often ignored (Bérubé 1990: 2) although inclusion did not translate to peacetime or initially change mass-cultural values. Bérubé contrasts military policies labelling homosexuals as psychologically unfit (speciously implying threats to American life), with the reality of a differing sexuality. These policies extended to other minoritized ethnographic groupings in that non-privileged veracities, although invisible culturally, informed difference and cultural totality. Repression creates the 'us-vs-them' mentality (which Gramsci implied). Dudziak, examines demand by the marginalized for equality and although the civil rights movement was originally concerned with the societal rights of African-Americans, numerous minorities asserted individuality; calls for equitable treatment microcosmically mirrored the Cold War conflict between Communism and Capitalism (Bérubé 1990: 255) yet official governments still attempted to suppress marginalized ethnographic groups, despite their increasing visibility. Bérubé traces indirect gay emergence into mainstream American life, to recent war mobilization strategies and details concurrent schizophrenic armed forces homophobic discrimination. This thought can be extended to include increased marginal visibility outside military sectors which redefined identity for non-privileged ethnographic subgroups.

Friedan's late 1950s study resulting in the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* is credited with beginning the Women's Movement. Friedan's book would probably not have been written without the societal redefinition begun by World War Two and the influence of Marxist egalitarian thought. Feminist critical theory is constituted similarly to Queer Theory – both theoretically demand societal

accommodation of all individuals but initially lacked consideration of individuals of color or difference; yet both mirrored a changing cultural topography. Hall details the theoretical tradition growing out of the gay movement with Queer Theory arising during the 1960s and incorporating the previous Existential concerns and mobilizational inclusivity. Queer theory does not seek evidence of gay presence but rather, re-interprets existing epistemological viewpoints, highlighting variation. Hall says: ‘sexuality is thoroughly interconnected with (if never wholly determined by,) religion, economics, prevailing scientific paradigms, the social sciences, aesthetics...’ (Hall, 2000: 2). Thus, Queer theory dispenses with ‘facile binary definitions’ (Ibid: 4) and viewers may ‘queerly’ read artworks by marginalized artists, or from any perspective intended. Queer theory reflects Gramscian efforts to ‘unmoor’ predominant societal values and asks ‘Who are you?’ (Ibid: 12). Bay Area residents had necessarily ‘queered’ culturally normative considerations in advance of national values, to accommodate unique or ad hoc social situations. Hall also says: ‘...queer theories multiply and complicate our identity bases to the point that we are less likely to look at others and desire to “put” them in their “place.” None of us has a single fixed place...’ (Ibid: 16).

Anticipating Queer Theory’s later stance and reflecting a midcentury cultural perspective, Donald Corey’s *The Homosexual in America* (1960) argues for a societal tolerance of homosexuality. It is an early attempt to insert a dialogue on homosexuality into mainstream consciousness, and mirrors the

Figure 9. Jess (Collins): *The Enamored Mage: Translation # 6*. 1965.



1950s Homophile movement intent at education, which in itself, attempts to destroy Gramscian hegemonic notions of mythos or oppression. Corey examines attempts by gay men to incrementally subvert prevailing cultural values: an intent equally applicable to other disenfranchised societal groups. Californian homosexual visibility may date to the enforced proximity of the gold rush (Lipsky, 2006: 11) and the necessary tolerance of unfamiliar habits. The state's more liberal laws regarding homosexuality attracted large numbers of homosexually-oriented people (D'Emilio in Chauncey, et al., 1989: 459-460). San Francisco's Gay and Lesbian History Archives contain the papers of William Gaddis, who details secretive gay local life before, during, and after WWII military service. Gaddis' papers recount an oppressive atmosphere similarly narrated by Michael Rumaker describing a repressive midcentury San Francisco society. Visibility afforded proscribed identities entry to mainstream discussion, and conspicuousness demythologizes prevailing, societal, mores. Jess' example (above right) depicting his partner poet Robert Duncan amidst books, in an art filled interior reifies the couple's construction of insular worlds outside normative cultural dictates: an example of the DIY spirit, in which people

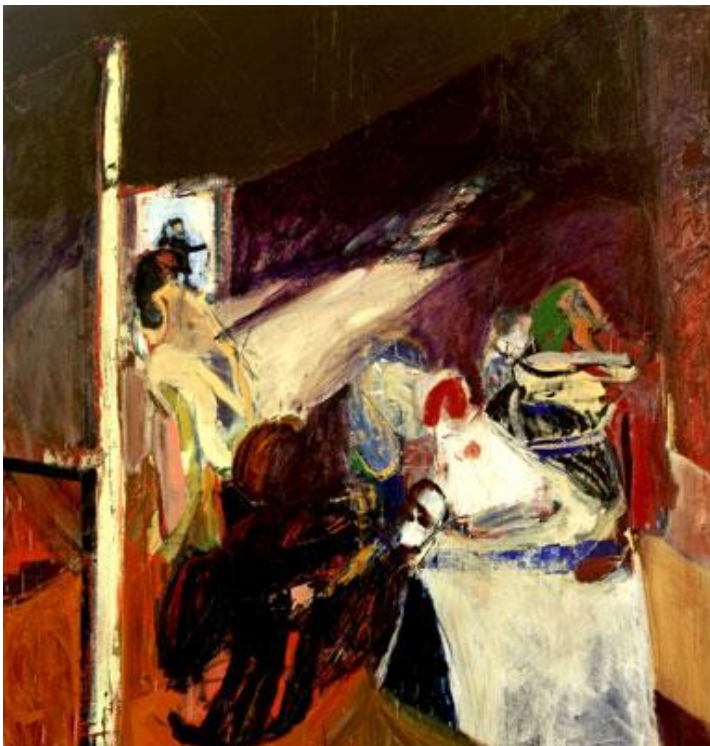


Figure 10. Bernice Bing: *Velasquez Family*. 1961.

disregard convention to construct personal mythos. Although intended for initiated audiences, the piece reconsiders cultural assignation and inserts dialogic presence.

Midcentury western society equated homosexual sensibility or sympathy, with Communistic threat (visibility confronted societal association with enmity) and Corber associates the rise of consumerism with the feminization of masculinity, which subverted both assumed heterosexual privilege and

Capitalist industry (Corber, 1997: 34). He equates Fordist consumerism with an advantaged heterosexual determinism explaining postwar culture as 'queered' or lacking prewar hegemonic domination. Proponents of social construction theory view sexual identity as human construct. If conceptions of sexuality change diachronically, aspects of sexual identity remain a factor in social construction although each society satisfies temporal needs, defining identity differently. Homosexuals in restrictive societies often seek anonymity: 'disappearing' into an enveloping cultural milieu. Bing's painting (above left) based upon a European Velazquez, epitomizes western art-historical influence upon American Asians, affirming cross-cultural interaction or global dialectic and upholds assimilationist negation of origin-based identity. 1940s societal reorganization, began fraying dominant social mores, and increased socialization opportunities informed gay people they were not alone (Lipsky, 2006: 49). 'A distinct identity is most likely to be involved in the pattern with which contemporary Westerners are ... familiar:

coeval egalitarian relationships...' (Chauncey, Duberman, and Vicinus, 1989: 10).

The Beats like other marginalized subgroups sought redefinition of existing and assumed cultural parameters: manifesting alternative or vanguardist values (Phillips, 1995: 28-29). Beat art reified differing values by ignoring traditional expressive avenues, disseminating alternate opinion in a DIY manner reminiscent of 'Manifest Destiny' (Ibid: 33). The postwar Bay Area region experienced an 'explosion' of exploratory cultural pursuits (Solnit: 27-30) with the

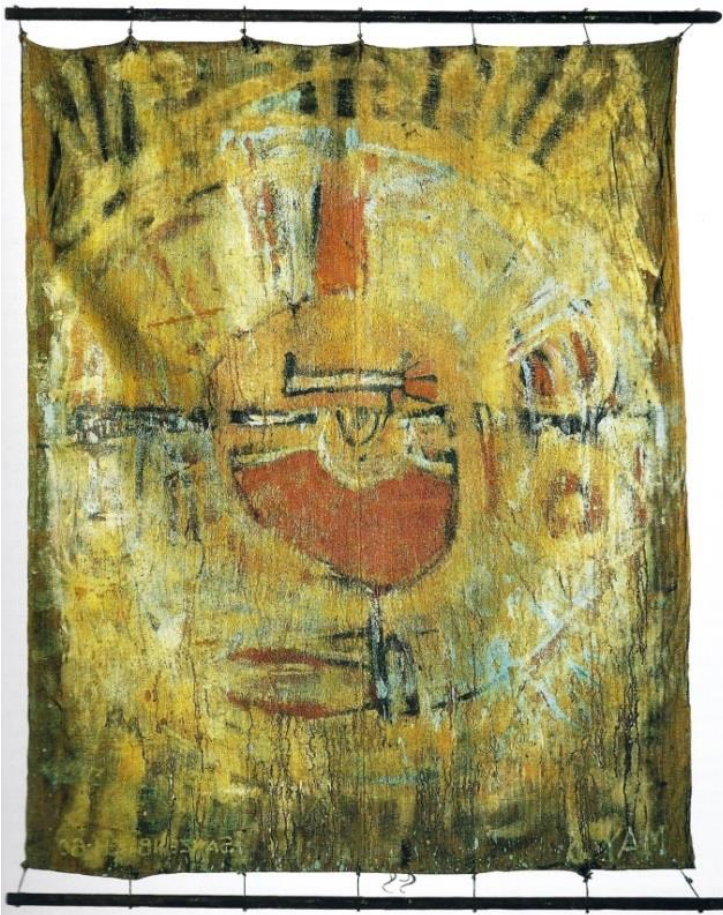


Figure 11. Keith Sanzenbach: *Mandala*. 1960.

Beats symbolizing a 'legitimizing of non-conformity' (Godfrey, 1988: 113). Gramsci and Friere were instrumental, if unacknowledged, in predicting and legitimizing cultural dissent from Capitalist hegemony while existentialism validated differing identities.

Asian ethnic minorities are prominent in Californian history, and a very visible subgroup in the San Francisco Bay Area. Although their art historical influence did not extend to formalized art school curriculums such as the CSFA's (Beasley, 1998:30-31), Asian Bay Area presence defines experience for many residents as does Asian popular culture (Chang, Johnston and Karlstrom, 2008: xviii): describing to a large extent, non-Asian experience; an east-west 'interpretive trope' (Ibid: 116). Composing the majority of the area's Asian demographic, Chinese immigrants began arriving in the Bay Area in the nineteenth century seeking financial betterment and fleeing tumultuous geopolitical history (Ibid: 112). Beat quest for alternative spirituality is evidenced in Sanzenbach's painting (above left), employing a stylized mandala suggesting inner spiritual migration (reiterated by DeFeo's *The Rose* in Figure 46) and presents alternative spiritual pursuit.

For some Asians, participation in American cultural construction enabled self-acceptance of their homosexuality (Eng and Hom, 1998: 9) as a valid aspect of a multiple distinctiveness, subverting host cultural valuation dynamics, and reaffirming temporal cultural changes. That Asian people should reassess core values and publically assert difference, exemplifies the influence of western values upon *them*, arguably not possible without their assimilated presence in America. America utilized assimilation when Abstract Expressionist works became cold war propaganda supposedly reflecting American mental 'freedom' (Cockcroft, 1974: 39-41; McEvilley, 1998: 22; Saunders, 1999: 267-275) which was disseminated abroad to combat international perception of Americans as fettered by dated cultural mores. Contemporary European-released Hollywood film product purported 'education' (Saunders, Ibid: 288-289), was actually advertising portraying America as culturally cutting-edge, being in reality, an attempt to obfuscate an impending Gramscian plurality, implied by increasing subgroup visibility.

Asian experience was not valued at the time of study (Cornell and Johnson, 2008: 9) and Asian-Americans would not have identified themselves as such. 'Insider perspectives' (Ibid: 12) offer glimpses into Asian cultural institutions, some of which are reflected in western spiritual traditions (Ibid: 102). Buddhism combines elements of religion with those of philosophy (Batchelor 1997: 15); allowing for an adherents potential divinity and considering the consequences of anguish or suffering (Ibid: 22-23) while placing responsibility for salvation squarely on the follower. Batchelor sets forth Buddhist precepts regarding individual integrity and mirrors the Socialistic, humanized concern for difference which resonated with Bay Area audiences.

The midcentury Environmental movement's inception reflects a Buddhist preoccupation with natural world preservation²³ and CSFA instructor Dorr Bothwell's waterfall depiction (below right) celebrates the natural world. She said: 'To me it's everything. We're part of it. Everything stems from it.

... I feel that there is something in nature that people are missing and that I can call their attention to...' (McChesney, 1973: 16). Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* described a biosphere in which unchecked pesticide use had poisoned the environment leaving many species on the brink of extinction and human survival threatened. Carson says: 'Along with the possibility of the extinction of mankind by nuclear war, the central problem of our age has therefore become the contamination of man's total environment with such substances of incredible potential for harm.' (Carson, 1962: 13). This book is



Figure 12. Dorr Bothwell: *Sierra Waterfall*. 1955.

²³ Buddhism was fashionable in the late 1950s/early 1960s (Chang, Johnson, and Karlstrom, 2008: 132, 212): dissatisfaction with conventional spirituality was not limited to 'bohemian' citizens.

credited with frightening American (and global) citizens into preserving the environment for future generations and (theoretically) ending related cold war era hubris which advocated humans taming nature. Carson dissents from official policy and mirrors her temporal, questioning, culture.

Bay Area artist Robert McChesney²⁴ said: 'There were very few artists who lived around San Francisco who didn't get out into the countryside once in awhile...' (McChesney, 1973: 78), indicating regional environmental cognizance and engagement. His serigraph²⁵ (below) abstractly depicts nature and humans aligned in a natural environment. McChesney's colleague John Hultberg, referring to regional output said: 'Using shapes and forms, vegetable forms, tree forms, the bole of a tree..., It's in terms of feeling. It would be part of nature, like a rock, wind, rain. You could feel the rain, feel the wind in it' (Ibid: 79). As Bay Area art incorporates localized and changing sentiments. Buddhism in America

Figure 13. Robert McChesney: *S4*. 1951.



adapted to new needs (Seager, 1999: 106, 111-112). In the midcentury Bay Area, Alan Watts²⁶ helped popularize an alternative approach to spiritual thinking explaining Buddhism

(specifically Zen) to American audiences (Watts, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1980).

²⁴ McChesney's wife Mary (also an artist) authored *A Period of Exploration*.

²⁵ See Appendix B.

²⁶ British-born Watts moved to the USA in 1938, and to the Bay Area in 1950. He published at least 25 books on subjects concerning or tangential to Zen, promoting Buddhism to young, countercultural devotees. His Bay Area following was large.

1.6 Class Considerations

Gramsci's hegemonic concepts apply to all classes in any given society, a lesson not lost on Paolo Friere – influencing concepts of artistic quality (McEvilley, 1992: 20) with oppressors seeking to establish uniformity in appreciation (McEvilley, 1992: 13) and, among other estimations, reinforcing a dominant position. Stratification occurs when groups situate privileged members closer to oppressors, and prioritize valuations to approximate those of oppressors. What happens when one is marginalized? What are the repercussions of hegemonic positioning upon individuals, and upon society? Most importantly for my discussion, what is the effect of marginalization upon output? In 'Overcoming Invisibility', Dr. Anderson J. Franklin refers to: '... clients who say feeling invisible causes them a range of ills, including disillusionment, chronic indignation, pervasive discontent, anger, depression, substance abuse and hopelessness...' (Greer, 2004). To the above, one might add feelings of uselessness, failure, inadequacy, internalized bias, and cultural incompetence; impeding art production, optimal societal performance, and resultantly, depriving society of interjecting voices. Hegemonic stereotypes can be attacked with art inserting dialogic reappraisal of prior valorization although artworks questioning stratification are often dismissed by dominant groups as inferior work because they reflect an alteric reality and threaten hegemony. Disenfranchised artists relate a reality dependent upon their personal personas and societal positioning, thus placing output at odds with dominant understandings of cultural organization.

Marginalized societal positions relegate people to collective fringes, usually via economic deprivations; attendant educational lack limits career opportunities, perpetuating marginalization and barring full cultural participation, as evidenced by Friere's experiences with poverty and hunger. Stereotypes are 'exaggerated' (University of Notre Dame, N.D.) essentializing misperceptions held

against ethnographic groups. Stereotyping should not be confused with prejudice,²⁷ although the result is the same: marginalization. Discrimination is '... the failure to treat all people as of equal worth, and to acknowledge their full humanity' (Axner, N.D.), differing from oppression in that the latter carries discrimination to an extreme level. Marginalization can be thought of as somewhere between the two although its effect is closer to that of oppression. With changed circumstances, previously marginalized²⁸ positions can become privileged and vice-versa.

I will not discuss 'good' vs. 'bad' art: values change diachronically (McEvilley, 1992: 21, 24-25). Work excluded from mainstream art histories creates illusory totalities. With redefined inclusivity, the position of alteric artists has improved and art produced by previously marginalized people is now more privileged. However, marginalized groups still battle invisibility and continue seeking succor in companionship. Godfrey (1988) documents several San Francisco neighborhoods associated with disenfranchised groups, equating establishment of 'ethnic and non-conformist communities' with metropolitan cores. Expansion of community borders can create friction (Godfrey, 1988: 104) with interplay between alternative communities and dominant culture creating what he terms the 'culture of civility'.²⁹ Bay Area prejudicial discord existed but fractional boundary disputes are more precisely an intermingling of historical and new values which 'bond' communities (McEvilley, 1992: 23) seeking negotiation of cultural terrain, or: '... the Ego is responsible for psychic states (e.g. love, hate) and that these in turn determine our consciousness.' (Barnes in Sartre, 2001: xi). When artists have 'psychic states' forced upon them, their psyches push them towards rebellion.

²⁷ Dictionary.com defines prejudice as a prior opinion formed without benefit of reason or knowledge. See: <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/prejudice>> - accessed 20/May/2014.

²⁸ See Burton and Kagan 'Marginalization' in Prilleltandsky and Nelson (eds) *Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Wellness and Liberation*. Chapter 13 (pp. 1-41). Available: <www.compsy.org.uk/Chapter13all> - accessed 19/May/2014.

²⁹ Gramsci's 'civil society'.

California was marginalized within the American ego – ostensibly because its residents think differently – and within California, Bay Area freethinking is considered to threaten Californian values (and thus dominant America's). Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind* anthropologically³⁰ examines societal construction of non-western cultures around the world with a special emphasis on what he terms 'bricolage'³¹ which is a concept applicable to western art considerations, incorporating ideas outside art realms, and is meaningful to Bay Area societal organization attempting to accommodate diverse citizenry through bricolaged governance, as well as marginalized art output. Lévi-Strauss' search for defining structures and classificatory meanings is flawed: 'multiple complex factors (are) contained in the units of culture' (Adams, 1996: 141), and Lévi-Strauss fails to account for regional or individual autonomic idiosyncrasy. His taxonomy conveniently fits gridded frameworks, but viable contemporary social structures must necessarily account for diverse populace realities which negate Lévi-Strauss' essentializing contexts.

1.7 Art as Communication

Art creation may be construed as the construction of semiological signs:

communication between people within given cultures. Some art is economically co-opted (i.e., 'blue-

Figure 14. Jess (Collins): *Seventy XXth Success Story*. 1953.



³⁰ Anthropology studies humans, both historically and in the present-day. I view ethnographic groups marginalized in American society from an anthropological stance.

³¹ Bricolage refers to ad hoc artwork creation employing available materials and Lévi-Strauss contrasts bricoleurs with his 'engineer', who ultimately constructs from a basis of pragmatic assumptions whereas the bricoleur creates from the mind.

chip' art), yet marginalized art, ignored by official academe, is essentially identical in purpose. Ferdinand de Saussure (Bally and Sechehaye, 1966) assumes that the smallest element of the linguistic sign, the *signifier*, points to the *signified*, or as Barthes³² puts it: '... the mental representation of the "thing"' (Barthes, 1983: 42-43). All art may be considered signage illustrating utopian, or other, concepts unique to an artist or ethnographic group. For de Saussure, language was created by culture and speech enabled communication between societal members. Barthes maintains no semiology is constructed without the presence of language. Jess' example (above right) combines the fragmented, painted image with pasted words, communicating with viewers in isolated snippets of language and paint. His piece projects words as artistic fodder in a war against convention, abstractly revealing a chaotic temporality and the influence of mass-culture and/or sympathetic colleagues upon artists.

According to Hall, artists encode the message which is then decoded by viewers who may share an artist's bias and encoded messages may be specifically tailored to their understanding. Viewers not sharing ethnographic affiliation can interpret artwork differently. Thus, an artwork can mean different things to different people. Hall says:

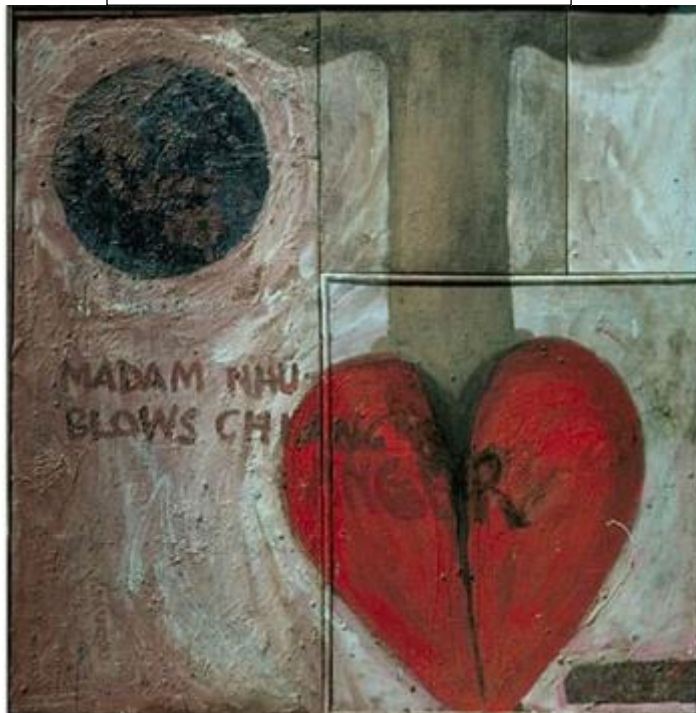
The 'message form' is the necessary 'form' of appearance of the event in its passage from source to receiver. Thus the transposition into and out of the 'message form' (or the mode of symbolic exchange) is not a random 'moment', which we can take up or ignore at our convenience. The 'message form' is a determinate moment; though, at another level, it comprises the surface movements of the communications system only and requires, at another stage, to be integrated into the social relations of the communication process as a whole, of which it forms only a part. (Hall, 1980: 52)

Meaning can be intentionally veiled if said meaning is dissenting, threatening to the status quo, or otherwise offensive to a dominant culture. As Hubbs says, highlighting difference elucidates ways in which we compose ourselves, revealing revolutionary possibilities (Hubbs, 2004: 175). Difference can be theoretical as well as physical.

³² In the case of artwork, Barthes 'thing' would be the image or compositional element employed to communicate ideas to audiences – the iconography chosen by an artist.

Historians have documented Bay Area distinctiveness as, locale possessing individuality of place due to the uniqueness of historical populations and attitudes. General American culture has rendered much Bay Area history invisible due to marginalization of California and Bay Area residents, owing presumably to perceived threats to American values. Locale inserts itself into discussions of region and flavors local art, discussed by artist James Kelly who refers to Bay Area art when he says: ‘... it had the stamp of its locality, for instance, in the colors or the value of the colors, things like that ... I think the light has a lot to do with it ... new York always had brighter colors, more intense colors ... west coast ... softer’. (McChesney, 1973: 80). Hedrick’s *ANGER* (below left) combines words with image in a politically

Figure 15. Wally Hedrick: *ANGER*. 1953–63.



motivated comment on current international policies, yet differing people could interpret the image to suit respective allegiances. Hedrick also registers dissent through color, utilizing the color red to imply frustration and in accord with western color semiology. He implies sexual activity deviating from dominant Christian normativity: appropriating traditional normativity to cast political suspicion.

Reclaiming San Francisco (1998) reasserts

the influences hidden histories have upon populations, implying that unique cultural history produces unique populace; a reversed appraisal of a locale’s effects. As poet, critic, and countercultural icon Kenneth Rexroth³³ says: ‘San Francisco was not just a wide-open town. It is the only city in the United

³³ Kenneth Rexroth (1905-1982) was considered among the ‘San Francisco Renaissance’ writers and was MC at the legendary Six Gallery reading where *Howl* was publically debuted.

States which was not settled overland by spreading puritan tradition ... More important, nobody cared what you did as long as you didn't commit any gross public crimes' (Brook, Carlson, and Peters, 1998: viii). The area is characterized by migrations (both internal and external) and perseverance despite national disapproval; a stubborn insistence upon an individual path reified in Bay Area art.

In output, Bay Area artists continually revealed themselves, their culture and temporality through behaviors or identities differing from normative cultural values. We have seen that Bay Area political composition follows a leftist orientation. This ultimately allows vanguard identity expression, despite cultural approbation and how midcentury philosophical trends such as existentialism, coupled with traditional American thought trends, produced a unique citizenry and a regional variation of then-current art expression. Midcentury art toils within, yet reifies, temporal cultural paradigms. Insistent assertion of difference, would then, enable broader, cultural, acceptance of deviance. That the question (and acceptance) of difference has been historically prominent in the Bay Area, allows alteric personalities to participate more fully in the cultural life of their region while simultaneously permitting conforming residents to experience cultural identities outside normative American cultural life. In the next chapter I will explain the research methods employed in the course of this project.

Chapter Two - Methodologies

'To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body'

– bell hooks (1984: unpaginated)

2.1 Project Structure and Research Methods

As a researcher living in the twenty-first century, I am unable to experience first-hand the conditions leading to creation of the artworks I consider. I rely upon the following methodologies to partially reconstruct quotidian conditions during the American midcentury period. I have relied heavily upon textual analysis. As an artist, I possess insight into creative drive, i.e., I am active within the artistic field and I have endeavored to avoid pure data collection, and attempted instead, to present interpretive analysis of my findings; a dialogical pedagogy as Friere (2005) offers it. Clifford states:

Neither the experience nor the interpretative activity of the scientific researcher can be considered innocent. It becomes necessary to conceive of ethnography not as the experience and interpretation of a circumscribed 'other' reality, but rather as a constructive negotiation involving at least two, and usually more, conscious, political significant subjects. Paradigms of experience and interpretation are yielding to discursive paradigms of dialogue and polyphony. (Clifford in Sobers, 1988: 108)

This includes researching living conditions (both general and marginal) in archival collections pertaining to the period under consideration. I depend upon other writers considerations including the memoirs of group participants and philosophical and/or political considerations (fernie, 1999: 18) as expounded by aesthetic theorists (Hofstadter and Kuhns, 1976: xiii). It is impossible not to insert personal viewpoint (and temporal location) into data interpretation. Likewise, it is impossible for other researchers not to interpret the information they present without realization that the onus is upon them to accept or reject the findings discovered. Information is 'inevitably incomplete' (Ferguson, 1990: 9).

The nature of this project and its structure, dictates employment of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to answer research questions. Four particular methods are employed. These

are: textual or hermeneutic analysis, on-site, empirical analysis of physical artwork, heuristic combing of archival records and quantitative interpretation of U.S. Census Bureau data.

Textual/hermeneutic research (conducted within America and Scotland) revealed midcentury period topography and regional cultures, art material employed, and mirroring of Western social status systems within art output. Given my artistic background, I possessed mental maps of dominant period art movements. As a Bay Area resident I am aware of west coast regional variants, and the nature of San Francisco Bay Area art, culture, and mindset. I renewed these familiarities and explored tangential pathways of interest, examining political, philosophical, and theoretical approaches to interpretation, i.e., Marxist and Queer Theories. I familiarized myself with political, scientific, philosophical, and semiological approaches to questions of identity as reflecting temporality, economic status, and regionality. Saussurean concepts of signs, signifiers, and/or semiology are pertinent to concept of output as communication. Textual examination reveals plethoric scrutiny of realities differing from accepted social and artistic perspectives. Artistically abridged or constrained production results from imposed social proscription.

On-site empirical analysis of artworks verifies contexts within which various artists functioned as well as revealing available dissemination opportunities outside the art-world. Most art viewable in museums or galleries falls within the economically advantaged area of dominant culture and does not reflect the marginalized persons I seek to reveal. Many artists of interest are little known today: records of their lives and work have disappeared, considered worthless in a society valuing economic advantage. I viewed much of what has been preserved but was unable to reveal any secrets. Personally viewing museum, gallery, or other collections provides valuable empirical experience, permitting critical analysis of period quotidian popular culture; the physical characteristics of artwork; employed iconography, present condition (i.e. utilization of 'cheap' materials indicating lower economic status). A rigorous process of subjective/objective analysis of individual works reveals clues to identities experienced,

expressed, period created, personal histories, intended audience. Often viewing reproductions is the only available recourse as original artwork is unavailable indicating disregard for artistic expression not reflective of dominant values; thus, much of the history I seek was considered disposable during the midcentury period and is now lost and many reproductions result from obscure sources. To understand visual images, viewers must understand an artworks' context and the context from which viewers currently observe that site as well as the technological standpoint of medium limitations (i.e., the physical limits of paint or clay).

I found that museums were perhaps the least helpful when it came to researching marginalized period art as they contain none of what I sought except in cases where the person or movement was valued by officialdom, and art was available in period collections. Museums after all, despite their alleged allegiances, reflect the dominant valuations of a society (and are affected by societal economic vicissitudes). I was unable to gain access to museum stacks or to view entire collection holdings. Museum bookstores permitted retrieval of publications difficult to find in more conventional bookstores as my quests were often specialized or esoteric and thus not cost-effective to stock.

Archived collections can reveal an artist's everyday social context and societal valuation challenges. Many archival acquisitions recount history too recent to illuminate midcentury social context and motivation, yet others capture remarkable detail of marginalized experience. My emphasis thus shifted to period context illumination and understanding marginal temporal experience. Ephemera collection shed light on the cultural milieu surrounding various ethnographic groups and videotaped interviews with artists illuminated artistic motivation and provided first-hand accounts of period milieu/status. However, little remains of period non-dominant artistic activity and archives rarely possess material dating to the midcentury period, perhaps due to said marginalization which rendered groups of citizens culturally invisible. When archives do record non-dominant activity, it is of a cultural

nature elucidating the milieu in which art was created but providing little accessible information documenting artists' lives or accomplished work.

Nonetheless, I spent considerable time in archives researching period cultural conditions of disenfranchised people and ethnographic groups. I found relevant primary material largely nonexistent. The Gay and Lesbian archives for example provided windows into the lives of gay midcentury San Franciscans and the Chinese Historical Society of America documented the history of Chinese people in California (and America), as well as providing a few examples of stored artwork. Archives were excellent repositories for documentary evidential history of individuals or ethnographic groups, however, I found them wanting when it came to recording artistic activity. They reflected the dominant cultural bias that considers art and artists irrelevant. Some curators/librarians helped by pointing me in beneficial research directions or alerting me to obscure art examples (if only documentary) but as the groups I examine were marginalized; I found little recorded activity and almost no examples of marginalized art outside publications and/or on the Internet. Archivists suggested specialized publications which aided my disentangling the complicated knots of personal lives reflecting complex social situations. Although archival research can be time-consuming, archives illuminate the history of groups or regions by contrasting daily reality with historical dominant preconception.

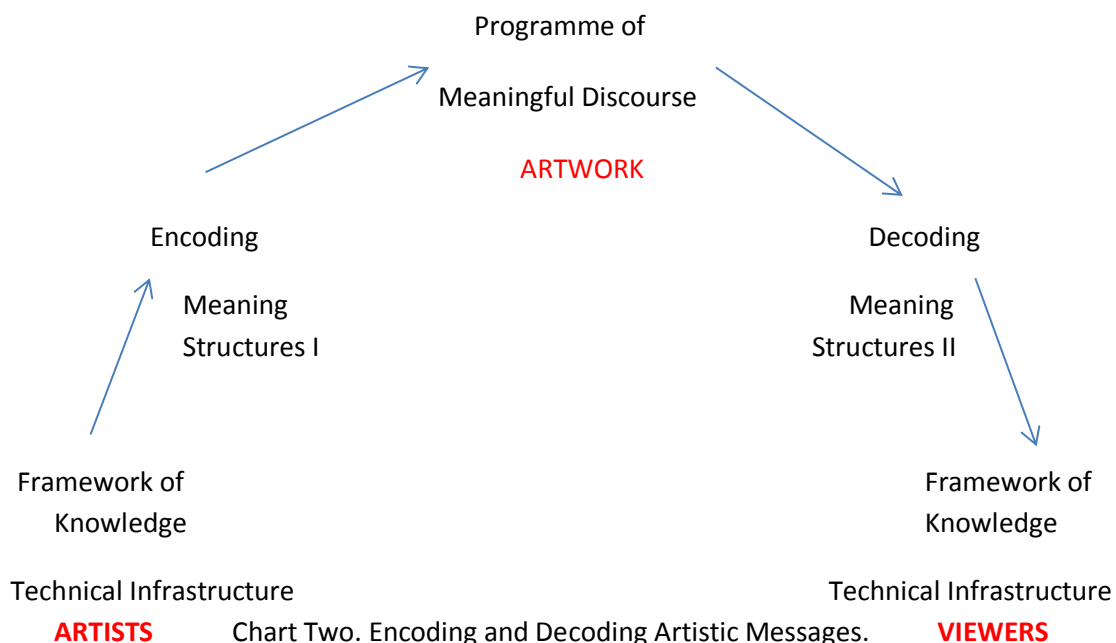
For more general information regarding cultural context, I relied upon decennial data collected and published by the U.S. Census Bureau. Interpreted quantitatively, data obliquely revealed ethnographic positionings relevant to this study. Census Bureau data is valuable for tracking mobility,³⁴ however, it rarely mentions artistic activity, being instead standardized to reflect dominating trends and values. I reformat much material after interpretive analysis to highlight revealing and salient points concerning the siting of artists in society and within ethnographic subgroups. Census records provide data concerning population densities and regional demographic division. Internet searches are another

³⁴ I refer both to physical mobility (i.e., moving across country) as well as societal mobility.

path to uncovering documentation, although usually considered secondary (and unreliable) research. Interpreting Census Bureau data is problematic due to the general nature of such data. It should be taken by my readers as indicative, but not definitive, indication of pertinent information.

I relied upon the Internet to discover what I could with respect to the art and artists of the period and region; however, I take this information with knowledge of the potential inaccuracy of Internet material. At times, Internet information seemingly contradicted textual source material. In some cases, I was able to download copies of publications as well as examples of period artworks; both of which furthered my pursuits. I was additionally enabled to retrieve quick definitions and to clarify minor points.

I located more success with public libraries and found their personal eager to assist; occasionally undereducated yet often endeavoring to set up interviews with persons perhaps possessing data I sought, however, regarding collections, I found information was often uncatalogued and libraries were frequently unaware of the scope of their own holdings. As may be surmised, they were excellent sources for published works which frequently enlarged previous findings.



2.2 Considering Interpretation

Chart Two³⁵ (above) represents a viewer's responsibility in decoding an artist's intentions. Art output is encoded by artists and decoding is accomplished by viewers (possibly of an artist's ethnographic group) either contemporarily or diachronically. The framework of knowledge is the context within which an artist creates and 'meaning structures' (both I and II) refer to understandings assumed by artists as well as those supplied by viewers. The 'Meaningful Discourse' refers to information contained within encoded artwork. An understanding of economic or other sanctions placed upon marginalized visual artists is critical to conversance with the meanings employed by artists and supplied to intended audiences (including diachronic viewers).

Culture, it is argued, is not so much a set of things – novels and paintings or TV programmes – or comics – as a process, a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings – “the giving and taking of meaning” - between the members of a society or group... (Hall in Rose, 2005: 6)³⁶

Hall's quotation references contextual association as much as it demands understanding of communication, situating identity as part of a larger positioning dialogue. A society is composed of communicating subgroups enabling cultural totality: all individuals may be considered intrinsic and making valuable meanings (acknowledged or not by dominant groups). In the case of official art historical record, dominant beliefs are reified in marginalization. The chart below (Rose, 2005: 30), details analytical considerations for interpreting visual images. I do not consciously pursue psychoanalytical analysis³⁷ for example, but the chart indicates avenues for output interpretation. What do artists say about themselves and the temporal period in which they created? I am interested in

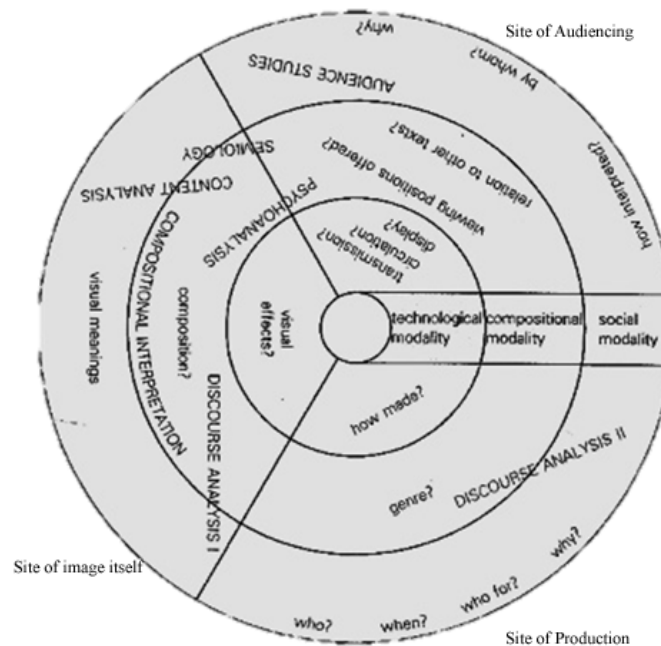
³⁵ The second Chart is taken from Encoding/Decoding by Stuart Hall, originally appearing in Hall, S. et al, *Culture Media, Language* (1980). See: <www.art.buffalo.edu/coursenotes/.../encoding_decoding_hall.pdf> : 54. Accessed 08/June/ 2014.

³⁶ See Hall, S. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (1997): 2.

³⁷ Psychoanalysis per se limits full interpretation of the visual by dismissing aspects of cultural coding and decoding with its too heavy reliance upon structural analysis of social conditions creating art producers.

identity, period contextual productions, included iconography, and intended audience as well as present-day semiological understanding (discourse analysis).

Chart Three - Methods of visual interpretation.



Rose's chart explicates aspects pertinent to interpreting visual material. Her definition of culture could be augmented by referring to visual culture as that which we are capable of seeing and available in a surrounding cultural milieu. I do not refer to print or aural cultural manifestations although both can augment the visual.³⁸ Strinati's conception of mass-culture is applicable as an outgrowth of collective mentality and experience. Visuals reference communally-held realities and are often supplementary to ethnographic association. In the case of midcentury Bay Area art, contemporary researchers must employ methods applicable to the fields of cultural studies, queer theory and ethnic studies to understand artistic production.

³⁸ Beat writers, for example, described their particular cultural milieu employing visual or aural aspects in a literary production.

Rose bases many observations upon Foucault's work although she criticizes him for not exploring visual manifestation far enough. Among Foucaultian terminologies, she employs the term Discourse and divides it into parts I & II (similar to 'meaning discourse' in chart Two, above). Discourse I may be equated with exploring 'various kinds of visual images' (including textual) and their interpretation relying upon immediately apparent factors in production such as medium, current condition, and period valuation. She defines Discourse II as 'paying more attention to the practices of institutions' (Rose, 2005: 140). Rose most often identifies Discourse II with Galleries and Museums. I am more concerned with Discourse I. The former are inapplicable in that marginalized artists were invisible to the profit-oriented world of business governing art sales and reflecting dominant valuations.

2.3 Deciphering Period Identity

Hegemonic societal structuring restricted dissemination opportunities for all examined societal groups. The Semina Gallery for example, permitted visitors to directly observe Beat mentality and reality in situ, in a setting lacking roof and wall text. Images were displayed as iconic representation of artistic intent, i.e., isolated images opposing earlier gallery convention of multiple examples distributed without consideration for classifications and enabling simplistic understandings. The King Ubu Gallery,³⁹ an 'underground' gallery started by two CSFA students was intended to 'show exploratory works by fellow-students and their teachers' (Natsoulas, 1996: 23). Midcentury San Francisco lacked an art market for marginal representation. Artist Bruce Conner said: '...you knew you weren't going to make any money. You did it because you felt no other choice, and you worked in a society that either had little interest in what you were doing or saw it as a threat....' (Natsoulas, 1996: 150). Both Jade Snow Wong and Wayne Ng promoted their art within a business context (see Asian Artists in Chapter Three), however, other marginalized artists were less fortunate or innovative. Given western societal proscription prohibiting deviating sexuality, gay-oriented or themed galleries were non-existent at this time.

³⁹ The King Ubu Gallery opened in 1952, founded by painters Harry Jacobus, Jess Collins and Collins' lover poet Robert Duncan.

Lasswell in *Power and Personality* (1948) defines content analysis as what is said, whom it is said to and what the effect is. I am concerned with creative intent (or coding), although equally concerned with viewer reception (or decoding). In Rose's chart quadrant labelled 'site of image itself', one considers ramifications of an artist's societal positioning, i.e., economic status (as reflected in dissemination opportunities, material employed, and quotidian survival). I would place 'Discourse II' within this quadrant as a subset of Discourse I and contend Rose's 'modalities' (technological, compositional, social) fall within this imagistic arena. Content analysis is the operative phrase here. Who made a piece and what does it say about the artist, their social standing, their time, and culture? Merlou-Ponty describes artists as essentially manipulating perception; however, temporal culture is essential to diachronic understanding (Adams, 1996: 141), and enables historical boundary-crossing. Marginalized artists were poor by societal design and employed materials were often more readily available, a construction concept explained by Lévi-Strauss' bricolage.

In 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,' Derrida basically deconstructed western thinking, positing that semiological structures had been re-defined i.e., that language could be broken-down into subsets of meaning enabling a coherent, syntagmatic whole, not unlike advertising and television's isolated units of meaning conveying unitary messages. This had implications for both art production (its creation and understanding) as well as human/cultural interaction via language.

"Deconstruction" is a form of textual analysis that deconstructs the language of the text and focuses on the self-referential aspects of language... Derrida invented the term *différance* to convey the divided nature of the sign ... meaning is the result of difference between sign and signifier... and how both (speech and writing) exist in a mutually reciprocal dependence marked *différance*. (Ryan, N.D.)

Saussurean linguistic structure explained speech and communication (including that of art) and Barthes' semiology utilized de Saussure's concepts of the sign, signifier, and signified (Bally and Sechehaye, 1966: 66-67) to explain daily communication employed to convey concepts and theoretical

positions within societies: by identifying unifying structures in a text (communication). Considered semiologically, artworks enable communication between artists and audiences including ethnographic group members and generalized communicants (Adams, 1996: 140, 141), while disseminating that communication to broader audiences, who may or may not comprehend the message.

Derrida's *difference* implies a distinction between two things. Most 'things' contain within themselves implied opposites in a binary duality. Ethnographers have named this distinction the 'other,' implying distance and an 'us-vs-them' dissimilarity (utilized in the cold war era). Marginalized peoples may be considered 'other' to dominant societal classes. West says

'... the new cultural politics of difference ... trash the monolithic and homogeneous in the name of diversity, and heterogeneity; ... in light of the concrete, specific, and particular; and ... historicize, contextualize and pluralize by highlighting the contingent, provisional, variable, tentative, shifting, and changing.' (West in Ferguson, 1990: 19)

and, '... social theory is what is needed to examine and explain the historically specific ways in which 'Whiteness' is a politically constructed category...' (West in Ferguson, 1990: 29), referring to the dominant privileging of white people at the expense of 'others' – the social construction of the notion of *difference* preeminent in Capitalist societies. For 'whiteness' one could substitute any societally conforming group. For artists positioned outside dominant structures, Minh-ha says: 'Inevitably, a work is always a form of tangible closure' – a means of suggesting internal coherence; a disseminated (or not) resolution of identity and conflict; an assertion of self (Ferguson, 1991: 329). She states elsewhere that artists are '...entirely involved with the now-and-here, one is also elsewhere, exceeding one's limits even as one works intimately with them. This is a dimension that one develops simultaneously, not something that happens linearly and successively in two time-phases, with one coming before the other' (Grzanic, 1998).

Rose's placement of social positioning as an art production factor (whether examined as economic element or as oppositional self-assertion tool) creates a politicized realm in which art ceases to be mere expression of difference and more expression of defiance. I look to social factors in artwork

interpretation as methods by which artistic intent may be understood to influence creation and dissemination and contrasted with those employed by privileged artists. Employment of differing creation techniques produces differing visual effects and thus differing messages.

The methods employed to achieve knowledge of this particular period and region, have proved unsatisfactory with the exception of examination of textual or hermeneutic sources, and work in archives. Books are an excellent starting point, but they only reify their author's intent and I required tangential subject matter to flesh-out considerations. Research took me into the realm of political and sociological thought with works by Gramsci, Strinati, Lévi-Strauss, de Saussure, Barthes, Friere, and Marcuse. They were consulted in order to comprehend the societal ramifications of the upheavals caused by the Second World War and those effects upon the already individualized Bay Area. There is a decided lack of primary source material and I have inferred conditions from both primary and secondary sources. Publications dealing with midcentury Bay Area art are few yet I have relied upon them for empirical observations in lieu of interviewing participants or personally viewing art created within the studied movements. Most persons active at the time I examine are now deceased; precluding interviews and published interviews conducted before death are few. Existing or documented artworks produced during the indicated years continue to live and speak of a creator's temporality, geographical location, and social status.

2.4 Reviewing Mass-Cultural Influence

I discovered upon returning to the Bay Area after time spent in Scotland that America's Public Broadcasting Service documentaries were often applicable to my project's more tangential aspects and, over time, wove together previously partial threads of knowledge. I was able to view programs concerning the Bay Area's geographical, demographic, environmental, and political histories. Chinese, gold rush, homosexual, San Francisco cultures, and the Second World War's effect on regional and national residents were all applicable to my project and enhanced gleaned knowledge.

The midcentury introduction of television united people (possessing financial wherewithal) in an unheralded exchange of information (not unlike the present-day Internet), revolutionizing ways in which

Figure 16. Family watching TV. c. 1958.



people communicated and thus, ways in which artworks were created and presented. However, television (left) and advertising reinforced a conformity deemed necessary; dissenters were shunned – and not everyone was able or willing to conform. What are the methodologies by which difference might be inferred? Visual, cultural, political differences destabilize dominant paradigms and evidence of non-conformity or dissent is easily found in textual or visual sources. Empirical inspection of reproduced work constitutes a methodology in itself, supplemental to knowledge gleaned from textual examination.

One influence upon all midcentury artists would be quotidian social reality (or Strinati's mass culture) considered as contrast to realities experienced by ethnographic groups yet uniting societal members in experience. Were there disparate experiences? Yes, in that there was a disparity in quality of life as experienced by rich or poor, white and non-white peoples. Do differing realities rarefy experience or reify societal privileging? Basically both, in that artists possess rarefying abilities to communicate, yet inevitably display evidence of temporal and societal placement. I approach culture construction from a politically and logically constructed midcentury societal conception of which art expression is the manifestation of identity formed within unique individuals and by temporally prevailing societal conditions. In Chapter Three I examine artworks by marginalized artists.

Chapter Three – Empirical Investigations

'I think it was a period of exploration as much as anything else, an effort to find out what painting could be without merely repeating what had been already accomplished...'

- Ed Corbett (McChesney 1973: 16)

Part One: Mass Culture

3.1 Quotidian, Regional and Popular Culture

Before and after statehood, California hosted differing cultures (Chan in Starr and Orsi, 2000: 44-45) and San Francisco's ocean proximity indicated trade potential; later, permitting businesses to corner world markets while intercontinental railroads enabled American business ties (Starr, 2007: 115-119; Dinkelspiel, 2008: 53-54, 83). The state promoted itself as Edenic, ripe for development; offering prosperity to potential migrants. California's natural wealth was regarded as a manipulable asset and boosterists promoted arable areas as potential farmland, city land as potential business or residential property. The warm (southern) Californian climate was promoted as remedy for physical complaints and tourist destination (Barron, 2000a: 65). Sustainable resource management was



Figure 17. Wallace Berman in a rowboat, Larkspur. 1961.

uncharacteristic of nineteenth century American thought although Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau (Phillips, 1995: 29)⁴⁰ wrote about living in harmony with nature, based in part upon study of Eastern religion.⁴¹ His injunction to simplify daily life subverted American materialist paradigms, advocating inner contemplation as

exemplified by quintessential Beat Wallace Berman (above) studying in a rowboat (Krutch, 1965: 247).

⁴⁰ Transcendentalist philosophers included Emerson, Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Amos Bronson Alcott, Frederic Henry Hedge, and Theodore Parker. See: Krutch (1965) and: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/transcendentalism/> - accessed 11/July/2014.

⁴¹ Throughout his writings, Thoreau evidences familiarity with Eastern philosophies referring to 'Hindoos', the 'ganga' (ganges), and the 'Bhagavat Geeta.' See: Krutch (Ibid) and: http://www.hinduwisdom.info/quotes1_20.htm - accessed 18/August/2014.

Thoreau indicated awareness of global philosophical thought, environmental considerations, yet conversely, reified the self-centered individuality manifested in gold rush era mentalities. He disdained concern for human associates in favor of self-knowledge (Holliday, 1981: 176-177).

American (and global) perception of the 'frontier' west as a separate mentality was in part created by California boosterism (Barron, 2000a: 27, 65,66) in which American manifest destiny fabricated a west outside tradition; an innovative, ad hoc, societal organization, privileging strength, heroism, and idiosyncratic individuals. Midcentury America looked temporally forward and backward for inspiration; available fantasies prized notions of confident momentum (in art, architecture, and household conveniences) and conversely, a romanticized American west (Hine, 1999: 61) as embodying American 'values'.⁴² Western-themed shows dominated television, reifying a frontier mythos of innovation assumed to embody unstoppable American world leadership presumed by manifest destiny. Boosterism valorized California individuality as heroic while lending credence to concepts of diversity; an exoticized and mythologically utopian past, an exoticism of distance, and a necessarily innovative approach to cultural organization. California was invisible within art-world machinations until midcentury innovation commanded attention and leftist political preoccupation reiterated accommodation or social experimentalism. 'San Francisco ways'⁴³ describe perceived Californian disregard of traditional American societal organization although California governmental management represents the ultimate destiny of other American states (Schrage, 2008: 253-254).⁴⁴

⁴² Frontierist concerns are reflected in midcentury Early American furniture, architecture, theme parks (i.e., Disneyland's 'Frontierland') and children's attire.

⁴³ Americans resisting social change employ the pejorative term, seeing inclusivity as threatening traditional hegemony. For 'San Francisco Values' see: <<http://www.sfgate.com/politics/joegarofoli/article/THREE-DIRTY-WORDS-SAN-FRANCISCO-VALUES-2467246.php>> - accessed 19/05/13.

⁴⁴ Residents of other American states castigate a California spuriously perceived as embodying disintegrating societal values, yet Americans see California as vanguard: combatting their own future governmental issues.



Figure 18. Postwar appliances. L-R: A modern kitchen; Age of the Tailfin; Lawnmower.

Postwar prosperity enabled purchase of products promising utopian life. For women, historically confined to the domestic realm, new appliances guaranteed increased ease with laundry, cooking and cleaning. Men were encouraged to purchase gardening and home repair tools, reflecting importance of a unitary lifestyle (above). Automobiles allowed families to become tourists experiencing topographical mobility in a society expanding inner and outer frontiers while landscape was reconfigured to accommodate greater automotive ownership (below). Hollywood film and television image began to present a society composed of diffuse individuals. Identity became a fragmented collage of splintered experience



Figure 19. New Jersey suburb. c. 1957.

assembled in abbreviated meaning. For the marginalized, hegemonic devaluation remained quotidian reality and art reflected the fragmented, collage many citizens felt they had become. The term kitsch grew in usage during the twentieth century, particularly between the two World Wars; especially after World War II (Calinescu, 1990: 225), concurrent with the rise of modernism as the dominant art trend. Citizens accepted art as commodity. Calinescu states:

...it is not difficult to realize that kitsch, technologically as well as aesthetically, is one of the most typical products of modernity. The link between kitsch and economic development is indeed so close ... Value is measured directly by the demand for spurious replicas or reproductions of objects whose original aesthetic meaning consisted, or should have consisted, in being unique and therefore inimitable. (Calinescu, 1990: 226)

Kitsch manifested as ubiquitous commodity blunting modern life's edges; insinuating democratic material access to all societal strata, and substituting for genuine cultural infusion. For Americans, replicas mirrored perception of a faster-paced world necessitating frenetic lifestyle while drug use, utilized to cope, released pressure from overburdened psyches and was employed as political dissention as well as for speedy spiritual attainment. None of this was perceived as untoward, but rather, symptomatic of the life pace promoted by television, advertisers, and print media.

In the 1920s and 30s, increasing importance of Hollywood film reinforced hegemonic perceptions of alterity and planted seeds of doubt as to veracity of stereotypes. Hollywood constructed and dictated simplified identities, yet incrementally subverted those images, as society changed. The later 1940s Film Noir genre depicted characters existentially at odds with tradition, yet bound by it. In other words, Film Noir questioned assumed cultural roles while offering little alternative. Artistic reflections of marginalization and assimilation disseminated alternative identities, yet due to a prevailing privileged supremacy, reflections of difference were rare, essentialized, and reified supremacy.

Television distributed information more equitably and mirrored mass culture (including the arts), by creating a generalized serialization of narrative. As we will see, audiences compartmentalize, then reassemble, communications to decode completed images. Hollywood's large-scale (screen presence) reinforced notions of 'importance,' dominating viewers



Figure 20. Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. c. 1950s.

with an imposed social reality, yet conversely, television's small-scale enabled feelings of dominance and accessibility within viewers. The public sphere invaded the private. The *I Love Lucy* show featured a real-life mixed-race couple (above right); another television show, *Amos 'n' Andy*, featured black actors in a show set in New York's Harlem.⁴⁵ Sponsors profited from cultural change and Americans saw revaluation. As critic Lucy Lippard says in *Mixed Blessings*: 'in art too, what appears to be historicism can often turn (inside) out to be a slier kind of appropriation...' (Lippard, 1990: 226)⁴⁶ meaning historicist narrative can be employed to present contemporary change. Populace behavior was controlled, i.e., the private home environment became the stage wherein larger societal dramas were enacted. As TV



Figure 21. Wallace Berman: *Untitled* (Verifax Collage). 1969.

altered communication patterns, artists altered art product: although this fits the definition of community,⁴⁷ it does not account for non-conformity and difference. TV communicated information in new ways as evidenced by Wallace Berman's *Untitled* (left), although created after the years I examine, similarly breaks depiction into measurable montage; a semiological deconstruction of image (Berman, 1992: 86-87) mirroring contemporary culture.

In midcentury America, Existentialist and Buddhist viewpoints were fashionable. CSFA instructor and painter Ed Corbett said: 'I was interested in what I thought was Existentialism...' (McChesney, 1973: 16). Segall says: 'Existentialists believe that while the universe has no purpose, we can imbue our own lives with purpose' (Segall, 2010). Crowell says: 'A phenomenology of consciousness, then, explores

⁴⁵ Publicizing black life reflected changing cultural dynamics.

⁴⁶ Identity dissemination can subtly alter a culture's self-perception. Insertion of alteric artistic expressions can result in awareness of differing realities.

⁴⁷ The word community has multiple meanings but for my purposes refers to ethnographic groupings. Community may be seen as collections of persons sharing similar values, beliefs, and often, similar geographic location.

neither the metaphysical composition nor the causal genesis of things, but the “constitution” of their meaning’ (Crowell, 2010: 3). ‘Unpredictable’ Abstract Expressionists supposedly disproved herd validity and ‘proved’ the valuing of the unique individual (Gibson, 1997: xvii, xviii), believing the depicted inner landscape indicative of truth. One can argue that privileged individuality implied human dominance of nature. California’s ‘taste for theatre’ (Bernstein in Barron, 2000a: 84), prefiguring the rise of Hollywood product, privileged a ‘white, anti-urban conception of California’ (Ibid: 84).

Miller traces bohemian tradition to approximately 1830s France (1977: 16-22, 29-36), and Gold defines bohemia (2007: 18-19) as a community organized in opposition to prevailing bourgeois societal values. The term bohemian describes historical Bay Area culture conducted in opposition to mainstream practices and conducive to situating of an avant-garde underground occurring at a time when the American public saw social non-conformity as Communistic and dangerously suspect. Regionally, a predilection for experimentalism (in art and society) may be traced to an initially necessary tolerance and ultimately, expressed a frontierist willingness to explore ad hoc alternatives. Artistic humor took the form of Surrealistic parody or satire of oppressing, dominant American stricture: a method of subverting prevailing cultural forms and values; demonstrating the regional inapplicability of said values. Visual humor depends upon particularized, surprising alternative iconographic readings and which also addresses initiated audiences, as is art produced by marginalized people.

Buddhism had been present in the Bay Area since the Chinese began arriving in the early 1850s (Seager, 1999: 159).⁴⁸ The large regional Asian population demographic is due mainly to geographic placement and not perceived liberality, (Johnson, 1993: 41).⁴⁹ Initially, Americans ignored Buddhism as a peculiar Chinese novelty and it played a limited cultural role for the next one hundred years. After World

⁴⁸ The first Buddhist church in California was constructed in 1853. See: McCormick, M, Ryuei. ‘Buddhism in America’ at: <http://nichirenscoffeehouse.net/Ryuei/Buddhism-in-America.html> - accessed 02/February/2012. See also: Anon. at <http://mindfulnessandbuddhism.wordpress.com/2013/05/03/research-project-sacred-places-and-spaces-aspects/> - accessed 01/July/2014.

⁴⁹ White southerners complained the most about ‘liberality’; the proximity of difference in larger, western cities while people of color complained that racism, though lessened, persisted (Johnson, 1993: 41).

War II, the Bay Area hosted returning servicemen formerly stationed in East Asia and many ex-service people imported interest in Eastern thought, reifying Buddhistic sensibilities already extant in Californians.

Tolerance was greater in Bay Area culture and homosexuals migrated in large numbers. Alfred Kinsey stunned the world with his book *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948)⁵⁰ in which he posited that 10% of any given male population is homosexual. A more realistic 2% of any given group may be considered to be homosexual, therefore, approximately 15,507 persons living in the Bay Area in 1950 may be assumed to have been gay (see population table below). By 1970, that number would have been approximately 14,314 individuals. No accurate figure for gay individuals living during this period may ever be known as gay people lived 'under the radar' as much as possible. Invisibility and isolation breed a more peaceful coexistence but result in little cultural documentation.

The city was always known for its relatively libertine attitudes towards sex and pleasure. The Barbary Coast and the waterfront brought together travelers, sailors, transients and others in casual encounters far from the prevailing rules "back home"... sexual openness ... gave San Francisco a reputation directly challenging the sexual repressiveness that prevailed in the rest of the country. This in turn made San Francisco an attractive destination for those deemed "outlaws" by the dominant morals of society. ... During the 1950s San Francisco also spawned the Beat Culture, which shared spaces and attitudes with the incipient gay culture. Allen Ginsberg, himself gay, wrote *Howl* and fought obscenity charges in 1957. The beats expressed a basic rejection of American middle class values, especially the family and suburbanism, which coincided closely with early gay attitudes. Of course, it can be argued that a good deal of gay culture tries to emulate middle class America and its values, helping homosexuality to become more mainstream and less stigmatized. (Carlsson, 1995)

After World War Two, the 'Beat' generation (Phillips, 1995: 23-40) emerged, comprised of socially dissenting young people who had grown up during the depression and World War II eras possessing a Marxian-influenced concern for an inherent cultural diversity and dissatisfaction with a

⁵⁰ Kinsey's book revealed an illusory cultural 'reality', sowing seeds of disillusion and distrust of cultural forces. Family Research Institute polls estimate 2-4% of males and 2% of females are gay (nationally). A study by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force estimates homosexuality among both sexes at 3-8%. It may be argued that findings are biased. See: <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/6961/what-percentage-population-gay.aspx>> - accessed 03/January/2013, and: <<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/williams-institute-report-reveals-million-gay-bisexual-transgender/story?id=13320565#.UOYr-iLTnIU>> - accessed 01/March/2013; as well as: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/07/gay-population-us-estimate_n_846348.html> - accessed 03/January/2013.

technologically-oriented western culture. The Beats were primarily a literary phenomenon but their dissent and disgust with the status quo was expressed in visual art. The bourgeois mainstream perceived Beats as threatening hegemonic values: attempting to render them invisible and silent. Beats affected a search for cultural alternatives to bourgeois hegemonic values, seeing man as embodying nature (McClure, 1982: 11) and accepting drug indulgence (often as an expedient to spiritual illumination), differing sexualities, and rejecting materialism (Phillips, 1995: 29, 30; McClure, 1982: 5).⁵¹ There are no demographic figures measuring the percentage of a given population that dissents politically. Likewise, no accurate measurements for partial adherence to dissenting viewpoints can be made.

Drug use enabled animistic, alternative perception of reality akin to artistic sensibility (McClure, 1982: 6-10; Huxley, 1970: 21), subverting nature as narrated by humans, and legitimation altered cultural behavior. McClure describes midcentury San Francisco as 'different' (McClure, 1982: 12). Peters says:

The beat phenomenon... invigorated a democratic popular culture that was to proliferate in many directions: the antiwar and ecology movements, the fight against censorship, the pursuit of gay, lesbian, minority, and women's rights... the beats ...inspired following generations to challenge oppressive political and cultural authority. (Brook, Carlson and Peters, 1998: 199)

In 1982, writer Allen Ginsberg summarized Beat Generation cultural effects:

- Spiritual liberation, sexual revolution or liberation i.e., gay liberation, somewhat catalyzing women's liberation, black liberation, Gray Panther activism.
- Liberation of the word from censorship.
- The demystification and/or decriminalization of some laws against marijuana and other drugs.
- The evolution of rhythm and blues into rock and roll as a high art form (as evidenced by the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and other popular musicians who were influenced in the late fifties and sixties by Beat generation's poets and writers).
- The spread of ecological consciousness emphasized early on by Gary Snyder and Michael McClure, the notion of a "fresh Planet."
- Opposition to the military-industrial machine civilization, as emphasized in the writings of Burroughs, Huncke, Ginsberg, and Kerouac.

⁵¹ See: Anon. 'The Beats' available: <<https://www.boundless.com/u-s-history/the-sixties-1960-1969/counterculture/the-beats/>> - accessed 10/July/2014.

- Attention to what Kerouac called (after Spengler) a “second religiousness” developing within an advanced civilization.
- Return to an appreciation of idiosyncrasy as against state regimentation.
- Respect for land and indigenous peoples and creatures, as proclaimed by Kerouac in his slogan from *On The Road*: “The Earth is an Indian thing.”
- The essence of the phrase “beat generation” may be found in *On The Road* with the celebrated phrase: “Everything belongs to me because I am poor.” (Phillips, 1995: 19).

Table Two: San Francisco Population by Race and Ethnicity.

The Population of San Francisco by Race and Ethnicity, 1940-1970				
Group	1940	1950	1960	1970
White	602,701	693,888	604,403	409,285
Black	4,486	43,502	74,383	96,078
Asian	26,545	30,392	58,236	95,095
Hispanic	no data	no data	51,602	101,901
Other	444	7,575	3,294	13,315
Total	634,536	775,357	740,316	715,674

* In 1950, the population count for Filipino citizens was not counted separately and is reflected in the ‘Other’ category for that year.

Criteria for both Hispanics and whites have changed over the years.

The Spanish-surnamed population, included as part of the white population, was first counted for the city as a whole in 1960 (it had been tabulated only in selected census tracts in 1950); in 1970, persons of Spanish surname and language were considered a separate racial group and therefore, not white. Source: U. S. Census Bureau, various years. Adapted from: Godfrey (1988: 97).

Table 3 (above) explains the percentage of ethnic groups within Bay Area population by decade; demographics change diachronically although overall population declines (explained in part by ‘white flight’⁵² and lessened marginalized urban economic opportunity). The growth of non-white ethnic groups indicates lessening influence of white culture although during the period encompassed by this study, it remained dominant. Some non-white populations are likely higher as illegal immigrants are uncoun-
ted.

⁵² ‘White flight’ describes the phenomenon of white residents fleeing urban centers; removing economic advantage to suburban areas. See: <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/white%20flight>> and: <http://oaklandwiki.org/White_Flight> - both accessed 25/July/2014.

Cultural masks facilitate assimilation into host cultures; permitting assumption of narratives outside quotidian reality (Gracie, 2008: 37). Internalized data forms what Lévi-Strauss calls a 'memory-bank' (Lévi-Strauss, 1981: 16).⁵³ Furthermore, evolution of a home culture is frozen the day an immigrant leaves their native region (Turnbull,⁵⁴ 2004: 295-296; Nee & Nee, 1974: 191). An understanding of group paradigms elucidates only the fact that artists may be of a specific ethnic descent, of a particular perceived gender or sexual orientation, although the Bay Area as evidenced in the table above was largely non-white. Alteric 'others' remain secondary or tertiary residents by virtue of contradictory mental ties and/or internalized ethos. Preserved ancestral culture can be desired as a barrier to assimilation. Within a host culture, dominating power structures penalize alterity with fringe positions and lower economic status can be spuriously reified by superficial tropes speciously representing difference i.e., stereotypes. Home environments may preserve ancestral culture but adolescence in a host society produces greater allegiance to the residential culture.

The terms 'race' and 'ethnicity' are misnomers: neither precisely utilizes academic intention of the distinction. The terms as used popularly are nearly interchangeable but a more precise division is indicated. The term 'race' can be applied broadly: as when one speaks of the human race. It is 'socially imposed and hierarchical' and 'biological' (Conley et al. 2003), referring to skin, eye, and hair color. Residence within a geographical domain does not guarantee all residents possess the same racial makeup and 'race' is a 'historical rather than a scientific construct' (Lippard, 1990: 5). The word ethnicity is assumed to refer to a person's ancestry; however, many ethnicities encompass more than one line of descent, or country of heredity. 'Ethnicity' refers to 'cultural factors such as nationality, culture,

⁵³ The 'memory-bank' is analogous to a people's cultural memory; the means by which desirable values and historical association are passed to younger generations. Such possession can facilitate identity formation.

⁵⁴ The Australian Turnbull lives in France, describing her adopted culture from an outsider's perspective, saying: '... in France, I may stand out as foreign yet in Australia I feel a bit foreign too.' (Turnbull, 2004: 298).

ancestry, language and beliefs'⁵⁵ and members of various ethnicities assume common unifying traits and history. The term 'race' has to do with how one is perceived. 'Ethnicity' has to do with one's history. It would not be unreasonable to presume a shared ancestry for Asians, but unreasonable to presume all Asians share the same ethnicity. I have chosen Asians⁵⁶ to represent marginalized American ethnic minorities.

Figure 22. Poster, The Club, New York (Detail). No date.

3.2 Racism



In the illustration left, a late 1940s/early 1950s gathering of Abstract Expressionists at 'The Club' in New York, the viewer notices a background rice paper poster sent from San Francisco (Landauer, 1996: 1, 2)⁵⁷ which displays a New Year's greeting written in an English font presumed to embody the 'look' of stereotyped Asian writing. It is rife with intentional misspellings implying an imperfect mastery of an adopted language. The inherent racism reinforces perceived difference ('us vs. them'); justifying hegemonic cultural disparagement. Was there less overt racism in California? Racism was not unknown within California itself although perhaps less so in the

San Francisco Bay Area (Daniels, 1990: xiii-xiv; Stoddard, 1998: 81,87,145,210) due in part to tolerance for diversity and geographical placement which permitted differing ethnic presence. Lucy Lippard quotes an acquaintance: 'change is a process, not an event' (Lippard, 1990: 6) meaning that old cultural habits slowly change.

⁵⁵ For discussion of the terms race and ethnicity see: <http://www.diffen.com/difference/Ethnicity_vs_Race>. See also: <http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-experts-03-02.htm> - both accessed 13/June/2014.

⁵⁶ I will not examine Black or Hispanic Americans, mentioning them as needed for purposes of elucidation.

⁵⁷ The topic discussed that evening was: 'What is the New Academy?' Poster text reads: 'Greetings, Happy New Lear, Flome the San Francisco Grup to New York Annex. Goot Yontiff. Flom the ... Zen Flicks' (Landauer, 1996: 211n2).

Dominant midcentury cultural discourse considered a woman's natural domain to be the domestic (encompassing marriage and child-rearing). For some women, home and family can be a refuge from a harsher world of racism and sexism; home enables control. hooks (1984) quotes Anita Cornwall: '... sadly enough, fear of encountering racism seems to be one of the main reasons that so many black womyn refuse to join the women's movement' (hooks, 1984: 12), however, the home is often the training ground in which patterns are instilled as children prepare for places in society; where attitudes begin to subvert culture. A brief discussion of attitudes towards women in midcentury culture is indicated here. Women, like many marginalized societal members were regarded as invisible i.e., they were not white males. The later Women's Liberation movement ultimately enabled women to better understand their unequal societal position. Friedan has been fairly criticized (particularly by hooks) as writing for elite, educated, financially privileged audiences (hooks, 1984: 1-3): ignoring the concerns of women of color as well as lesbians.⁵⁸ News that women were marginalized meant little to women of color and/or lesbian women, all of whom experienced oppression on several fronts although criticism of movement leaders and policies led to a more inclusive approach. hooks quotes feminist writer Zillah Eisenstein:

... Today's feminists either do not discuss a theory of individuality or they unself-consciously adopt a competitive, atomistic ideology of liberal individualism ... Until a conscious differentiation is made between a theory of individuality that recognizes the importance of the individual within the social collectivity and the ideology of individualism that assumes a competitive view of the individual, there will not be a full accounting of what a feminist theory of liberation must look like (in) our Western society. (Eisenstein in hooks, 1984: 8)

hooks equates 'competitive, atomistic ideology of liberal individualism' (hooks, 1984: 8),⁵⁹ with impediment to the realization of radical (feminist) progress, attributing this lack of forward momentum to bourgeois white women experimenting with liberalism, positioning black women as occupying the

⁵⁸ hooks criticizes Friedan's preoccupation with leisure class housewives as opposed to women with no such options, maintaining Friedan writes from a white bourgeois standpoint not applicable to all women.

⁵⁹ hooks calls for a more inclusive feminist perspective citing existing theories as lacking a broader consideration and that ignorance of marginalized concerns inhibit societal progress. Such sentiments can be applied to all marginalized individuals.

bottom level of social status (Ibid: 14), conveniently forgetting that gay people of color would argue that point.⁶⁰ The equating of Feminist inadequacies with privileged blindness also characterizes criticism of Queer theory's earlier manifestations, yet both theoretical foci currently endeavor to consider marginal societal positions along with those of comparative opportunity. Both thought modes trace their inception to America's civil rights movement and the postwar concern with identity assertion.

3.3 Bay Area Politics and Governmental Legislation

American political legislation was largely based upon the previously established order practiced in the New England states (Starr, 1986: 26, 85-105, 108)⁶¹ blended locally with the existing Mexican-Californian sensibility (Starr, 2007: 73-75). Bay Area politics shadow greater America's hegemonic privileging, but diverge in a more Gramscian accommodation of difference. Early San Francisco saw mob rule and lynch law (Barker, 1994: 162-163)⁶² when boom-town growth created lawless situations accommodating frontierist myth parameters. Opportunities for vice indulgence blossomed and San Francisco's, 'Barbary Coast' neighborhood catered to all tastes.⁶³ A divergent populace earned the Bay Area a reputation for wildness, competing interests, and lack of meaningful governance. As population increased, differing ideas required accommodation; laws increased to accommodate the greatest possible number of persons.⁶⁴

Discrimination on the basis of sexuality, gender or ethnic minority status is theoretically legislated against. For a brief compendium of pertinent American legislation, please see Appendix A.

⁶⁰ hooks states that black woman are not socialized to play the oppressor, ignoring the oppressing role many black churches play in furthering homophobia.

⁶¹ Pre-statehood controversy surrounded California's acceptance as a free or slave-holding state. California was accepted as the former.

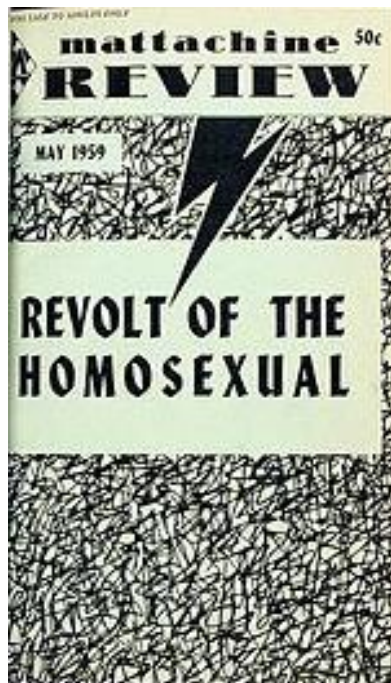
⁶² Lynch law (or mob rule) was an unschooled, idiosyncratic, legal interpretation presuming guilt: an early method of law enforcement. Most at risk were people neither white, male, nor-English-speaking. See 'The Gold Rush' at: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=327 - accessed 06/June/2014.

⁶³ The 'Barbary Coast' was a San Francisco 'vice' district. One gay bar is known to have existed. I have found no evidence that Chinese or other immigrant sexual needs were ever catered to (Chinatown was known to contain numerous brothels). Beats frequently congregated at area bars known to cater to homosexual patrons.

⁶⁴ The 1882 Chinese Exclusion act caused Chinese population in San Francisco to dwindle from gold rush heights.

Hypothetically intended to liberate, legislation frequently suppresses dissent by deeming behavior either legal or illegal⁶⁵ and is often revealed in practice to be motivated by contemporary bias or bigotry. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 reflected prevailing dominant sensibility and was designed to appease a public angered by perceived economic competition. It was repealed in 1924 but existing immigration quotas prevented Chinese mass immigration until all such quotas were abandoned in 1965. President Franklin Roosevelt's 'New Deal' attempted to employ depression era Americans and was Marxist in scope (including artists), resulting, in part, in the creation of the WPA.⁶⁶

Figure 23. *Mattachine Review* Magazine. May 1959.



3.4 Queer Theory

Rumaker (1996) describes gay life in 1950s San Francisco when homosexuality was classed as mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association (Stryker and Van Buskirk, 1996: 51-52). Tolerance is not the same as equality (Rumaker, 1996: 6). For gay people, societal revilement forced many to hide same-sex proclivities; homophobic cultures privileged heterosexuals and penalized difference⁶⁷ and midcentury gay cultural invisibility was normative. Legislation also denied homosexuals constitutionally guaranteed rights to assembly. The Mattachine Society⁶⁸ (left) focused on male homosexuals (Stryker and Van Buskirk, 1996: 38-41; Berube, 1990: 273-274) and the lesbian-oriented Daughters of Bilitis (below right) were manifestations of the

⁶⁵ Smelser (1963: 27-28) lists coercion, ridicule, appeal to duty, withdrawal of communication (censorship or incarceration?) as methods of societal sanction. I would add economic deprivation.

⁶⁶ Artists employed under the WPA usually worked in the then popular Social Realist style, reflecting communistic period concerns.

⁶⁷ Many ethnic subcultures avow that homosexuality is non-existent within their cultures.

⁶⁸ The Mattachine Society had a San Francisco branch by 1953. The Daughters of Bilitis organized in 1955, and *The Ladder* began circulation in 1956. See 'The Mattachine Society'

<http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Mattachine_Society.html> - accessed 22/May/2013. Several Mattachine founders were ousted for communist ties. See Aldrich, 2006: 206-211, and timeline: Eakler, 2008: xix-xx, 96.

Figure 24. *The Ladder* Daughters of Bilitis Magazine. October, 1957.



'Homophile' movement (as was the 1964 Society for Individual Rights or S.I.R. - Ibid: 43, 45) proclaiming similarities between all societal members (Boyd, 2003: 162-165, 170-171; Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, 1989: 460-461; Bronski, 1984: 80-84; Gallo, 2006: 11,13; Stryker and Van Buskirk, 1996: 26, 38-41, and Berube, 1990: 273-274), believing education obviated prejudice. The homophile groups were supplanted by politically oriented liberation movements inspired by the radical activist Black Power movement (surpassing the outmoded Civil Rights groups from the mid-1960s onward). The iconic

1969 gay riot at New York's Stonewall Inn actually occurred after the first recorded instance of gay unrest when transgendered people physically fought unjust marginalization in 1966 at San Francisco's Compton's Cafeteria⁶⁹ (Elinson and Yogi, 2009: 322-323; Sandeen, 2010; Stryker and Van Buskirk, 1996: 49). Gay people faced employment loss at best; injury or death at worst.⁷⁰ Charles Chaddock's 1892 translation of Kraft-Ebbing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* introduced the term 'homosexuality' into the English language; 'sexual inversion' being the prior term of choice as George Chauncey Jr. demonstrates:

Sexual inversion, ... did not denote the same conceptual phenomenon as homosexuality. 'Sexual Inversion' referred to a broad range of deviant gender behavior of which homosexual desire was only a logical but indistinct aspect while 'homosexuality' focused on the narrower issue of sexual object choice. The differentiation of homosexual desire from 'deviant' gender behavior at the turn of the century⁷¹ reflects a major reconceptualization of the nature of human sexuality, its relation to gender, and its role in one's social definition. (Duberman, et al., 1989: 38)

Chauncey Jr's. terminological clarification isolates homosexuals as a minority and highlights the classification 'homosexual' as a human construct. A cognizance of difference and the influence of the Civil Rights Movement's egalitarian agenda led the 1950s homosexual voice to begin speaking out.

⁶⁹ A television documentary entitled '*Screaming Queens*,' was presented on San Francisco's KQED; See: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/trulyca/episode.jsp?epid=130979> - accessed 16/August/2012.

⁷⁰ 'Queer-bashing' is still a concern for vast numbers of people and has resulted in death. Between 1945-65, homosexuals experienced difficulty obtaining employment if homosexuality was perceived.

⁷¹ Approximately 1900.

3.5 Conformity and Dissent

US Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist witch-hunts preyed upon unreasoned yet perceived, threat of 'others.'⁷² McCarthy's (Rovere, 1959: 119-120, 140-143; Simkin, 1997) assertions were initially unopposed although criticism mounted, indicating increasing public dissatisfaction. His 1954 downfall came when his increasingly inclusive ranting about communist presence included members of the U.S. military (Hoyt, 2008). Dominant society 'policed' differing behavior; treating homosexuals and minorities as outcasts and criminals. Dominant persecution of differing realities was an attempt to instill feelings of inferiority amongst non-conforming citizens. In art, the 'Society for Sanity in Art', a national organization, claimed to detect communist messages in modern abstract art (Solnit, 1990, p. 4).⁷³ Bolton, (1992) reveals unabated assaults on assumed subversive contemporary



Figure 25. Wally Hedrick: *Peace*. 1953.

American art values which were, in actuality, outright attacks (mainly on homosexuals and women) intended to erase marginal identities by selecting deviating realities for censure. In 1950, the Korean War ostensibly slowed the spread of Communism and in the later 1950s, the United States sent 'advisors' to Vietnam.⁷⁴ *Peace* (above right) by San Francisco artist Wally Hedrick,⁷⁵ alluded to US cold-war era machinations by making political dissension the art subject. As expression of individuals at odds

⁷² Michael Polanyi's *Conviviality* describes the taking 'on faith' of 'expert opinions' from persons deemed knowledgeable through assumed expertise; ability to speak authoritatively to and for us. This 'transfer' of symbolic knowledge (and responsibility) is substitute for actual knowing and assumedly ensures perceived, continuing societal coherence as we rest easy in potentially faulty knowledge.

⁷³ Why could not the same be coded in a realistic or illusionistic painting?

⁷⁴ The USA sent actual troops to Vietnam in 1965.

⁷⁵ Wally Hedrick (1928-2003) was a Korean war veteran, painter, sculptor, and husband of painter Jay DeFeo.

with society, poet Allen Ginsberg's poem *Howl*⁷⁶ listed the evils he perceived as inherent in America. The poem became a *cause célèbre* when seized by San Francisco Customs officials⁷⁷ enforcing U. S. legal dictates and its publisher⁷⁸ was brought to trial for purveying obscene literature. *Howl* (below left) became the most widely disseminated poem in America, ultimately publicizing and portraying dissent as a popular, valid choice. Dominant postwar Americans easily sought 'enemies' in the supposed 'threat' of Communism (Rovere, 1954: 153-154).⁷⁹ The inner mental realm was ungovernable and the overt dissension practiced by Beats made dissension public. The most epitomizing Beat event took place at San Francisco's Six Gallery in October, 1955, when Ginsberg read the first completed section of his infamous poem (Campbell, 1999: 17-183; Miles, 2000: 192-194; Morgan, 2010: 103; Solnit, 1990: 48; Smith, 1995: 162-164;). Poet Michael McClure, spoke of a boundary broken, a line crossed that no one wanted to re-cross (McClure, 1982: 15; Solnit, 1990: 49).

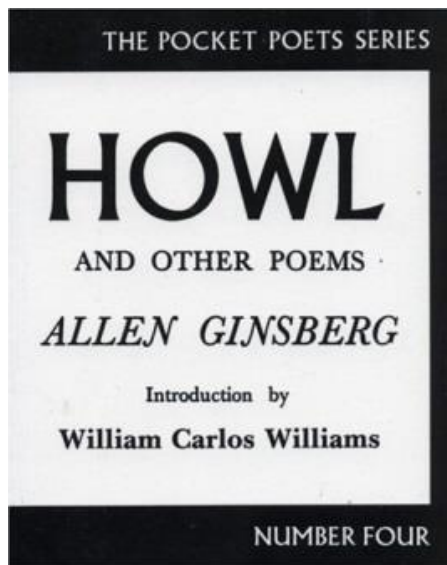


Figure 26. Cover of *Howl*. Approximately 1956.

In southern California, Wallace Berman experienced difficulties with censorship.⁸⁰ He was arrested in 1957 (Peabody et al, 2011: 91) (expecting vindication, he was convicted on obscenity charges) and reacted to official censure by going even further underground; retreating to San Francisco to work in relatively undisturbed peace (Solnit, 1990: 21-23). Even amongst advanced avant-gardists, self-censorship was still considered a viable option; an internalized voluntary marginalization. Intended

⁷⁶ *Howl* was first read at the legendary Six Gallery reading in San Francisco on October 7, 1955.

⁷⁷ Arrest and confiscation took place in 1956; the trial was held in 1957. See Rexroth testimony in Morgan, and Peters, 2006: 164-167.

⁷⁸ Lawrence Ferlinghetti, owner of San Francisco's City Lights Bookshop and City Lights Publications published the poem. As of this writing, *Howl and Other Poems* is still in print.

⁷⁹ Homosexuals (or 'sexual deviates') were conflated with Communists as threatening Capitalistic American values.

⁸⁰ Officers found 'obscene' material on the floor of Berman's 1957 assemblage *Temple*: a drawing by L.A. artist Cameron. His conviction precipitated a move (with several friends and associates) to San Francisco.



Figure 27. Poster for *King Ubu Gallery*. 1955.

to sidestep bureaucratic control, the mid-1950s poster (left) advertises two exhibitions at San Francisco's King Ubu Gallery and incorporates a literary element into art composition which is reminiscent of Dadaistic typographic arrangement.

The natural world figured frequently for Beat writers/poets Gary Snyder and Michael McClure. Snyder studied Buddhism in Japan and was memorialized as Japhy Ryder in Jack Kerouac's novel *The Dharma Bums*⁸¹ [credited with creating the 'rucksack' revolution (Kerouac, 1977: 97-98)].



Figure 28. Cover of *Ghost Tantras*. 1964.

McClure⁸² frequently utilized animal voices to insert the natural world into his poetry. The cover of *Ghost Tantras* (right) epitomizes Beat preoccupation with environment, with McClure's makeup (by Wallace Berman) symbolizing the author's embrace of the natural world (Miles, 2000: 193; Phillips, 1995: 73).

The transcendentalist philosophers⁸³ rebelled against nineteenth century East Coast society, espousing a simplification of quotidian life, anticipating Beat antipathy towards bureaucracy and quotidian complexity. Thoreau saw materialist society as impediment to a truly spiritual path, stressing that independent thought is preferable to mass-produced systems of thought control. He says: 'We think that that *is* which *appears* to be.' and 'He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine

⁸¹ Kerouac's 1958 novel inspired the 1960s 'rucksack revolution'— counterculture mentality sought rural refuge in the 'back-to-the-land' movement. The novel synergized Buddhism, Existentialism, and a nascent environmentalism.

⁸² McClure's poetry often represents the natural world with animal sounds as poetic dialogue joining McClure's voice as author.

⁸³ Prominent Transcendentalists published individually and in the magazine *The Dial* (1840/50s).

being established'(Krutch, 1965: 177, 268 respectively), stressing that reality is illusory and that divinity supersedes the human animal when education obviates blind ignorance. Examined together, Transcendentalism, Buddhism, and Existentialism all posit a fundamental theory of controlled cognition which theoretically dominates nature. Transcendentalist influence upon American thought⁸⁴ permeated such areas as the civil rights movement inspiring Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Kerouac, Ginsberg, as well as some of the San Francisco Renaissance writers,⁸⁵ and the 'rucksack revolution'-aries (see above).

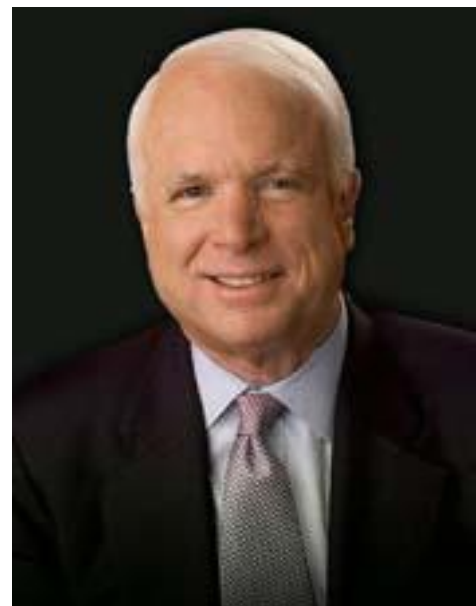
Part Two - Constructing a Personal Mythos

3.6 Identity, Race, and Gender

Identity is fluid and complex; a self-narrative partly determined by natural affinities, partly by deterministic societal assignation. It is the means by which individuals define themselves both internally and publicly; announcing societal positioning. Identity is additionally determined by temporal placement, current material culture, geographic residence, and it is always in flux. Individual composition governs personal paradigms whether self-imposed or compelled by external stimuli. Redefining the elastic parameters of self-definition can alter identity. Hall defines shifting identity: 'Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think instead, of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process. ...'(Cornell and Johnson, 2008: 25).

In seventeenth century America, white, English and/or Northern Europeans (Anderson, 1970: 3) were the prevailing settlers⁸⁶ and their cultural practices became the basis for

Figure 29. Senator John McCain.



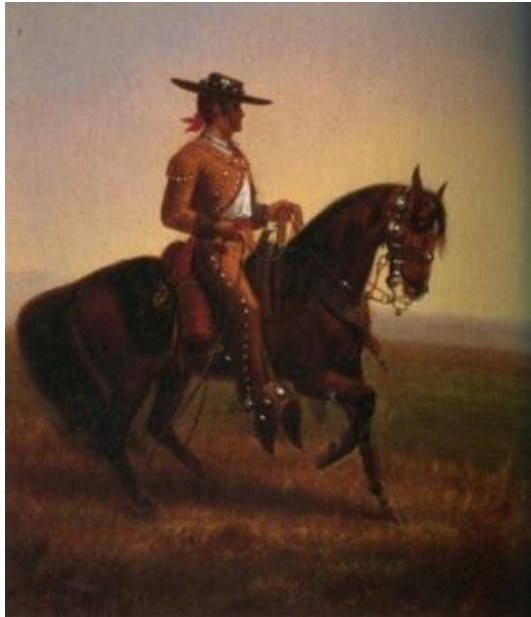
⁸⁴ Corbett also said regarding period influence: 'There was the word 'engagement.' (McChesney, 1973: 17).

⁸⁵ Essentially the literary component of Beat era art.

⁸⁶ See: Prescott, H, F. 'Immigration and the Educational Test' *North American Review* LXV (October 1897): 385.

present day dominant societal ethos. Senator John McCain (above right) illustrates the quintessential Protestant American male power-holder, embodying whiteness, conservatism, and privilege. All non-white, non-male persons were presumed inferior (Anderson, 1970: 79, 86-87); relegated to the cultural

Figure 30. James Walker: *Vaquero* (Detail), c. 1830s.



fringes and barred from full cultural citizenship. Settlers colonized the continent, overwhelming indigenous people and eventually instituting their own biases as dominant cultural ethos. When the country was extended to the west coast, all resident Spanish or Mexican citizens (Moore, and Cuellar, 1970: 4) ranked themselves above indigenous residents (Daniels, 1990: 107) while both were marginalized by Americans.⁸⁷ An example (left) would be Californios (Starr, 2007: 46-47, 49)⁸⁸ who were ranchers

(Ibid: 111), operating land grants bestowed by the Mexican/Spanish government.

3.7 Marginalization and Boundary Transgression

Naming an identity is a means of oppressing, yet conversely defining and possibly dissenting: defying silence or combating stereotypes. Artists often negated portions of themselves while highlighting others to negotiate a usually hostile terrain imposed by a dominant culture. San Francisco Chinese artist James Leong⁸⁹ echoes pictographic biblical scenes employed as narration in his mural

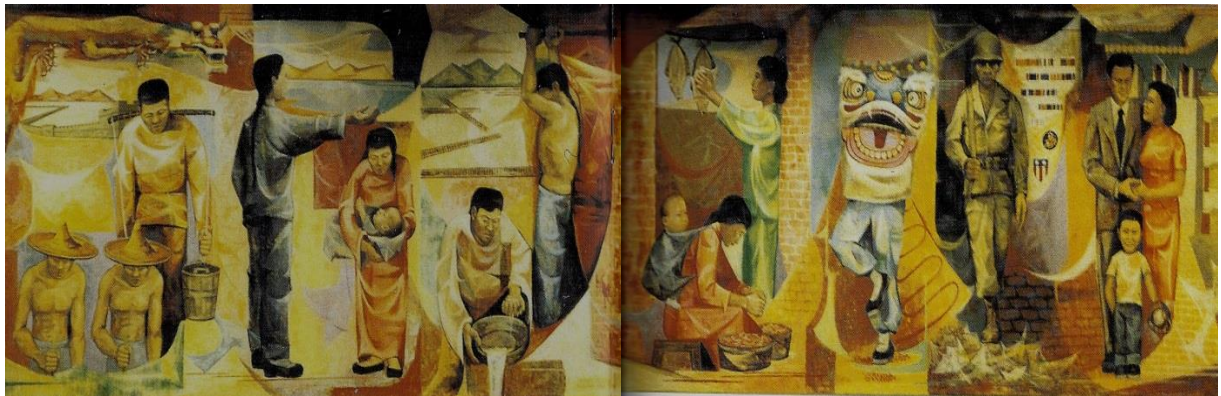
⁸⁷ Early Californian society employed European models of social ranking. Both Anglo and Spanish settlers relegated indigenous California peoples to the status of peons. Anglos arriving in the 1849 gold rush viewed Californios and Native Americans as competition. Daniels acknowledges difference in Hispanic California as 'significant.'

⁸⁸ The Spanish mission system reflected European feudal or monarchical societal organization.

⁸⁹ Leong delineates Chinese culture within an American context beginning with immigration to America and ending with assimilationist Chinese-American normativity. Naming, by virtue of its syntactical identifying function, can instill pride, imply defiance, and reify the dominance of one group over another. His *One Hundred Years of the Chinese in America* mural (1952) was criticized first for depicting survival of Chinese cultural ways, then for depicting signs of cultural assimilation. [According to Pam Wong, program administrator for the Chinese Historical Society of America (now housing the mural), objections were raised by inclusion of a Chinese soldier in an American uniform – the public's complaint being the soldier indicated the Chinese were a 'war-like' people, the public not seeing evidence of assimilation].

below. Beginning at the mural's left in China with the 'Gold Mountain'⁹⁰ in the background, the mural progresses to life in America at right. We see two distinct geographical locations, united by translocating destiny. Leong theoretically depicts the triumph of successful assimilation and migration: what he actually depicts is cultural invisibility and disenfranchisement. A soldier in uniform references Chinese-Americans fighting for their (adopted home) country. The mural's right (with the western garbed couple) informs viewer's that although geographical transition is accomplished, internal identity

Figure 31. James Leong: *One Hundred Years of The Chinese in America*. 1952.



is muddled by implied location, nationality, and attire. The mural's title states a fact but infers that assimilation guarantees neither acceptance nor equality.

Immigrants literally 'cross borders.' All marginalized 'others' within western societies may be seen as experiencing realities differing from dominant groups. Existence in the face of disparagement disproves dominant mainstream assumptions. Such individuals are daily engaged with transgressing and negotiating boundaries – what author's hooks and Goodman call 'border-crossing' (hooks, 1994: 5; Bronski, 1984: 8). Border-crossing disrupts the 'colonizer/colonized mindset' (hooks, 1994: 5) unmooring ingrained dominant bias; presenting difference in a new, utopian light reflecting multicultural, or global, societal truth. Artworks cross boundaries when they reflect a disadvantaged identity, as if saying: 'I am here too'. Insistence upon inclusion is the ultimate declaration of assimilationist intent.

⁹⁰ Pam Wong stated the name 'Gold Mountain' is (or was) the Chinese term for America – dating to the nineteenth century – it references presumed wealth available to all immigrants and the San Francisco gold rush.

3.8 Precursors

Figure 32. Precursors L-R: Yun Gee: *Where Is My Mother?* 1926-27. Sargent Johnson: *Elizabeth Gee*. 1925.



I call 'precursors' those previously active artists expressing alteric identities in their work and whose prominence possibly made them role-models within marginalized communities. These early artists portrayed a reality in

which diversity occupied that same reality experienced by marginalized artists in midcentury America.

Bi-racial San Francisco artist Sargent Johnson promoted himself as black and depicts his pluralistic environment in representing his neighbor's daughter Elizabeth Gee (above right); acknowledging the multicultural makeup of his personal and cultural experience. The bust is ceramic: the fact that he represents a member of a culture particularly valuing the medium may be significant. Additionally, the glaze seems to be what is referred to as 'celadon,' imitating jade⁹¹ considered precious by Asians. Johnson's narrative inserts alterity, negating a homogeneous dominant (white) culture. Yun Gee's⁹² (Chang, et al., 2008: 205,316-317) work reflects traditional western (European) art historical education blended with exploration of a dislocating migrancy. *Where Is My Mother?* (above left) references mobility in the ship (indicating travel) portrayed at an angle above the artist's head (suggesting stormy seas) and the internal, distancing turmoil of transplantation. Diasporic familial loss is implied by depicted tears and the painting's title. The half-present figures indicate occluded memory (Ibid: 205-206), lost

⁹¹ See celadon in Appendix B. Elizabeth Gee is no relation to Yun Gee.

⁹² Yun Gee (Zhu Yuanzhi) was active in California from 1921-1927, after which he migrated between Paris and New York.

Figure 33. Revolutionary Artist's Club. c. 1927.



familial ties, as well as new identity created via immigration. The Cubistic painting style distances Yee from Asian art tradition and fractures identity. Gee's father arrived in the Bay Area before 1906 and gained his citizenship (Ibid: 205, 317).⁹³ Gee was instrumental in

establishing the 'Revolutionary Artist's Club'⁹⁴ (above) in early twentieth-century San Francisco's Chinatown (Ibid, 2008: xix, 14); and Lee, considers that the club reflected Bay Area Chinese support for political developments in China (Brook, et al., 1998: 170-171). The club infers the influence of immigrant community upon home culture. Gee's influential presence disseminated Chinese images and disrupted western hegemonic culture structure; narrating the commonality of immigrant experience.

Figure 34. Diego Rivera: *The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City*. 1930s.



Diego Rivera was easily the most

prominent Mexican artist working in the art world during the first half of the twentieth century. He created his famous American murals (left) during several stays in cities on both east and west coasts (Starr, 2007: 291-292; Zakheim, 1998)⁹⁵ disseminating Marxist

theoretical concern with egalitarian social welfare to international audiences (while also serving as role model to American marginalized groups). He intended to 'move the world toward a Marxist state'

⁹³ Gee's father's American citizenship enabled him to bring children/family to the United States. If citizenship claims were falsified, his presence along with that of his offspring would have been technically illegal.

⁹⁴ Gee was a founding member of the club and was presumed to be the first director.

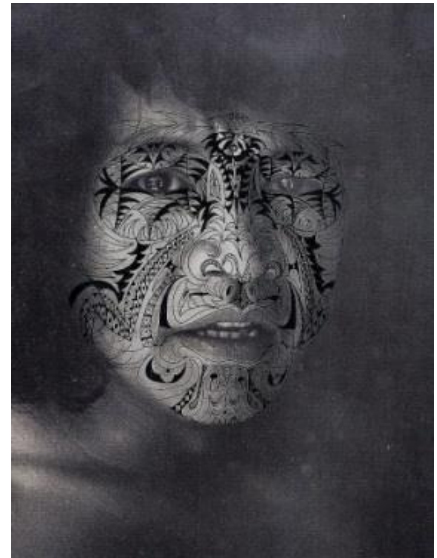
⁹⁵ Rivera's mural was housed at the CSFA.

(Chadwick and de Courtivron, 1996: 121), an extrapolation of his experiences in post-revolutionary Mexico applied to a broader world view and audience. 'Social Realism' is available as an artistic style in the Bay Area in places such as San Francisco's Coit tower, CSFA, and the Rincon Annex Post Office. Marxist-tinged viewpoints were especially well-received during the equalizing 1930s economic Depression, articulating period leftist egalitarian social concerns, and influence of 'New Deal' political actions.

Figure 35. Carlos Villa: *Tat2*. 1969.

3.9 Asian Artists

Carlos Villa (right), a San Francisco-born Filipino artist creates work reflecting a multicultural experience (Chang, et al., 2008: 250, 251, 445-446).⁹⁶ Villa's contribution is based on a multifaceted history, filtered through a unique perception focused in subverting the dominant art world paradigms echoing western cultural hegemony. Villa's existence speaks of cultural migration and a pluralistic blending; the mobility of nations, cultures, and individuals.



His artworks supplant bourgeois perception of dystopian dissent with alteric utopian affirmation of difference and non-compliance with hegemony.

The example (below left, Chang, et al., 2008: 18) by Chinese artist Nanying Stella Wong originally hung in the first western-style bakery and soda fountain in 1930s San Francisco's Chinatown, illustrating activities conducted within the establishment (Nee and Nee, 1974: 114).⁹⁷ The baker at top right feeds dough into an oven producing American Gingerbread men (lower left). Wong depicts a hybridized culture resulting from Chinese assimilationist business strategy. The piece was intended for display to specifically Chinese audiences and situated within an assimilating American context. Viewers are shown

⁹⁶ Villa's *Tat2* image, is a self-portrait photograph under an ink drawing evoking a tattoo depicting clan affiliation, ancestral heritage and the unification of divergent cultures. Villa intended that the drawing overlaid on the photograph suggest the space between two cultures inhabited by the individual (The space between the drawing and photograph).

⁹⁷ The Bakery is closed.

Chinese contribution to American culture yet reminded of subordination by understanding depicted contextual activity, e.g. that Chinese people perform western endeavors. Her Gramscian schema

Figure 36. Nanying Stella Wong: *Untitled (Fong Fong Soda Fountain)*. 1935.



westernizes a Chinese-inflected social situation. Wong described her work as 'cosmic' and herself as influenced by the Buddhist ideal that human spiritual growth

assures a place in nature, simultaneously exploring the 'juncture of place, community, and history' (Chang, et al., 2008: 179). Wong's figures reinforce American negation of minority power and validity, and uphold Chinese cultural inheritance. The painting resembles a pasted collage, and fragmentation reiterates pieced or adapted lives. The stylized 1930s era 'streamlined' design indicates temporal creation, and inserts notions of quotidian societal mobility induced by immigration.

Figure 37. James Leong: *Untitled*. 1951-2. Ping Yuen Housing Development Mural.

Leong's Ping Yuen Housing Mural (right), depicts both Asian heritage and American identity serving egalitarian social concerns in San Francisco's first attempt to accommodate an underprivileged Chinese community (Nee and Nee, 1973: 320). Intended for a child's bedroom, the mural



simplistically illustrates Chinese mythological figures reifying ethnic society, yet situated within a marginalized American context. Viewers recognize essentialized stereotypes, yet the image asserts cultural variety. His typecast Chinese figures are masked (a metaphor for adopted identity). The Asian

inserts self into a prevailing American culture, yet both Wong and Leong's examples illustrate creation of a societal structure excluding dominant Americans – in this case, serving Chinese neighborhoods in which people band together for economic reasons and mutual support.



Figure. 38. Jade Snow Fong (left) – Wayne Ng (right).

Among San Francisco's Asian-Americans, Jade Snow Wong and Wayne (Win) Ng (Vermillion, 2009; Hicks, 2005: 4, 39)⁹⁸ emerged as ceramicists and enamellers (above). Ceramics is approbated within Chinese culture but enjoys lesser status within western art history, being perceived, along with enameling, as 'craft.' Both artists drew upon ancestral cultural heritage and engaged in unique strategies of output dissemination⁹⁹ (Poon, 2002: 18; Wong, 1993: 240-246; Hicks, 2005: 13-4, respectively). Ng found greater acceptance within the ceramic world through well-received sculptural ceramic work. His seldom acknowledged homosexuality, masked with silence, betrays an internalized conflict not uncommon among gay people whose sexuality is proscribed by Asian and Christianized western cultures, and his desire to remain silent might indicate that he feared penalization for differing sexuality. Wong is less known outside the San Francisco region due to marginalization of the ceramic medium as craft and perhaps due to the fact that women¹⁰⁰ were, historically ignored by power holders. The ceramic medium offers less control over results due to kiln atmospheric vicissitudes whereas enameling artists function more as painters, in control of surface decoration. Both Wong and Ng reflect

⁹⁸ Jade Snow Wong lived from 1922-2006. Wayne Ng lived from 1936-1991.

⁹⁹ Wong made pottery in the window of China Bazaar (Grant Avenue, Chinatown) in return for 15% of her gross sales and Ng (with partner Spaulding Taylor), founded Taylor & Ng: a store specializing in kitchenware and original artwork.

¹⁰⁰ Postmodernism has redefined the meanings of 'craft.' That women are more acknowledged now is symptomatic of increased cultural valuing of alterity.

period decorative sensibilities yet Ng is more consciously daring. His *Black Slab* (above, right) positions him at the forefront of avant-garde Otis-inspired ceramics.

Ruth Asawa was born in 1926 in Norwalk, California (Cornell, 2006: 11) and died in 2013. Being Japanese, she and her family were interned during World War II in Rohwer Relocation Center in Rohwer, Arkansas (Ibid: 13-15). At that time the United States government offered high school graduates one-way tickets to the college of their choice. She failed to receive her Bachelor's Degree from Milwaukie State Teachers College, which required a teaching credential for graduation (as well as teaching

experience) and no one at that time would hire Japanese people to teach. Sidestepping the issue, Asawa attended North Carolina's Black Mountain College (funded through a student loan and her savings), where she began crocheting wire, a technique she learned in Mexico.

Asawa's characteristic suspended woven wire sculptures permit simultaneous experience of both interior and exterior surfaces (Ibid: 30). Essentially she transformed two-dimensional line into transparent, volumetric space (Ibid: 41). These soft, contoured forms, represented by the over 9 foot *Untitled (S272)* (left), reposition the natural world, femininity, a Japanese heritage, and the ceramic vessel tradition. The design's elegance manifests the human soul, the dissolution of barriers, and the permeability of obstruction. That Asawa references non-western religious and aesthetic traditions reminds us she is neither a white male nor European-American.

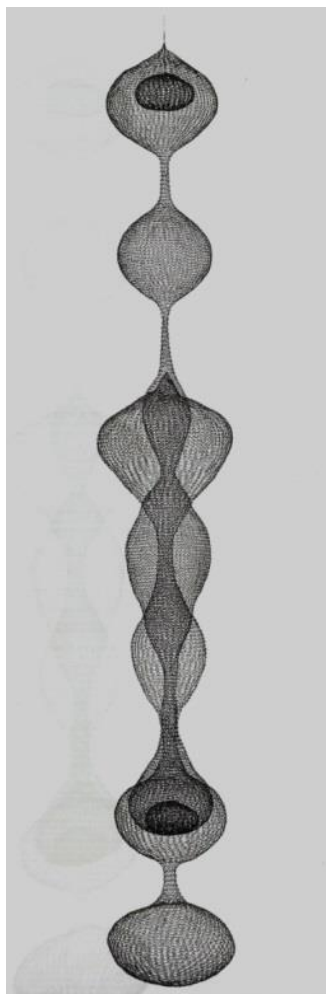


Figure 39. Ruth Asawa: *Untitled (S. 272)*. 1950s.

In using Asawa's sculpture as context (below left) for a 1953 *Vogue* fashion illustration (Ibid: 146), the magazine unintentionally acknowledged that minority artists are significant in American cultural landscape, providing (in this case) the contextual fashion backdrop. An

Figure 40. Ruth Asawa sculpture in *Vogue*. 1953.



disenfranchised artist's output is silently appropriated to market western materialist consumables. Asawa's work provides a then-contemporary timeliness to render women's fashions appealing; enabling manufacturers to sell postwar fashion. Asawa's work is echoed in the female model's hat in the same manner that the fluid lines of the coat reiterate those of her sculpture. The model's arm is visible through the sculpture (although obfuscated) indicating the permeability of barriers.

3.10 Gay Artists

Figure 41. Jess (Collins): *Goddess Because Is Is Falling Asleep*. 1954.



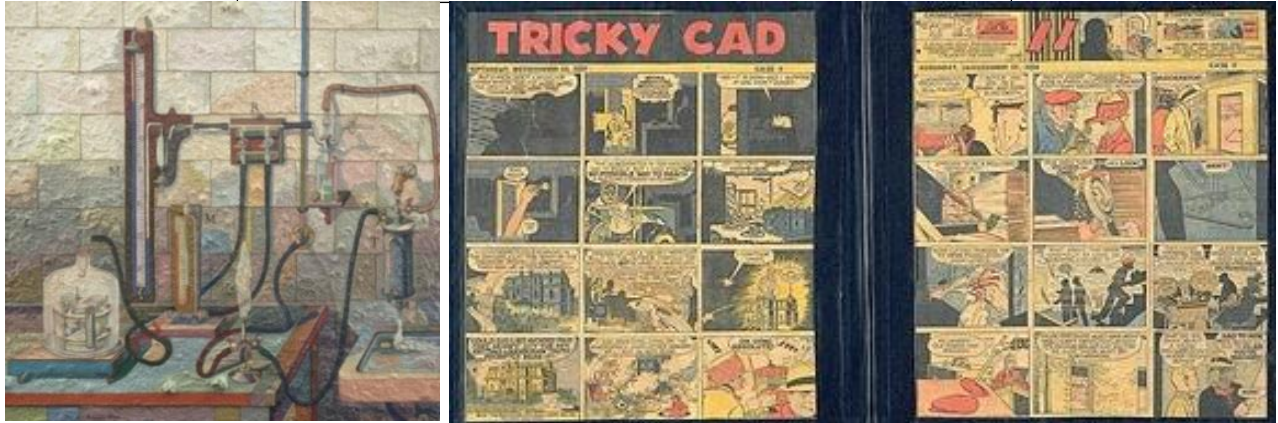
During the early 1950s, poet Robert Duncan met and began living with his life partner artist Jess (Collins). Jess was a chemist before becoming an artist. Both were members of the Beat generation. Jess, a former CSFA student had been immersed in the Abstract Expressionist tradition although Duncan noted that Jess was interested in work that was 'diverse and derivative' (Albright, 1985: 85-86), and that he created 'visible poems' (Duncan, 1959). Jess's collaged work mirrored fractured contemporary identities and period society as well as revealing the camp¹⁰¹ (Sontag, 1964)

sensibilities of a homosexual underground during a repressive period in Bay Area history. His work reflects gay themes intended for specific audiences, and reflects Duncan's poetry with the

¹⁰¹ See appendix B.

preponderance of word fragments, exemplifying Jess' absorption of influence from other creative media. In *Goddess Because* (above right), he collages magazine fragments into surrealist-tinged central image of a gowned woman in a formal interior. The title is a campy play on a formerly ubiquitous ad for

Figure 42. Jess (Collins): L. *Trinity's Trine*. 1964. R. *Tricky Cad, Case V*. 1958.



women's sanitary napkins (*Modess Because*) indicating reversed, or blended gender roles and mocking sexualized identity. Jess's *Trinity's Trine* (above left, 1964), recalls his background in chemistry and exemplifies his *Translations* series in which he mimics popular midcentury paint-by-numbers sets by repainting his own earlier works (Jess called them 'salvages' – Albright, 1985: 87). He anticipated postmodernist re-presentation, while the impastoed units of paint recall measured TV units of information. In *Tricky Cad: Case V* (above right), Jess collaged the popular Dick Tracy comic strip into nonsense expressing the absurdity with which Beats viewed the mainstream bureaucratized, paradigmatic world and parodying the information TV meted out to midcentury populations. The fractured nature of all three images present compartmentalized information reflecting television's influence and *Tricky Cad* presages a later Roy Lichtenstein and/or Pop Art.

Figure 43. Jess (Collins): *Poet's Coffeepot*. 1963.



Jess is best remembered for his collages: less known are his Assemblage works in which he re-presents images garnered from societal debris. In *Poet's Coffeepot* (above right), the coffeepot reposes in a flower-pot stand and the mirrored ball on a marble base perhaps refers to reflecting garden balls: the winged horse and antlered head further draw in the natural environment, exemplifying the Japanese concepts of *Wabi* and *Yugen*. Together (with painter Harry Jacobus), Duncan and Jess opened San Francisco's King Ubu Gallery (later the Six Gallery, run, at one point, by sculptor Manuel Neri) defying traditional art world gallery paradigms. The Beats remade existing society in their utopian vision, echoing Hall's later description of culture and ultimately enabling 1960s dissent and countercultural Frierian pedagogy. There is a dearth of information concerning artists who identified publically as gay, presumably because to do so during the period of this study, entailed social opprobrium and economic sanctions. I have found no mention of prominent lesbian art or artists.

During the 1940s and 1950s, San Francisco's gay life centered in the North Beach neighborhood, historically home to the Italian-American community but during the indicated years, also a Beat and Lesbian neighborhood more renowned for bars (used as meeting places) than art galleries. In the later 1960s, first the Polk Street corridor, and later, Castro Street,

were primarily home to the city's gay men, but also as site of bars and gay-targeted businesses. Although there was gay artistic activity, little if any survives. Among the San Francisco bars, The Tool Box (catering to the area leather community) contained a 1963 Chuck Arnett mural (above right) depicting variously described professional-appearing men exemplifying the breadth of gay experience; among the first publicly viewable representations of a nascently visible gay culture.

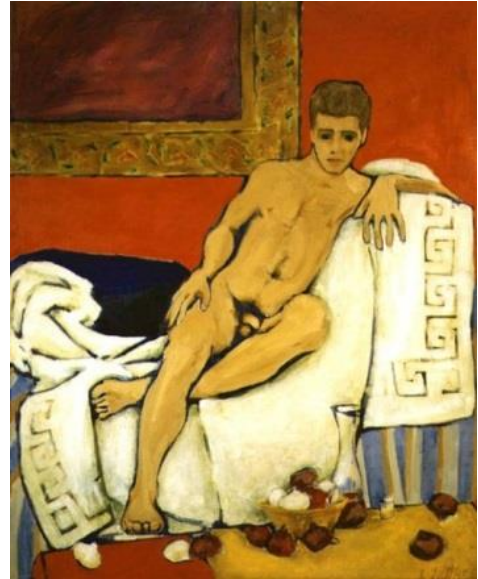
Figure 44. Chuck Arnett: *Tool Box Mural*. Approximately 1963.



Figure 45. Robert LaVigne: *Nude With Onions* (Portrait of Peter Orlovsky). 1954.

3.11 Artistic Beats

Bohemianism is generally associated with youth movements (Miller, 1977: 15, 19-21, 27, 29) although anyone could be Beat (Gold, 2007: 8-9). The Beats disdained conventional mores and adopted Jazz lingo making for an audible stereotype.¹⁰² Their inclusivity, acknowledged the presence of ethnic minorities, women, and gay persons within their ranks, however, publically, they reflected hegemonic



they reflected hegemonic cultural tenets. Beats from disenfranchised groups were relegated to the background although a few individuals achieved notice.¹⁰³ Bourgeois society minimized Beat threat, quashing social dissent, co-opting them in the popular press and reducing them to a money-making proposition. Among the gay artists prominently associated with the Beats was Robert La Vigne (another CSFA student). Allen Ginsberg saw the portrait of a young Peter Orlovsky (above right) and reputedly fell in love on the spot (Orlovsky and La Vigne were lovers prior to that). La Vigne arrived in San Francisco approximately 1950, pursuing the social transition reputedly underway then and was much influenced by early twentieth century modernists such as Matisse and Cezanne, 'interweaving ... figure with

Figure 46. Jay DeFeo: *The Rose*. 1958-66.

¹⁰² Stereotyped Beat lingo derived in part from African-American based Jazz argot – that of cool hipsters, whose speech was considered unintelligible to outsiders.

¹⁰³ A few marginalized artists began to be well-known during this era such as Jay DeFeo, and poets Allen Ginsberg and Imiri Baraka (formerly known as LeRoi Jones).

ground' (Albright, 1985: 293).

Jay DeFeo, probably the quintessential Beat artist, worked with imagery reflecting period concerns, such as a characteristic mandala-like¹⁰⁴ imagistic orientation suggestive of Eastern religion (Solnit, 1990: 76), but her meaning is often obfuscated by abstraction. Many of DeFeo's works feature surrealist-inflected forms distilling the feminine and natural worlds. Her most famous painting, '*The Rose*' (above left), is a mandala-like sunburst with lines radiating out from a central point forming a concave surface. Reputedly containing wire and beads,¹⁰⁵ technically it is an assemblage. *The Rose* achieved legendary status, ultimately becoming eight inches thick and weighing one ton. DeFeo worked exclusively on it six years before rising rent forced her to move (Albright, 1985: 93). Her sustained practice and disciplined working method are reminiscent of Zen Buddhist meditation. Her artistic ascent was eclipsed by devotion to one piece and her subsequent career only slowly resumed its 1950s momentum.

Figure 47. Jay DeFeo: L. *Untitled*. 1953. R. *Untitled*. 1953.



DeFeo experimented with sculpture, collage and photography. Her early plaster assemblages (left) supposedly inspired Manuel Neri to pursue the inexpensive medium; a bricoleur's utilization of available materials. That the plaster works

utilize cheap material evidences bourgeois disregard for dissenting, economically disadvantaged Beats.

Although DeFeo's works exemplify feminine sensibilities, she worked as an equal of male artists and

¹⁰⁴ Many DeFeo paintings are organized around mandala-like central shapes. Mandalas supposedly aid Buddhist meditation – central images with radiating layers of meaning guide viewers through meditation or reflective practice. DeFeo's characteristic working method often approached a meditative state in daily work, concentrating on essence.

¹⁰⁵ DeFeo worked as a jeweler as a young artist.

displayed the cultural dissention epitomizing Beat sensibility and a Duchampian sense of object autonomy.

Figure 48. Manual Neri: *Untitled (Standing Figure)*. 1959.

Neri evidenced the exploratory and multivalent tenor of the Beat era as an artist and in his relationship with painter Joan Brown. The two likely worked on each other's pieces and he is perhaps best known for his plaster sculptures of female figures. In *Untitled: Standing Figure* (right), Neri dispenses with arms and head, attacking the figure with rough gouging and carving: splashing the figure with Abstract Expressionistic swatches of bright pigment, depicting the feminine in much the same manner as DeKooning's *women* paintings. It can be argued that Neri's treatment of women narrates a violently expressed fear; a dismembering fragmentation, but his work is obviously conscripted from classical Greek sculpture as well as DeKooning. It expresses a powerful challenge to paternalistic depiction of the feminine and negates classical art historical canon. Neri's work reflects the Abstract Expressionist valorization of the mental; the confrontation with spiritual self and the abrasive tenor of his times. He asks us to redefine conceptions of beauty.



Figure 49. Joan Brown: *Noel In The Kitchen*. 1964.



Joan Brown, (left), although considered Beat, is usually associated with the Bay Area Figurative painters (Ibid 65, 69; Jones, 1990: 145-155), (and the later Funk

movement). Brown was primarily a product of the Beat early 1950s CSFA milieu and among the first Beat artists to achieve a national reputation. She renounced New York attention to pursue more individual artistic aims and was married to artist Manual Neri (above). In *Noel in the Kitchen* (Noel is her son with Neri), Brown depicts a domestic interior, providing autobiographic account of child-rearing duties, reifying a woman's assumed societal place yet employing that assumption for career furtherance. Like Neri, she disregards art-historical technical convention: troweling on paint to an approximate depth of three inches, thus rendering background equally as important as the foreground.

Brown and Neri's interracial marriage reflects a hybridized Bay region culture. Brown and her first husband William Brown¹⁰⁶ lived next door to Jay DeFeo and Wally Hedrick, lending credence to Beat profit from proximal artistic exchange.

Figure 50. L-R, Jay DeFeo, Wally Hedrick and Joan Brown at the Six Gallery. 1950s.



Part Three: The Regional Artistic World

3. 12 Bay Area Art Infrastructure

Conventional San Francisco art galleries provided little dissemination for non-mainstream artists. Alternative/artist-run galleries served a means by which exhibitors exchanged ideas, socialized and showcased work for friends (above right, 1950s), there being no San Francisco market for avant-garde art. The Six Gallery (right, formerly the King Ubu Gallery), re-opened under different

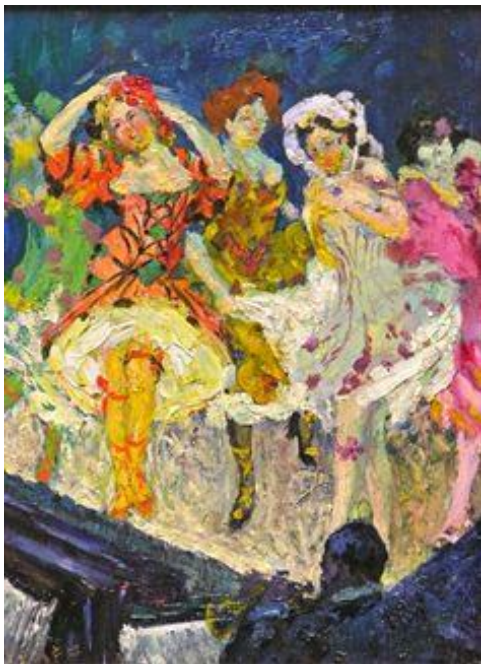
Figure 51. Charles Brittin exhibition at Semina Gallery. 1961.



¹⁰⁶ Not to be confused with William T. Brown, a gay Bay Area Figurative painter, partnered with Paul Wonner.

management (Solnit, 1990: 47).¹⁰⁷ Additionally the Dilexi, Spatsa (Ibid: 72-73)¹⁰⁸ and Batman galleries (among others) showcased period bohemian art. In early 1960s Larkspur, on a salt marsh near his home, Wallace Berman established his legendary Semina Art Gallery, a roofless shack where artists exhibited usually for one day (above right). There were no crowds, no press, and the shack ultimately sank into Bay mud. Semina shows were basically symbolic actions presaging performance art, Happenings (and Environments); all reflecting the Abstract Expressionist valorization of the independent individual. By bringing art into the viewer's realm, artists made audiences a compositional element.

Figure 52. William Clapp: No title. No date.



The Oakland Art Gallery (later the Oakland Museum) was headed by William Clapp (1879-1954 – left), a member of Oakland's Society of Six (Boas, 1988: 53-54) who showcased advanced modern art privileging innovation over tradition. The Six's plein-air (see Appendix B) works were initially considered too audacious for Oakland. Boas quotes Terry St John: 'The members sensed they were ... making new art ... with an exhilaration that was born from overthrowing subservient attitudes toward previously sanctified art modes ...'¹⁰⁹ Galka (Emilie Ester) Scheyer (Peabody, 2011: 7; Albright, 1985: 4), a German collector and dealer, featured members of the Scheyer-named 'Blue Four'¹¹⁰ there.

Although less comprehensive than those of New York, San Francisco museums exhibited recent art developments as well as featuring work by local artists (Landauer, 1996: 35,56).¹¹¹ The first Director

¹⁰⁷ The Six Gallery opened in the former King Ubu space. Formed by CSFA students and/or instructors of mixed race, gender and sexuality: Wally Hedrick, Hayward King, Deborah Remington, John Ryan, David Simpson, and Jack Spicer. The gallery hosted non-fine art evenings, including the poetry reading at which Ginsberg's *Howl* was read for the first time.

¹⁰⁸ The Dilexi Gallery was opened in 1958 by Robert Alexander (associated with Wallace Berman and Walter Hopps) and James Newman. The Spatsa Gallery was opened in 1958 by Dimitri Grachis.

¹⁰⁹ See St John quoted by Boas in 2003 in *Resource Library Magazine* at: <http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/3aa/3aa479.htm> - accessed 26/July/2014. St John was an Oakland Museum Associate curator.

¹¹⁰ The 'Blue Four' were: Lyonel Feininger, Alexai Jawlensky, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee.

of the San Francisco Museum of Art,¹¹² Grace McCann Morley (Williams, 2013: 19), hired Douglas MacAgy in 1941 (Ibid: 35). He assumed presidency of the CSFA in 1945 (Beasley, 1998: 28). Under MacAgy's directorship, the school became financially stable and, thanks to the GI Bill (see below), overflowed with students. During the period I study, galleries and museums offered free admission, theoretically offering democratic access to all. The cost of an art school education, however, was restricted to ex-GIs, people on scholarships and those paying full tuition, creating an elite body of eligible students.

3.13 CSFA

Abstract Expressionism (Ibid: 31) partly drew upon Surrealist obsession with revelation of motives hidden in the psyche manifesting as seemingly non-rational association. Preoccupation with psychoanalysis stemmed from Freud's discoveries of approximately 1900 (Gibson, 1997: 16). Abstract Expressionists valorized existentialized individuality and artists embarked upon an inner voyage of discovery (Ibid: 6, 10, 11). For the CSFA (which became associated with west coast Abstract Expressionism), the so-called 'GI Bill' enabled, among other things, pursuit of higher education or resumption of interrupted education for returning service people (McChesney, 1973: 6).¹¹³ By the late 1940s, San Francisco was less isolated from art world developments and CSFA's ex-GIs evidenced a willingness to experiment.

Macagy accepted CSFA directorship insisting his ideas for a more progressive educational environment be implemented (McChesney, 1973: 4; Beasley, 1998: 30) ultimately placing the school at the forefront of American art education (Beasley, Ibid: 31, 34-35). In 1949 he brought Marcel Duchamp to San Francisco's 'The Western Round Table on Art,' (notable for the absence of detractors although including Frank Lloyd Wright and his well-known modernist antipathies). Duchamp's influence on

¹¹¹ As in the case of Clyfford Still (CSFA instructor), who exhibited at the Legion of Honor in 1947.

¹¹² The museum is known today as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA).

¹¹³ For a discussion of women and the GI Bill see: <<http://www.womensmemorial.org/H&C/History/historyhl.html>> - accessed 16/October/2012.

California artists was extensive; particularly his concept of the readymade, enabling a Dadaistic, proto-pop, surrealist-tinged fetishizing of the individual object. Although not using such terms, Duchamp permitted California artists to employ Buddhist concepts such as wabi, sabi, and yugen (Hoover, 1988: 182-183),¹¹⁴ which highlight the beauty inherent in aged, imperfect objects; a faultless metaphor for Beat aesthetics.

Figure 53. Frank Lobdell: *Drawing II*. 1949.

Abstract Expressionism at the CSFA was characterized by darker, muddied colors, a rounded-ness in employed shapes and presence of the natural world lacking in the 'New York School' (Landauer, Ibid: 23). *Drawing II* by Frank Lobdell (right), prominently displays a feminine pink color, and the



browns and greens associated with natural landscape. Lobdell's color choice intimates the external landscape but abstracted imagery veils true intent and regional influence, however, the title displays a regionalized sense of humor in that the 'drawing' is in fact, a painting. Otis' John Mason's *Desert Cross* (left) radically recreates form in a midcentury caste, referencing earth, art history, and a nascent minimalism. Otis artworks are discussed later in this chapter.



Artist Joan Brown is worth quoting at length here:

Figure 54. John Mason: *Sculpture (Desert Cross)*. 1963.

¹¹⁴ See Appendix B. Although not mentioning the concepts, for discussion of Buddhist aesthetics see: <http://artsites.ucsc.edu/faculty/lieberman/zen.html> - accessed 07/February/2012.

... I was very hung up with a lot of the sculpture that was going on and ceramics. Pottery and sculpture such as Peter Voulkos and Kenneth Price were doing, some of Billy Al Bengston's sculpture, his ceramic stuff, and all this had to do with form. Form just knocked me out so pretty soon what I was doing with the representational painting was that I didn't give a damn about the objects as being objects for themselves any more and they started evolving into these shapes ... I started calling them 'things.' They were images in an environment, whether that environment was sky or a room or simple space ... they were of course derived from recognizable objects, maybe arms, legs, just shapes or an ironing board, table things. All this came about from the representational painting and they evolved... (McChesney, 1973: 85-86)

Culture assigned Beats the status of misfits and malcontents, relegating them to the outer fringes of respectable society.¹¹⁵ These disaffected young were first described in writer John Clellon Holmes novel *Go* (right) and his 1952 essay 'This is the Beat Generation', which credited invention of the term 'Beat Generation' to Jack Kerouac¹¹⁶ in 1948 (Phillips, 1995: 17). The book's publication disseminated dissent to a broader public. In 1957, *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen coined the term 'Beatnik' (Hamlin, 1995).¹¹⁷ The name resonated with the

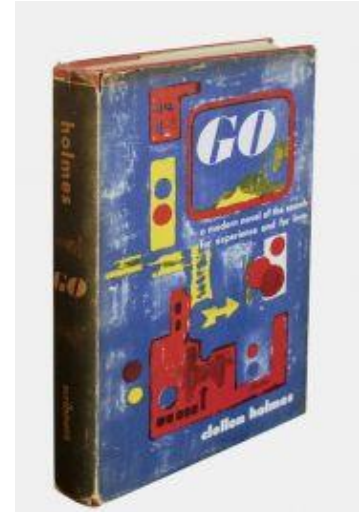


Figure 55. Cover of *Go* by John Clellon Holmes. 1952.

public and the term became synonymous with midcentury bohemians until the 1960s advent of the 'Hippie' movement. Beat similarities to Dadaists were not limited to postwar temporal placement, however, both groups evidenced a disdain for bureaucracies and attempted to change respective cultures. 'Dada was not a school of artists, but an alarm signal against declining values, routine and speculation, a desperate appeal, on behalf of all forms of art, for a creative basis on which to build a new and universal consciousness of art' (Richter, 1978: 49). Surrealist goals included remaking society along more communistic lines and through creative acts of unconscious experience. Both are goals seen in the

¹¹⁵ Writer Amiri Baraka made the concise assertion: 'The so-called Beat Generation was a whole bunch of people, of all different nationalities, who came to the conclusion that society sucked.' See: <<http://www.unc.edu/~elese/beatgen/guides.html>> - accessed 21/May/2013.

¹¹⁶ Kerouac, when asked about his generation replied: 'Ah, this is a beat generation' (Ginsberg in Phillips, 1995: 17). He referred to contemporary use of 'beat' as denoting fatigue, but also referred to beatitude in the religious sense.

¹¹⁷ Caen's draws a parallel between bohemians and the Russian satellite 'Sputnik,' implying Beat communist sympathies. Allen Ginsberg distinguished between Beats as embodying the 'philosophy of love and tenderness,' and Beatniks 'who were mostly weekend bohemians' (Miles, 2000, p. 245).

pluralistic Bay Area as well as in the Beat counterculture. European artists (including Surrealists) began arriving in America prior to the Second World War in response to curtailed freedom of expression at home (Anderson in Karlstrom, 1996: 181-203). Surrealist intent belies internal struggle to achieve (Landauer, 1996: 34) and New York Surrealists shaped the avant-garde artists who became known as Abstract Expressionists (Kleebat, 2008: 14).

Figure 56. Jay DeFeo in front of *The Rose*. 1950s



The term 'Abstract Expressionism' is imprecise - applied to a wide stylistic range and a unifying sense of commitment by the artist, an intense focus or entering into the work manifesting in a variety of stylistic 'idiosyncrasies' (Ibid: 7). Generally speaking, Abstract Expressionism is characterized by non-objective canvases which valorize the existentialistic individual i.e., 'to reflect their individual psyches' (Paul, 2004). Leftist midcentury citizens attempted to present multidimensional differences and religion was often adopted as personal stance towards society or

expression of personal heritage as in Berman's photo¹¹⁸ of Jay DeFeo (above left), reminding that all persons are composed of many identities and all are valid. Other Eastern religions were brought to the forefront although in the Bay Area, Buddhism, particularly Zen, dominated. Abstract Expressionism, and Zen-inflected Beat art allowed for improvisatory response by practitioners akin to the improvised nature of the Jazz idiom, then popular amongst intellectuals (and artists), and employment of Duchampian Dadaistic chance. People trusted initial response to stimuli.

¹¹⁸ Figure 56 is a photo of Jay DeFeo by Wallace Berman. Note the Hebraic symbol on DeFeo's chest. Berman was interested in the Kabbalah and although not religious, was of Jewish descent. His work featured Hebrew letters (never spelling coherent or identifiable words). He disseminates an important aspect of his identity – his religious heritage.

Allen Ginsberg famously espoused ‘first thought best thought’ (Boone, 2010; Meyer, 2010; Semas N.D.)¹¹⁹ and spontaneity was his characteristic working method which he compared to the improvised riffs associated with Be-bop Jazz.¹²⁰ ‘Be-Bop’ was concerned with inventiveness and rapid, random associational response. Spontaneity, championed by writers like Ginsberg (and Kerouac) may be



Figure 57. Michael McClure: *Snake Eagle*. 1956.

seen in the ‘dashed-off’ nature of much Zen art. Many Beat paintings and drawing resemble quick sketches, a result of Beat fascination with improvisational Jazz and the supposed immediacy of Abstract Expressionist ‘performance’ on canvas. Michael McClure’s *Snake Eagle*, (left), exemplifies Zen aesthetic immediacy in the few ink brushstrokes composing the image, which captures the quintessence of an imaginary natural world. Beat art endeavored to apprehend essence and many poetry readings were reminiscent of Zurich’s Cabaret Voltaire’s Dada evenings with poets reading simultaneously and destruction of furnishings presaging later Performance art (Forsgren, 2008: 80; Solnit, 1990: 72).

Beatniks typically were politically leftist, anti-materialistic,

unconventional in lifestyle, directly influenced by jazz slang; disengaged from current cultural standards, marginalized by society (Phillips, Ibid: 28) and acknowledging of alterity. One discerns elements of Buddhist thought inherent in Dada (Motherwell, 1981: 78), Surrealist, and Beat writings. Dissenting discourse reverberates through canonical Twentieth-century western art movements including the bohemian, midcentury San Francisco Renaissance writers who reciprocally informed Beat culture.

¹¹⁹ Ginsberg attributed the saying to his Buddhist spiritual advisor Gelek Rinpoche, and acknowledged a debt to English poet William Blake.

¹²⁰ Jack Kerouac is considered the quintessential Beat writer and referred to his work as ‘spontaneous bop prosody.’ For description of Kerouac’s working methods, see: Morgan (2010), pp. 62, 65-66. For description of Ginsberg’s working methods see: Miles (2000), pp. 183-184.

3.14 Assemblage

Assemblage found numerous practitioners but few with the panache of San Francisco's Bruce Conner, or the fresh vision of George Herms (below).¹²¹ Conner's *Child*¹²² (right) is Beat social protest cast in a nostalgic yet nightmarish vein. Bruce Conner was known for scavenging the wreckage of San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood.¹²³ He was particularly known for using discarded nylon stockings to create illusion of cobwebs, veils, and 'containers'; vaguely 'suggesting sexual fetishism' (Albright, 1985: 99). Wallace Berman is often associated with assemblagists but in the Bay Area he devoted most of his energies to his *Semina* magazine (Solnit, 1990: 69), showcasing the work of Berman, and friends from both San Francisco and Los Angeles. *Semina* was assemblage in that each

Figure 58. Bruce Conner: *Child*. 1959-60.



volume contained collections of artwork, poetry, and photographs, printed on cards or other pieces of paper. His major function was as catalyst for critical thought; assemblagist George Herms referred to him as a west coast Duchamp (Clearwater, 1991: 121). Assemblage artists functioned as bricoleurs appropriating societal cast-offs (Kaprow, 1966: 161) containing, in part, the embodiment of beauty disregarded by society but found in rocks or rusted pieces of metal and echoing the Buddhist concept of

¹²¹ Herms was temporarily a Bay Area resident, having followed Berman to the area.

¹²² The controversial *Child* protested the gas-chamber death of convicted rapist Caryl Chessman. Supposedly it reminded some viewers of Nazi death-camp victims.

¹²³ A predominantly black neighborhood destroyed in the name of 'urban renewal.' It was also home to artists seeking cheaper rent.

wabi (Hoover, 1988: 110, 182, 183; Humphries, 1974: 217).¹²⁴ Assemblagists found richness in poverty; beauty in what was conventionally regarded as ugly and ignored; attempting to remind viewers that raw immediacy presented overlooked societal aspects and that marginalization negated value.

3.15 Bay Area Figurative Painters

In 1952, CSFA painting instructor David Park, famously hauled his abstract canvases to the dump and began creating anew (Jones, 1990: 12), this time with recognizable subject matter. Retaining an abstract composition and the juicy Abstract Expressionist brushstroke, his new paintings were considered throwbacks repudiating abstract principle. Park, several fellow CSFA instructors, and local artists, became known as the Bay Area Figurative painters. Neri and Brown (above) are considered among the 'second-wave' or 'bridge generation' of this movement (Ibid: 87). The work is characterized by still life and the human figure as introspective vehicle for expressionistic paint handling. Life partners Paul Wonner and William T. Brown (Ibid: 87-108) often reflected a male-oriented identity, however, they were artists first and homosexuality was an incidental, albeit differing, fact of life.

Figure 59. Paul Wonner: *Standing Figure #2*. 1959.



Figure 60. William T. Brown: *Untitled*. 1964.



¹²⁴ See Appendix B.

Wonner's *Standing Figure #2* (above left) depicts a male figure seemingly emerging from the bath with a washcloth over his groin, engaged either in the act of drying his wet body or in the process of masturbating.¹²⁵ Brown's interest was in male figures in motion (above right); finding reference material in contemporary photographic sports illustrations and appropriating figures from nudist magazines (Jones, 1990: 95). The two paintings merge public and private identity spheres, the domestic and the recreational. The life of gay men in the 1950s was secretive; the 1960s allowed a more open admittance of gay identity although in both paintings above, we have examples of coded quotidian life.¹²⁶ Neither artist lived in an ideal society and the solitary endeavors shown above, depict utopian, existential freedoms, celebrating a differing selfhood. That Bay Area Figurative Painters returned to figuration at a time when McCarthyism rendered suspect all avant-garde expression may be significant. Such return may also represent an early depictive pendulum swing characterizing a yet unnamed postmodernist appropriation. An as-yet unnamed Postmodernism emerges mid-century with reinterpretation of previous working methods and repeated shifts between one dominant working method and its polar opposite – between abstraction and representation; complication and

Figure 61. William Morehouse: #35. 1966.



simplification.

3.16 Funk

The Funk (Albright, 1985: 126,128) sobriquet¹²⁷ is a misnomer - although much Funk work derived from previous Beat aesthetics; it is also a reaction to Pop. The movement was named

¹²⁵ Jones reads this painting slightly differently seeing the lighter shape to the figure's left as an inflatable suburban swimming pool. She does not read a washcloth in the figure's abdominal area; however, she does indicate that the male figure has 'vaguely defined but seemingly aroused genitals' (Jones, 1990: 89). In either case, Wonner fetishizes his male subject.

¹²⁶ Brown described his paintings as 'fantasies of a beautiful harmonious world.' One concludes the intention manifested in his paintings represent an egalitarian utopian dream (Ibid: 95).

¹²⁷ Albright distinguishes between 1950s Beat art and the later Funk movement by referring to Beat art as funk with a small f and the later Funk as having a capitalized F (Albright, 1985: 126).

by Peter Selz when he curated a 1967 show (Funk) at Berkeley's University Art Museum. Many included works clearly anticipated the Finish Fetish artists associated with Los Angeles and all of the works shown in the 'Funk' exhibit were sculptural in nature. The polyurethane foam pieces by William Morehouse looked like paint blobs squeezed out and deposited in a rectangular format (above left), outwardly conforming to formalist painting directives yet brought into the third dimension. Funk sensibility

Figure 62. Beat Artists: L. Robert Arneson: *Typewriter*. 1965. R. Joan Brown: *Fur Rat*. 1962.



reflected a lax attitude toward subject matter, a rough or rapid handling of material, and in general, ugliness or *wabi*. Joan Brown's *Fur Rat* (above right) exemplifies assemblage construction from detritus and Funk attempts to portray reality as unpleasant.¹²⁸ The exhibit introduced several newcomers who proved important additions to the Bay Area art scene, notably William T. Wiley whose work exhibits a heavily Buddhist inspiration. The Funk artists insist that viewers reconsider veracity and those aspects of quotidian life often overlooked, including marginalized realities.

Bay Area artist Robert Arneson became associated with the Funk tradition and (as a teaching artist) influenced subsequent generations of ceramicists, helping change the nature of sculpture. Arneson is known as the 'grandfather of Funk ceramics'. His *Typewriter* (above left), surrealistically replaces typewriter keys with red-nailed fingers and epitomized the Funk aesthetic which disregarded 'finish,' and much like the Otis work (see below), Arneson dispensed with the traditional vessel directives. His anticipatory Pop sculptural treatments of everyday objects were often constructed on a

¹²⁸ Brown's *Fur Rat* includes nails embedded in the fur which disrupt viewer inclination to 'stroke' said fur.

scale defying reality. Price's *B.T. Blue* (right) posits alternative realities presented in modified midcentury vernacular. The Berkeley Funk exhibition included several ceramic artists, appropriating craft as marginalized genre; a postmodern appropriation gesture reflecting daily experience. The art department of the University of California, Davis (where Arneson, Neri, and many Voulkos students taught - Starr, 2007: 292) is credited with revitalizing sculptural conceptions in recent decades.



Figure 63. Kenneth Price: *B.T. Blue*. 1963

3.17 Ceramics at Otis and Berkeley

A notable Los Angeles contribution to midcentury dialogue was the ceramic work done at Otis Art Institute under the direction of Peter Voulkos.¹²⁹ In the later 1950s, Millard Sheets invited him to head the Otis¹³⁰ ceramics department. Voulkos and students revamped previous conceptions regarding the nature of clay, its potential as a vehicle for Fine Art as exemplified in his *Little Big Horn* (right), and provoked discussion as to the nature of art and beauty. Voulkos and the Otis group discarded concepts of vessels, applying an Abstract Expressionist ethos to the plastic qualities



Figure 64. Peter Voulkos: *Little Big Horn*. 1959.

inherent in the clay itself, revolutionizing the way ceramics are conceptualized and created to this day.

¹²⁹ Voulkos is probably the best-known potter of the later twentieth century. For more on his work at Otis see: Clark, 1978: 103-111; Clark in Lauria, 2000: 123-155; Clark in Pagliaro, 2003: 261-284; Peabody et al., 2011: 49-57.

¹³⁰ The Otis Art Institute is currently known as The Otis College of Art and Design. In Voulkos' time it was known as the Los Angeles County Art Institute. See: <<http://www.otis.edu/history-timeline>> - accessed 22/July/2014.

Clay had historically been a vehicle for civic monuments, but never utilized in the gestural manner pioneered at Otis. Although Voulkos receives the lion's share of credit for this revolution in consciousness, he actually worked in partnership with his students.

By the early 1960s, Voulkos was invited to leave Otis, almost immediately resuming work at the University of California in Berkeley. His students became important teachers within the Bay Area, influencing succeeding generations of ceramicists and sculptors. Ultimately, international ceramic and sculptural fields were influenced by California ceramic sculpture innovations (Peterson in Lauria, (2000): 87) regarding the dispensation of traditional vessel aesthetics and scale, allowing material to reflect its physical limitations, the creative process, and the artist's personality. Global artists saw that anything

Figure 65. Ron Nagle: *Perfume Bottle*. 1960.



was possible. Clay became more sculptural, less functional, and reflected temporal cultural influence (Lauria, 2000: 131). Nagle's (Berkeley) piece (left) belies its title and appears as a conceptually independent object. At Otis, Voulkos and students worked on a scale previously impossible for ceramic objects, producing sculptural pieces 6-10 feet in height (Lauria, Ibid: 88).¹³¹

Results questioned the place of scale, the place of spectators, and the nature of meaning or reality; by bringing depiction into the viewer's space. California artists in the 1950s created a new aesthetic altering historic art paradigms; creating a more existential, chance-oriented, mass-culturally inflected art, reflective of their temporal creation and inserting the midcentury period into our own.

Sculpturally oriented Otis ceramics began reducing a vessel to its essence, allowing process to show: often exemplifying great speed and symbiotically combining Abstract Expressionist

¹³¹ Voulkos constructed kilns large enough to accommodate his work.

ethos and traditional ceramic aesthetic. Among Voulkos' Los Angeles students, John Mason, in addition to other pieces, worked on sculptural/architectural ceramics, producing sculpted clay walls (below right), inserting 'art' integrally into architecture, human shelter, and by extension, nature. Although Voulkos never stopped working in clay, at Berkeley, he began working with metal, helping construct a foundry (The Garbanzo Works), where fabricated metal sculpture displayed many of the boundary-crossing innovations developed through the ceramic medium.

Figure 66. John Mason in his Glendale Boulevard studio, Los Angeles, 1959-60.



Midcentury artists drew from a plethora of cultural sources to produce art reflecting their temporal situation and the period revaluation or society and mobility, as well as the worth of previously overlooked persons and aspects of quotidian life. The artists presented in this chapter all disseminate values or experiences, previously determined by hegemonic society to be of little worth. They ask the world to reorder priorities; to understand that worth is often overlooked. I next evaluate material covered in this thesis.

Chapter Four: Evaluations and Conclusions

(Art's) 'purpose is not ... self-enhancement ... it aims solely towards bringing a new thing into existence in the truest manner possible. It ... posits self-sacrifice and consecration.' (hooks, 1995: 6)¹³²

This thesis has shown that between 1945 and 1965, previous conceptions of societal placement which delineated marginal identities and even the nature of art were deemed inadequate and were redefined incorporating more inclusive ideas of validity. Referring back to the hypothesis developed for this project, the war effort mobilization enabled a chain of events that recognized the cultural contributions of all citizens, defying previous hegemonic privileging of western peoples. Difference was reexamined, and previously under-acknowledged cultural assets were revalued by the mass-mobilization efforts of World War Two, as discussed in my introduction and section 1.1. These thesis sections explored a revamped western, political cultural organization predicated upon cultural placement and/or socio-economic positioning. Diversity is reflected in current valuations of output displaying alteric origins.

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the Second World War ushered in a new era of societal organization and although acceptance of alterity was not apparent for decades, it ultimately revamped the course of art history. In America, after 1945, the post-war mentality was a palpable cultural response to recent World War II horrors. Recognition of inclusive cultural composition is partially adopted internationally (at least in technologically developed nations) – even in countries outside western purview (i.e., China), although such societies remain fractionally closed to public display of internal dissent. I have deeply investigated under-examined midcentury San Francisco bay region art, and immersed myself in unheralded contributions of persons invisible to an illusory art historiography, i.e., the societally marginalized. Their art mirrored, and continues to display, a reevaluation of once-

¹³² Nell Sonneman quoted in hooks (1995). Sooneman writes of black artist Martin Puryear and references the drive to create which is present in all artists, marginalized or not.

dominant cultural beliefs which has redirected the course of contemporary world culture as delineated in this project's research question. I have shown that art by ethnographic subgroups reflected a version of identity differing from hegemonic white-centric normativity, and that depicted divergent realities have become the new standard for current output. The influence of California, specifically the San Francisco Bay Area, upon America and the western art-world, although unacknowledged, is pervasive. Midcentury culture replaced traditional hegemonic standards with a more inclusive simulacrum, reflecting revamped period needs. The people of California tolerated difference more readily in part because the state was established in a region historically inhabited by a diverse collection of people and cultures. California joined the United States largely due to the perceived economic benefits of impending wealth to be derived from the state's gold. This sparked the famous 'gold rush' of 1849. Prior to statehood, California had been colonized by United States citizens, primarily for agricultural, economic reasons. Geographically the Bay Area's placement as a port (see Figure 1), invited immigration, with a concomitant influx of differing ideas and regional proximity to difference, which necessitated accommodation. Williams says: 'The courage of the Bay Area artists should not be understated' (Williams, 2013: 123). Those artists defied current convention with output reflecting geographical placement and whose personal identities differed from then-normative models. They insisted upon inclusion: inserting themselves into a dialogue which redefined existing culture. This project began under the auspices of the Glasgow School of Art, whose staff have attempted to broaden global art research, painting a more expansive picture of the art world, a more inclusive portrait of cultures and thus, a more complete image of humankind. Ultimately, the intentions of marginalized peoples to be accorded level acknowledgement have been partially successful. There is greater recognition of alteric cultural contributions, particularly in the arts; however, hegemony and hierarchizing are still rampant socially.

This study brings to light neglected artists, works, unacknowledged contributions, and begins, in a small way to fill an art historiographical knowledge gap. My efforts embody implications for further studies, enabling realizations of cultural totality. I have argued that an opposition between the dislocating, internalized, brutality of migration, combined with an externalized, or compulsory, brutality of governmental action created dissatisfaction with a contemporary cultural status quo. The hegemonic impositions of dominance, are reflected artistically, with assertion of individualistic autonomy. These are inherent in Duchampian concepts: non-conformity contrasted with supremacist normativity. Midcentury artistic and philosophical auto-confrontation are reflected in output by marginalized artists, as well as Californian attempts to revitalize art theory, as demonstrated in sections 3.6-3.11 which examined the construction of personal identity. The shared incidence of existential and leftist-derived dissent reified the cultural acknowledgement of alterity begun regionally during the gold rush era and reinvigorated by wartime mobilization.

4.1 Artistic Legacies of 1960s Counterculture

The 1960s era Hippie movement as a countercultural phenomenon, spread arguably to worldwide adoption. Hippies were directly descended from culturally dissenting Beats. One Beat legacy was increased societal acceptance of divergent realities (including homosexuality and non-white ethnic heritages) which, in tandem with wartime mobilization, resulted in an assertion of mass divergence from imposed normative models. Culture was revealed to be composed mainly by persons not fitting parameters imposed by privileged whites as explored in chapter three. In the photo at right,

Figure 67. Reggie, A Cockette c. 1994.



Reggie, a member of San Francisco's Cockettes, (a mostly gay Hippie drag queen theater troupe) exemplifies several boundary-crossings impossible without prior Beat example or societal revaluation. Cockettes audiences were integral elements at shows intended to celebrate difference with humor. This represented a subversion of suffocating history endured by the marginalized, who thumbed noses at imposed 'normativity', defying compulsory positioning, and applying a three-dimensional conception of artistic dissent. Reggie's moustache and dress dismiss notions of stereotyped gender, a large 'peace' sign necklace indicates leftist, antiwar political stance, and the photo presents a gay African-American man as culturally barometric, reifying our examination of the midcentury reappraisal of cultural worth. New identities were constructed (as examined in section 1.5) and Hippies extended a Beat dissenting political stance. This stance promoted a concern with reshaping existent culture, with the substitution of more Marxian leftist values disdaining unethical governmental policies, predicated upon Capitalist or bourgeois sensibility. The 1960s were more politically motivated for the previously marginalized who drew inspiration from the American civil rights movement, asserted minoritized validity, and posited a societal organization more Gramscian or inclusive in outlook. The Cockettes made no distinction as to member's sexuality, ethnicity, or gender orientation, viewing all as valid, and demonstrating a burgeoning, broader acceptance of difference within American culture.

Hippies, largely born before, or during, the Second World War, were the first generation to grow up with the increasing influence of American prosperity, increasing societal inclusivity, and the example of the civil rights movement. Beat dissent may be detected in Hippie countercultural values and was transmuted by later punk movement undertakings. It is currently observed in social movements such as Occupy, with its various franchises or guises promoting a more inclusive demand for populational equity in the face of perceived oppression.

Hippies were more media-savvy than their predecessors and maintained events designed to capture media attention such as the frequent 'Love-ins' or San Francisco's 'Human-be-in' (1967) that characterized the mid-to-late 1960s, both of which reveal the influence of Funk aesthetics and Bay Area 'nose-thumbing' humor. The nature of dissenting countercultures is beyond the scope of this project, however, the continuance of ad hoc social protest demonstrates a continuing dissent regarding perceptions of iniquitous, hierarchical social structuring and insistence that all voices in a culture be heard and valued equally. Such dissent is paralleled globally, in art produced to give voice to non-white identities.



Figure. 68. Andy Warhol: *13 Most Wanted Men*. 1964.

The influence of Californian art upon western cultural consciousness may be seen as denying the easy categorization of ignored ethnographic groups. Warhol's *13 Most Wanted Men* (left, created for New York's 1964 World's Fair) was vilified when produced: ostensibly a powerful politician claimed most depicted men possessed Italian surnames and would thus offend constituents. In reality, that politician displayed a period fear of homosexuality and non-normative difference. Warhol attempted to utilize the world stage to subvert a repressive societal atmosphere. His somewhat abstruse homosexual intention (and the reaction the artwork provoked) reiterates midcentury criminalization of homosexuals, and reifies the concept of coded messages addressing marginalized societal elements, i.e., artistic communication specifically addressed to ethnographic groupings as seen in works such as Nanying Stella Wong (Figure 36), and works by Paul Wonner or William Brown (Figures 59 and 60). Warhol's mural was destroyed (a

bourgeois attempt to silence dissent as we saw in section 1.1) in an atmosphere repressive of difference as detailed earlier in this thesis (sections 1.4-1.5).

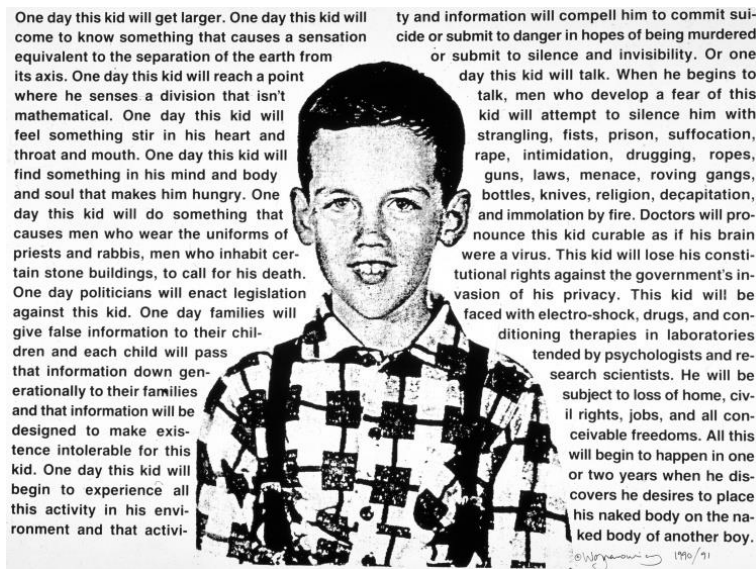


Figure 69. David Wojnarowicz: *Untitled (One day this kid . . .)*. 1990.

David Wojnarowicz's image (left), questions stereotypes that often result in persecution by dominant societal groups, and his text implies that dialogues on difference can negate prejudice through education (not unlike midcentury homophile groups whose original intent is explained in section 3.4) His message is more overt than

Warhol's. Wojnarowicz's impatience with institutional changes indicates that valuations are changing for the artist. He defies hegemony, telling us individuals differ; asking viewers to reconsider valuation. The artist's use of words betrays Beat exchange of inspiration between media as we will see later with Andrew Graham, as well as presenting the inarguable presence of difference. We see Wojnarowicz reflecting countercultural values, which were replacing a fatigued privileging with a revaluation of under-appreciated identities. Just as modernism possessed an implied avant-garde, postwar dominant culture's implicit opposite was the disobedient counterculture. Midcentury cultural substitution became the dominant mass-cultural trend (examined in section 3.1), in part, as reaction against perceived imperialistic, political demands evidenced by wartime mentality. Dorfles states that we do not see things 'in a different light' (Dorfles, 1975: 10), but rather, as currently required; correctly equating implementation of societal substitution with ethical or political assumptions. In other words, leftist principles replaced outmoded cultural imperatives because a world weary of preceding organizational tactics sought remedy in progressive, cultural mobility. California's alleged outdoor lifestyle, assumed

moral deviance, plus perceived acceptance of environmental principles, became synonymous with countercultural concerns because all presumably embodied a mythicized frontier west, which diverged from traditional American values.

4.2 Global influence on California

War mobilization ultimately instituted a western dialectic on the importance of dissimilarity and unity. This began in California where consumerism reified a frontierist sense of social progressivism, and dissenting voices presaged an existentialized conception of individual identity. Western populations realized that supposed 'norms' were not theirs and that allegiances were internal as well as external. Thus, an unintended result of all-encompassing wartime recruitment was the beginning of the ending of

Figure 70. Ai Wei Wei: *Colored Vases*. 2007 – 2010.



white-centric hegemony. This resulted in pluralistic societies viewable in art developmental directions, i.e., validated artistic identity-assertion as descriptive of place, time, and inner self. Political actions in other parts of the world impacted on

California and the reverse is also true. Globally, we are still affected by World War Two, more than seventy years after the fact, and we still struggle with allegiances. China's Ai Wei Wei's *Colored Vases* (above left) remind viewers of the variations inherent within ethnographic groups in all nations. They refer back to western midcentury reevaluations of the nature of beauty, begun by ceramicists at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, reifying the insertion of Beat values into quotidian lives. The Second World War thus brought the global nature of identity into focus, reaffirming for non-western citizens, the more ethical acknowledgement that all members of a nation compose that populace and should be equally

valued as individuals. World thought is reflected in western art and philosophical innovations which in turn revamp global conceptions of validity. Ai Wei Wei's Beat-derived Funk aesthetic is apparent in the colored paint casually splashed over pot rims recalling nonconformist actions at Otis which applied alternative finishing strategies (section 1.4). Ai Wei Wei's work shows viewers that Bay Area aesthetics have penetrated countries beyond America. True plurality requires identity reexamination, redefinition, or expansion. To recognize that one is a product of many heritages is to echo what marginalized people negotiating an unfriendly terrain have long been aware – that individuals are in fact hybrid creations of all encountered cultures and are existentially autonomous (a realization examined in section 1.2 and first voiced by Jean-Paul Sartre). In midcentury America singularity replaced dictated collective behavior.

4.3 Tracing Legacies into the Present

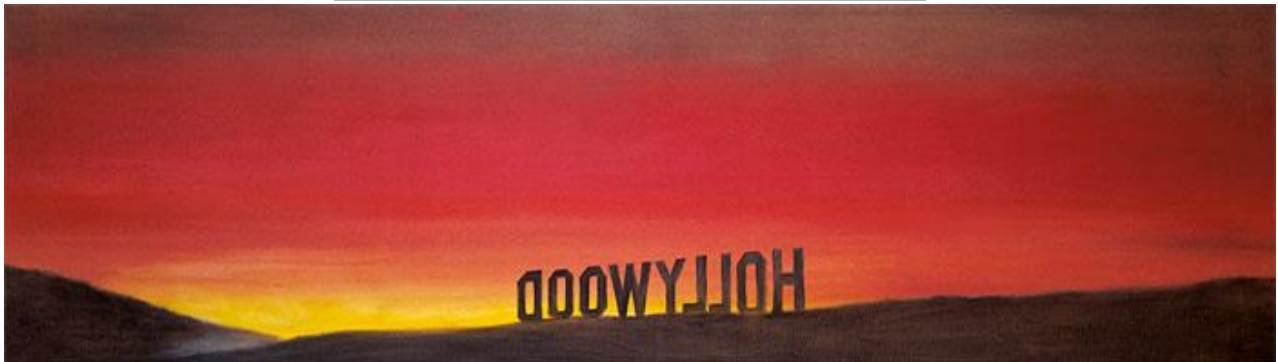
The influence upon the Bay Area by cultures such as that of Asia (or Mexico) had the result that the Bay Area reflected a multicultural demographic and at root, an accommodation of differing practices. Regional output reflecting theoretical hybridity increased the acceptance of formerly disregarded art allowing previously non-dominant ethnographic groups to occupy a 'place at the table.' I have mentioned that San Franciscan, Abstract Expressionism evidenced regional specifications (section 3.13). Bay Area artistic advances are, as Williams says, 'unheralded' in the larger art world. Their adoption has changed the face of art expression. Gramscian inclusivity notions (embodied in artistic advances) allowed the choosing of allegiances, in the process of coming to terms with multicultural reality presented as output. Coincidentally, the 'spectacular' (Bay Area) scenery mentioned by Peter Plagens¹³³ as 'distracting' (Plagens, 1974: 9) actually affords artists and residents awareness of the natural world, perhaps indicating why such sentiments, in tandem with Buddhist influence took root in the Bay region prior to global adoption. The Beats drew on diverse examples to formulate values (Phillips, 1995: 23) replacing traditional ones, i.e., the acknowledgement of societal influences (and personal

¹³³ Plagens is a Los Angeles art critic who disparages northern California as frivolous.

heritage) became commonplace with the rise of the Beat and later Hippie movements who emphasized hybridized identity incorporating individuality, spirituality, and environmentalism. Bay Area society reexamined social values and refocused in advance of the greater U.S., adopting Beat countercultural values (as examined in sections 3.11-3.13). 'In our time individuals are often compelled to set out on original paths, instructed only from within' (Rosenberg in Williams, 2013: 121), indicating the influence marginalized populations exerted on western culture, and the necessity of a non-conforming innovation, particularly in urban American settings.

As a countercultural epicenter, the Bay Area produced art reflecting a self-centric focus indicative of the existential individual. When San Francisco was no longer the financial capital of California, Southern Californian artists assumed the mantle of avant-garde dialecticians. Their concerns echoed earlier Bay Area artists, who mirrored San Francisco's presentation of existentialized, individual

Figure 71. Edward Ruscha: *The Back of Hollywood*. 1977.



identity reified by a multicultural Californian milieu; confirming that dominant dialogue is contingent upon valuation. Californian dialogue was 'unheralded' yet reiterated by New York's status as art capital post WW II and spread globally as marginalized, national populations asserted themselves as valid.

The Back of Hollywood by L.A. artist Edward Ruscha (above) depicts the famous Hollywood sign seen from behind indicating an empty California reality behind the facade presented to the world. Ruscha faces his sign into a stereotyped, yet desolate, California sunset, reiterating the film industry illusion globally perceived as reality, yet actually revealing existentialized dystopian myth. The piece's format recalls Hollywood's widescreen film, a pop-oriented central image recalling television's (and

Hollywood's) isolated, abbreviated image, as examined in sections 1.7 and 3.1 (see especially p. 50). Ruscha's sign¹³⁴ is unsupported, suggesting that perceived reality is illusory myth: a facsimile dictated to audiences (referring back to the idea that imposed culture and identity as societal surrogate, supplanted truth in the postwar period). The influence of visual media upon quotidian experience manifests in an abbreviated communication, as discussed at the beginning of chapter three. Artists present isolated images, revealing internalized brevity in communication and constructed identities, resulting from interiorized theoretical (and physical) migration. Visual media's influence upon communication patterns cannot be understated; functioning as a mass-cultural information delivery system, which abbreviated societal information. Media-influenced artistic output displayed a simplified iconographic message. Ruscha's painting can be read as metonymic, existential isolation: aloneness: reality an unsupported false-front (see Appendix B): literally signage referencing veracity.

Figure 72. William T. Wiley: *Nomad is an Island*. 1981.

The essence of Californian Zen Buddhist thought is observed in the work of Bay Area artist William Wiley¹³⁵ who was a CSFA student¹³⁶ (Moser, Yau, and Hanhardt, 2009: 17) in the later 1950s, initially studying Abstract Expressionism. His work epitomizes the mid-1960s Bay Area counterculture, extending the politically deviating Beat tradition of questioning the world and self:



¹³⁴ The Hollywood sign is actually constructed with its back into a hillside and not freestanding as Ruscha depicted it.

¹³⁵ William T. Wiley is a painter and sculptor originally from Washington (born 1937), influenced by Native American thought, the natural environment and art history. His mature style has been called 'Dude Ranch Dada.'

¹³⁶ The CSFA at that time was dominated by Abstract Expressionism and later, the Bay Area Figurative Painters. Wiley studied with Elmer Bischoff, Frank Lobdell, Nathan Oliviera and, less formally, with Richard Diebenkorn, James Weeks and Jeremy Anderson. Also important to Wiley were Joan brown, Manuel Neri, with their Beat/funk aesthetics, and Funk sculptor Robert Arneson.

Figure 73. Robert Arneson: *Mr. Unnatural*. 1978.



presenting visual evidence of a shift in perception wrought by midcentury cultural revaluation. Wiley's *Nomad is an Island*¹³⁷ installation (above right) references a politically/geographically divided environment (the topographical steel cutout) threatened by toxic pollution (the leaking oil drum) and human intervention (Wiley's physical presence is not part of the piece). He reflects Rachel Carson's concern for the environment (section 1.5), the existentialistic responsibility towards same, and contradicts hubristic business-centric considerations to the contrary. Again we have De Saussure's concept of the art-image as *signifier* (section 1.7).

Implementation is also evident in Robert Arneson's Funk-derived (section 3.16) 1978 ceramic bust signifying *Mr. Unnatural* (above left) - Wiley's Bay Area performance manifestation. Arneson sets his bust upon a pedestal: a device later employed by England's Carole Windham (below). 'Mr. Unnatural' is the western 'fool' (speaking truth without fear of retribution) in the guise of a Zen monk devoted to a leftist alternative ideology. Wiley's persona (a jester with a dunce cap) exemplifies performance art: an outgrowth of Abstract Expressionist-derived incorporation of audiences as intrinsic to art output (section 3.12). 'Mr. Unnatural' embodies living content, or active criticism. The Funk aesthetic may also be observed in contemporary sculpture. Echoes of the work of William Morehouse (see Figure 61) are seen in work by Los Angeles' Jacci Den Hartog. Her *Viewing The Rain from under The Bridge* (below left) reiterates the Funk and assemblage aesthetics with the artist's employment of plastic tubing and plaster, quoting the Morehouse sculptures exhibited in Berkeley's 1967 Funk show. The later 1960s England's 'Gentlemanly Funk' movement quoted California (see sections 1.4 and 3.17) ceramic innovations,¹³⁸ and that same tradition altered European art intent, redefining the appearance of sculpture as we saw in Figure 70 and will see in Figures 77-78. Like painting, sculptural content queries

¹³⁷ Wiley's title is a pun on John Donne's 'No Man is an Island' indicating human interconnectivity, existential nomadism.

¹³⁸ Artists working in California-influenced veins exist globally, however, there is little available information regarding England's 'Gentlemanly Funk'. See: <<http://www.ceramicstoday.com/articles/022398.htm>> - accessed 19/June/2014.

Figure 74. California Influence. L. Jaci Den Hartog: *Viewing The Rain From Under The Bridge*. 1996. R. Judith Lowry: *Shopping*. 1996.



quotidian perceptions of veracity and evidences the legacy of dissent from formerly traditional values. Californian influence and an abstract, or Pop, compositional coherence, appears in the work of Judith Lowry,¹³⁹ along with an assertion of differing nationality or nativity (Fuller and Salvioni, 2002: 194-5). Her presentation mimics both television and Hollywood screen image. In *Shopping*, (above right), two Aztec goddesses (possibly mother and daughter) in a 1930s era dress shop reflect a Funk-derived, surrealist-tinged absurdism, an existential sense of the individual alone in society: at odds with the surrounding culture, negotiating colonialism (the irony of Aztecs being offered stereotypically Catholic vestments evokes Mexican conquest). Hollywood's filmic conventions imposed identity (the sales person suggests movie-star Eve Arden). America's postwar preoccupation with commodity (discussed in sections 1.3 and 3.1) is reflected with Lowry's colonized individuals adopting the imposed valuations of their colonizers: lamenting suppressed heritage and reflecting midcentury reassessment of marginalized identity. Her *Shopping* also reminds viewers of Joan Browns' (Figure 49) employment of autobiography as art subject with its accommodation of imposed difference. *Shopping* epitomizes bay region multiculturalism, humor (Funk), artistic and political history. Wiley's Bay region absurdism and Lowry's humor are also seen in

¹³⁹ Lowry, from Washington D.C. (b. 1948) is part Australian, part Mountain Maidu/ Hamawi Pit River (Californian Native American).

the work of Bruce Nauman, who resided in the Bay Area during an early, formative portion of his career¹⁴⁰ albeit after the period I study. In his photograph *Self-Portrait as a Fountain* (right), he parodies Duchamp's *Fountain* of 1917, and re-conceptualizes an art-historically iconic work, employing Funk-related, 'nose-thumbing' humor. Duchamp, while not parodied in all Nauman's work, is nevertheless present in much of Nauman's conceptually and technology-oriented oeuvre (employing neon, film, videos, etc.), which questions the apparent veracities of period quotidian experience. Nauman exemplifies a redefined art concept.



Figure 75. Bruce Nauman: *Self-Portrait as a Fountain*. 1966-7.

4.4 The Presence of alterity

California's mindset was developed by midcentury L.A. artists, such as George Herms, Wallace Berman, their friends, and connections. Robert Alexander (an L.A. friend of Berman), was instrumental in opening San Francisco's Dilexi Gallery, and disseminating Beat art phenomenon to fellow Californians and, ultimately, a greater international art audience. Fineberg (2000: 18),

Figure 76. Bruce Nauman: *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths* (Window or Wall Sign). 1967.



¹⁴⁰ Nauman was a graduate student at the University of California, Davis, where, amongst instructors, William Wiley particularly influenced Nauman's developing thought. He was also inspired by Duchamp's ideas of the conceptual nature of artwork and maintained a San Francisco studio immediately after graduation in 1966.

equates the early 1960s theoretical shift from existentialism to structuralism, to a cultural preoccupation with alienation and consumerism. A shift to post-structuralist artistic interpretation links to the rise of Postmodernist ethos, however, this author sees the vaunted 'Postmodernism' as the logical conclusion to modernism and the so-called 'poststructuralism' as the conclusion of structuralist ethos.

Bay Area art movements have shaded global dialogical definitions of dominant stylistic theoretical conceptions. In Nauman's¹⁴¹ example (above right), viewers observe technological repurposing of quotidian culture (neon), nature's spiral shell-shape (referencing complexity), words acknowledging an artistic literary component, and an alternative or 'mystic' spirituality as well as a bricolaged conveyance of message. The piece is nascently postmodern and reflects a Buddhist simplicity. Nauman bricolages his personal history, western art history, human history, and the influence of midcentury California art world thought upon individuals (see section 3.1). 'All interpretation is in some measure relative and contingent' (Fineberg, 2000: 18), meaning artistic individuals worldwide idiosyncratically interpret their environment. Nauman shows us that artists endeavor to reveal all aspects of human perception; to reveal truth, and his Bay Area roots reveal his disagreement with

Figure 77. Damien Hirst: *The True Artist Helps The World By Revealing Mystic Truths*. 2006.



¹⁴¹ Nauman employs words in art. There are many precedents, for example, the influence of poet Robert Duncan upon Jess (Collins). Nauman was especially influenced by Wittgenstein's *A Philosophical Investigation*.

existing societal valuations. He reminds us his innovations were becoming culturally commonplace, in part, because of midcentury innovation, and that humans are intrinsically interconnected with nature. His identity reflects apprehension of midcentury existentialized thought.

Britain's Damien Hirst (above) appropriates Nauman's title, as well as intent, and presents viewers with a tripartite display of fish preserved in formaldehyde, conflating art, science, and environmentalist narratives. Hirst's presentation is descended from Den Hartog's *Viewing The Rain From Under The Bridge*, and shows us that Beat or California aesthetics, as exemplified by Funk, have descended through dialogue, to color current art production in differing countries. He utilizes Warhol's famous serialized imagery while bringing to mind traditional religious image format and modern communication's abbreviated sequential information, betraying the influence of art-history in western culture, and by extension, that of California and the Bay Area with his employment of Buddhist simplicity and opposing, somewhat dogmatic, political stance. His piece's abstracted dissension obliquely reveals human folly and his presentation reassembles the natural world re-conceived as art, and literally 'preserves' environmental elements. As Levi-Strauss says: 'attention ... to the mythopoetical nature of "bricolage" on the plane of so-called "raw" or "naïve" art' (Levi-Strauss, 1969: 17) and, 'the elements of mythical thought ... lie half way between percepts and concepts ... signs can always be defined in the way introduced by Saussure' (Ibid: 18). Hirst bricolages his obfuscated sign yet leaves no doubt as to message, a feat impossible without interior migration first adopted in the multicultural, midcentury Bay Area.

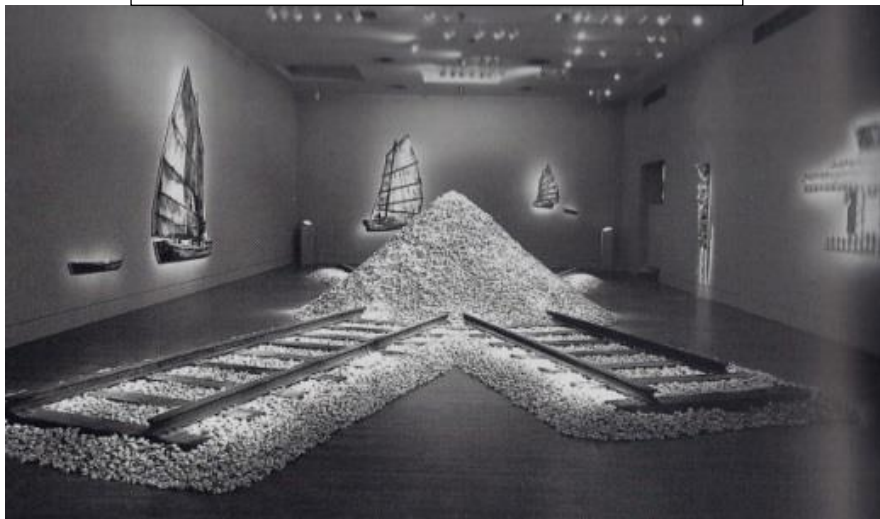
World War II social reevaluation made the appearance of a Postmodernist ethos inevitable. Seeds of the latter's nascent development are found



Figure 78. Andy Goldsworthy: *Rowan Leaves and Hole*. 1987.

culturally within the growth of the late 1940s/early 1950s dissenting Beat generation. Goldsworthy's piece, (above right), displays the fruit of those seeds and utilizes the assemblagist aesthetic (explored in section 3.14) by bricolaging found natural objects to impress human creativity upon the biological world. Goldsworthy abstractly appropriates the Buddhistic sense of organic form employed by Beat Bay Area artists (section 3.11), who placed humanity on a level equal with nature; valuing egalitarian expression. Within the art world, the insistence that all people receive equitable treatment enabled the conception that all output was equally important. This did not translate to an immediate, impartial cultural acceptance of human difference and fights for equal rights continue. The Bay Area's veneration of diverse experience allowed broader outputs modeling global conceptions of inclusivity as intrinsic to ongoing dialogue. Goldsworthy's example reminds viewers that human imprint upon nature is a globalized concern and that all expression is valid.

Figure 79. Hung Liu: *Ju Jin Shan: Old Gold Mountain*. 1994.



For immigrants, America (often initially California) was reputedly where financial hardship was overcome, new identities conceived, and imposed boundaries transgressed (section 3.7).

Bay Area artist Hung Liu's installation *Jiu Jin Shan: Old Gold Mountain*, (left) reveals wall mounted depictions of Chinese merchant sailing vessels or 'Junks'¹⁴² denoting both mobility and commerce (Fuller and Salvioni, 2002: 38-39) and inserts Asian heritage into an American context. On the floor, intersecting

¹⁴² 'Junks' are Chinese sailing vessels employed for multitudinous purposes, often facilitating commerce. The junk was frequently deployed in Bay waters during the nineteenth century.

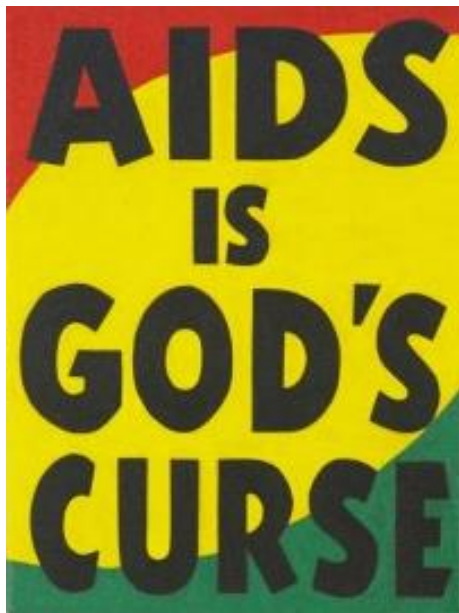
railroad tracks form a multidirectional cross referencing the four directions, and surmount a bed beneath a 'mountain' – both of fortune cookies.¹⁴³ Liu refers to gold, the quest for 'good fortune,' and the part played by Chinese workers in constructing the railroad linking California intercontinentally to the greater United States (1869), which ironically bettered California's fortune, but did little for the economic status of Chinese immigrant workers (Chin, 1969; Nee & Nee, 1974: 40-43). Transposed Chinese workers sought railroad employment when gold field opportunities became limited for non-Americans, indicating negotiation of available terrain. The railroad completion enabled greater communication and fixed the idea of California as culturally unique and therefore distinctive within the United States (Starr, 2007: 305-308); a perception undoubtedly encouraged by Californian boosterists desiring an identifiable market niche. Thus, American perception of Californians is based in part, upon Chinese efforts. Liu's ideologically inclusive format embraces her ethnic history in California, foreshadowing contemporary globalized sculptural presentations of personal history as endemic; validity (and differing identity) is economically necessary to western societies. Liu echoes previous Asian artists like Nanying Stella Wong's assimilationist creations (see Figure 36 and section 3.9). Liu is, above all else, American and her identity as shown in this installation, confirms this. Ethnic presence has shaped the totality of American culture.

4.5 A Changed World

With the acceptance of difference, people are forced to alter established thought modes on an individual basis: cultural changes set in motion by the Second World War are now internalized by citizens, which in turn alters mass-thought or culture. The influence of Bay Area artists within California, that of the state upon America and the latter upon the western world redefined artistic dialogic meaning by incorporating a larger-scaled conception of art, identity, beauty, and veracity. The Bay Area

¹⁴³ Fortune cookies are tawny golden brown, enfolding a strip of paper bearing a printed fortune. The mountain of cookies (upon which Liu's railroad bed is laid) symbolizes the hope for immigrant good fortune entwined with the gold from which California derives its Chinese name.

art world betrays a globalized influence and has returned inclusive thought to a globalized world – a circle of life in which art (like nature) recycles itself in a continuum. The influence of world politics, dissent, Marcel Duchamp, the Surrealists, Dadaists, existentialism, etc., redefined meaning of the word art in non-western world areas by inclining the human mind towards theoretical potentialities and expansion. The San Francisco Bay Area's cultural diversity as evidenced in western preoccupation with sustainable cultural evolution is predicated upon Gramscian inclusivity. As Lippard says: 'crossings and mixings are echoes from the future' (Lippard, 1990: 245). Graham (below left) re-presents the political poster with its textual and graphic components as fine-art much in the manner of political posters reifying Marxist notions of the import of 'everyman' (section 1.1 and Figures 68, 69). Graham utilizes words as image component much like Jess' examples (discussed in section 3.10). The painting dissents from hegemonic silence regarding the AIDS epidemic (linked to officially condemned homosexual



behavior) and insists upon equal presence and recognition of difference. He disparages fundamentalist Christian prejudice, as well as the latter's disdain for deviation from essentialized norms, by appropriating Christian words and betraying the fact that work to destabilize hegemonies is an ongoing process. Graham denies previous hegemonic privileging: inviting viewers to reassess personal definitions of art, of identity, and of human predisposition and consequent cultural worth reflecting Beat inspired changes in societal valuation.

Figure 80. Andrew Graham: AIDS Is God's Curse. 2009.

In France, Pierre et Gilles (below right) illustrate their country's cultural non-uniformity by depicting soccer players of differing nationalities, a direct reflection of Bay Area negotiation of populational plurality as applied globally. The duo have technically created an assemblage by surrounding a photograph with an actual paper border in France's national colors, and in the (possibly painted) paper falling between the athletes and the camera), revealing diversity as does Jess who presents midcentury quotidian environment as dissentingly non-normative (Figure 9). Pierre et Gilles's piece created a stir when exhibited because the men were shown unclothed, thus, the male nude remains problematic for some populations. This demonstrates that western hegemonic prohibitions against cultural valuings remain in place, including cultural interdictions against homosexuality which prevent subversion of inherited social role dictates and indicate a rethinking of philosophical positioning (section 1.2). Diversity implies a combination of things not unlike Beat and later experimentation which recombined elements into new forms and asserted the validity of all things and ideas as avowed in sections 1.1 – 1.2. Beats promoted contemporary insistence upon expansive notions of inclusion as examined previously. Pierre et Gilles reconfigure valuation revealing midcentury Bay Area cultural theorization (as we have seen throughout this thesis).

Figure 81. Pierre et Gilles: *Vive la France*. 2006.



Otis's ceramic work was a direct result of postwar experimentation and, ultimately, revamped artistic depiction confronting viewers with denial of cultural privileging. What we have seen is the

smashing of barriers, redefined perceptions of art, identity, and the assertion of difference within an art world mirroring postwar western cultural changes and an asserted Gramscian validity. In this respect, Gramsci's dreams of a more inclusive society have partially been achieved. Hegemonic difference has been subverted, although not obliterated, as there remains a great deal of biased advantage in the world. Many aspects of an excluding privileging have yet to be rectified (as in an illusory art history). Inclusivity is partially accomplished, yet the nature of the world as we understand it, is a myth perpetuated by previous hegemonies. We still deal with tearing down prior barricades protecting advantaged supremacist interests. Analysis of midcentury cultural and theoretical change reveals a successful synthesis of differing cultures and concomitant identities - displayed in output betraying a non-western derived position, and an assertion of non-white validity. Implementation of those on a global scale is due in part, to Bay Area shaping of a larger art dialectic. Foucault said:

I believe that it is very important when one wants to do a work of transformation to know not only what are the institutions and their real effects, but equally what is the type of thought that sustains them: what can one still accept of this system of rationality? What part, on the contrary, deserves to be set aside, transformed or abandoned? - (Foucault in Corber, 1997: 191)

Contemporary artists employ Foucault's sentiments when they depict the nature of identities differing from previously normative models. Artistic reevaluation of acceptable formats arose partly from midcentury Otis Art Institute advancements reflecting Duchampian random chance (and object autonomy). These cultural advancements are manifested in portrayals of previously marginalized identities offered as outputs that would have been ignored, as we have seen. Gibson says in *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics*: 'To outline the politics of race and gender in even the narrow spectrum of time and place ... I have omitted many aspects of rich interaction with other values, formal and sociological, that are at play in these works' (Gibson, 1997: 167). In other words, people are freer to show themselves as drawing encouragement from divergent foundations; constructing personal identity from a myriad of sources. We do not live in the multicultural utopia many midcentury citizens might have imagined had they foreseen our world – their future: increased inclusivity highlights breaches in

accommodation or appreciation of difference and points up the fact that cultural discrepancies continue to exist. A covert prejudice, even overt racism, residually inhibits inclusive acknowledgement, yet Bay Area art advances have reconfigured world valuation veracity.

Buddhism and Existentialism have passed from American fashion but echoes of both are detected in a world which currently privileges alternatives to previously narrow hegemonic viewpoints. Both were hallmarks of the postwar era, and embedded cultural interest in them partly realizes the sense of the responsible individual alone in society, yet interdependent with it. Examined as a unity, contemporary art betrays midcentury cultural changes in valuation and mirrors an inclusivity not existing prior to dissension and divergence from normative models prevalent in the 1945-1965 period. All of the artworks illustrating this chapter were created after the midcentury period and exemplify the global adoption of mid-Twentieth century, dissenting American values. They prove that a Beat-instigated cultural redefinition has contributed to a world art dialogic privileging an increased inclusivity, while showing us that ethnographic cultural contributions are intrinsic to construction of the world as we know it today.

England's Carole Windham (below left) shows us herself foregrounded amongst personal heroes including the California ceramicist (and so-called 'Grandfather of Funk') Robert Arneson (to Windham's right) whose influence is seen in the columnar pedestals supporting the represented figures and Windham's employment of the ceramic medium. The other depicted figure is believed to be Obadiah Sherratt (important in British ceramic history as the most famous of the Staffordshire potters). Windham obviously acknowledges the influence of California (as well as art history) as important to her personal development, displaying the institution of Beat values as an accomplished fact and evidencing the derivation of identity from multiple world sources. She nullifies previous distinctions, exhibiting a redefined art and self. Windham's work betrays elements of both western and non-western cultures: a hybridization of East and West, with her conflation of world history and the assertion of self-validity. The

Figure 82. Carol Windham: *Myself And My Heroes*. After 2000.



ongoing global art dialogue continues to produce product predicated upon Californian innovations and, as Bay Area painter Ed Corbett said (albeit midcentury): ‘... I don’t think that by any means painting is exhausted in this country. Truly nothing has died, so long as good painters continue to paint regardless of the school they are supposed to belong to. So nothing has died and that, as far as I’m concerned, is that.’

(McChesney, 1973: 86). For ‘painters’ read ‘artists’. Art crosses human boundaries, and as human expression, art incorporates diachronic perception and continually evolves, as recognition of diverse experience is increasingly validated. This is a Bay Area bequest to succeeding art generations.

Appendix A

Legislation

Significant United States and California Legislation.

● = Federal legislation

● = California legislation or State political event.

California was under United States jurisdiction from 1850 onwards and subject to United States laws. A compilation of specifically Californian law is time-consuming and beyond the scope of this project. Given the unique circumstances of the state's inhabitants, some legislation is attempt at acknowledging a diverse demographic. As will also be noted, the majority of legislation and events, occurring in California occurs during the twentieth century, (and continues into the twenty-first century). This latter is a reflection of the state's more liberal outlook. It reveals the ongoing acceptance of Beat generation values becoming the held beliefs of the dominant American culture.

First Amendment to the Constitution

Passed by Congress on December 15, 1791 as part of the Bill of Rights. This amendment protects basic freedoms from undue government intrusion and guarantees freedom of religion, of speech, of the press, the right to assembly, and the right to petition government for redress (of grievances).

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, was signed Feb. 2, 1848, ending war between Mexico and the United States. It confirmed U.S. claims to Texas and set its boundary at the Rio Grande River. Mexico ceded California, Nevada, and Utah, (parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming) to the United States. The U.S. Senate ratified the treaty on Mar. 10, 1848, and by the Mexican Congress on May 25.¹⁴⁴ It also granted citizenship to Californios.¹⁴⁵

Statehood

In 1850, California was admitted to America as the 31st state in the union. It was considered a 'free' non-slavery state after heated Congressional debate and admission, arguably, set-the-stage for the later American Civil War.

Protection and Government of California Indians

In 1850, California passed the Act for Protection and Government of Indians. It denied indigenous people (Indians) the right to testify in court and allowed Californians and Californios to keep native Californian Indians as servants.

¹⁴⁴ Information courtesy of *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. Copyright © 2012, Columbia University Press.

¹⁴⁵ See <<http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/calcultures/eras/era4.html>> - accessed 19/June/2013.

Foreign Miner's Tax

Also passed in 1850 was the 'Foreign Miners Tax' targeting 'greasers' (Latin Americans). Failure to pay the tax (\$20 per month) was sufficient grounds to drive the miners out of goldfield claims (often resulting in violence), thus reserving economic benefits for white Americans.

Land Claim Settlement

In 1851, Congress passed 'An Act to Ascertain and Settle Private Land Claims in the State of California' which attempted to iron out differences in California land claims concerning grants made to private citizens by either Mexico or Spain. The new law placed the burden of proof upon claimants. As litigation could extend several years and legal costs mounted, many families were forced to sell off the land they were attempting to protect.¹⁴⁶

Fugitive Slave Act

In 1852, California passed the Fugitive Slave Act making it illegal for slaves to seek freedom in California. It also barred blacks from testifying in court. The right to testify in court was won in 1863 and blacks (males) were allowed to vote after passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 (see below).

1868 Burlingame Treaty

The Burlingame treaty was between the United States and China guaranteeing the right to immigration, migration and residence.

Fifteenth Amendment

The fifteenth amendment to the United States Constitution¹⁴⁷ was ratified in 1870. It guaranteed the right to vote regardless of race, color, or previous status (i.e. ex-slaves were included under the protection).

Chinese Immigrant Rights

In 1872, a law was passed granting Chinese immigrants the right to testify in court.

1882 Chinese exclusion act

The Chinese Exclusion Act was signed by President Chester A. Arthur on May 6, 1882, following revisions made in 1880 to the Burlingame Treaty of 1868. The 1882 act allowed the United States to suspend Chinese immigration. This law was repealed by the Magnuson Act on December 17, 1943.

Kim Wong Ark vs. USA – 1898

¹⁴⁶ See <<http://www.archives.gov/pacific/education/curriculum/4th-grade/land-ownership.html>> - accessed 19/June/2013.

¹⁴⁷ See <<http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/calcultures/eras/era4.html>> - accessed 19/June/2013.

United States vs. Wong Kim Ark, 169 U.S. 649 (1898), is a Supreme Court case ruling allowing that practically everyone born in the United States is a U.S. citizen.

Alien Land Law

In 1913, California passed the 'Alien Land Law' prohibiting immigrants ineligible for citizenship from owning property.

Women's right to vote

National Women's suffrage in the United States was passed in 1920. The implication that all citizens enjoyed equal status was tested repeatedly, particularly in states other than California. The national right to vote was referred to as the nineteenth amendment.

Executive Order 8802

Executive Order 8802 was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 25, 1941, banning racial discrimination in military defense industries. An executive order is not a law, but rather a strong suggestion, and military segregation continued. Roosevelt's accompanying statement cited the war effort, saying that 'the democratic way of life within the nation can be defended successfully *only with the help and support of all groups*¹⁴⁸ (italics mine).

Executive order 9066 – Japanese internment

Executive Order 9066 was signed on February 19, 1942 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It required all persons of Japanese ancestry residing in the western regions of the United States to enter internment camps for the duration of the war.

Magnuson act – 1943

The Magnuson Act or Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act of 1943 was signed on December 17, 1943 in the United States (see above). Some Chinese already in the United States were allowed to become citizens.

Executive Order 9981- desegregation of military (early 50s/late 40s)

Executive Order 9981 was issued on July 26, 1948 by President Harry S. Truman, abolishing racial discrimination in the armed forces.

Internal Security Act

Passed in 1950, despite President Harry Truman's veto. The Internal Security Act barred immigration of any foreigners who were Communists or who might be considered a danger to the public.

¹⁴⁸ See <<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/eo-8802.html>> - accessed 18/June/2013.

McCarran Walter Act

Again, passed after President Truman's veto, the 1952 Act re-affirmed the 1924 national quota system, limiting total immigration to .6 of 1% of U.S. population in 1920. Exempted are children and spouses of U.S. citizens and people born in the western hemisphere (Europeans).

Brown vs. Board of Education – 1954

Brown vs. Board of Education (of Topeka, KS) was a United States court case declaring that laws establishing separate public schools for non-white and white students were unconstitutional. This led to greater inclusivity in educational populations as well as more egalitarian educational opportunities.

Civil Rights Act – 1957

The Civil Rights Act of 1957, Pub.L. 85–315, 71 Stat. 634, was enacted September 9, 1957, primarily dealing with voters rights but was also a response to continued segregation in public schools, primarily in the southern United States.

Jose Sarria

In 1961, openly gay Jose Sarria became the first homosexual to run for public office in the United States – running for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He did not win, but his run for office revealed that gay people had political clout. See also Harvey Milk below (1973).

Executive Order 11063

With executive Order 11063, President John F. Kennedy (on November 20, 1962) prohibited discrimination in housing or other real estate owned (or operated) by the United States government. The Fair Housing act of 1968 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability,¹⁴⁹ or familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18).

Twenty-fourth Amendment

The Twenty-fourth Amendment prohibits both government and states from conditioning the right to vote upon payment of a poll (or any other) tax. The amendment was ratified on January 23, 1964.

1964/5 civil rights act

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub.L. 88–352, 78 Stat. 241), was enacted July 2, 1964 outlawing major forms of discrimination against racial, ethnic, national and religious minorities, and women. It

¹⁴⁹ See < http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/FHLaws> - accessed 18/June/2013.

ended unequal voter registration requirements and racial segregation both in schools, and at the workplace.¹⁵⁰

Voting Rights act – 1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. It was designed to prohibit any requirements being placed upon the right to vote.

Fair Housing Act - 1968

The Fair Housing act of 1968 is also known as Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act, and prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, or religion. It reinforced language from the 1964 Civil Rights Act (above).

Homosexuality

In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders.

In the same year, San Francisco's Harvey Milk ran for the first time for the board of Supervisors. He did not win. See also Jose Sarria above.

Undocumented Aliens and Education

In 1995, California passed a law (later declared unconstitutional), (referred to as Prop 187) prohibiting undocumented aliens from participating in public education. It denied welfare eligibility and other health services to non-legal immigrants.

Domestic Partnership

In 1999, California Governor Gray Davis signed legislation permitting state employees eligibility for recognized domestic partnerships, including the extending of health benefits to those government employees unmarried partners.

Same-Sex Marriage

In 2008, California's Supreme Court ruled that all persons have the constitutional right to marry. Also in 2008, the state's 'Proposition 8' banning same-sex marriage is passed. Proposition 8 was ruled unconstitutional in 2010, although the ruling did not take effect until 2013. The Proposition has been called unconstitutional because it violates the 14th amendment (equal protection under U.S. law). It was subsequently nullified in California.

¹⁵⁰ See <http://www.congresslink.org/print_basics_histmats_civilrights64text.htm> - accessed 18/June/2013.

Appendix B

Glossary

Alta California – Spanish term for the region later known as the state of California (the land area north of Mexico). California was possibly named by several sixteenth century Spanish explorers and probably referred to a mythical land described in a 1510 novel, *Las Sergas de Esplandián* (by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo). ‘Calafia’ was queen of that land. The word may also derive from the Arabic *khalifa* (meaning steward). Originally parts, of Texas, Arizona, and Nevada were included in the term.

Alterity – the state of being different: otherness.

Asian – in America, Asians are persons whose ethnic ancestry derives from countries bordering the Pacific Ocean or eastern Asia (excluding Russia). The term ‘Oriental’ is currently considered derogatory. Americans do not include as Asians, citizens of the Arabic-speaking world such as Saudi Arabians (usually referred to as ‘Middle Eastern’). Indians (from India) are referred to as Indians or occasionally, South Asians.

Bricolage – Bricolage is a French word denoting construction from a diverse range of readily available objects: a work created by such a process is said to be a work of bricolage. The Bricoleur improvises from materials at hand. Errors and accidents are welcomed as fortuitous. In art, this obviously applies to Assemblage. It can also be considered whenever random chance or accidents are involved, as in the influence of Duchamp’s concepts, which welcomed the serendipitous, and in work created at a distance from a source which necessitates innovation (California was physically removed from art capitals such as New York).

Californio - a resident of early California, usually of Mexican or Spanish derived ancestry, present in the state prior to statehood. The term is most frequently associated with owners of Spanish land grants and/or other agricultural concerns.

Camp – Usually refers to an aesthetic sensibility prevalent within homosexual communities. The word may be used as a noun (campy) referring to a deliberately dramatic or ironic style, and also to an ostentatious and flamboyantly gay man, however, one need not be gay to be ‘campy’.

Celadon – refers to a Chinese ceramic glaze thought to resemble jade. It is usually assumed to be pale green in color and is identified with a type or look, in Chinese ceramics. Celadon is available in many colors, perhaps imitating the many varieties of jade.

CSFA – California School of Fine Arts, later renamed the San Francisco Art Institute (or SFAI).

Disseminate – The Oxford English Dictionary defines disseminate as to ‘spread widely’ (especially information). The term as I employ it, refers to artistic product and ways in which art reaches potential viewers i.e., via galleries, museums, exhibitions, publication, and/or purchase from source.

False-Front – In Hollywood, stage-sets are often constructed in which buildings are rendered as facades only, creating the illusion of structures.

Film Noir – a Hollywood film genre renowned for its high contrast photography (the name is French and means literally ‘black film’) which contributes to the perceived pessimism of the plot lines. The films usually concern an individual at odds with society.

Funk – a term derived from the Jazz idiom and prevalent in usage during the 1950s. The term itself refers to ‘musky smell of a woman’. In fine-art usage, it refers to Beat –derived work deliberately lacking technical ‘polish.’¹⁵¹ During the 1960s, it was the name given to an art movement thought to reflect not only lack of polish but also derived from beat expression.

Gay - slang for a homosexual person. It is the most widely used term to denote homosexuals. See also **queer** below.

Hegemony – Societal stratifications privileging one group over another. It is associated with Antonio Gramsci who usually refers to the dominance of the ruling class in society. It is a means of imposing the values of that group upon less dominant groups and affects hierarchical structures within social groups.

Hip – Hip is the archaic form of hip. Both are thought to derive from the West African Wolof language. Hip refers to someone ‘in the know’ and comes from the African/American Jazz lexicon.

Manifest Destiny – a nineteenth century doctrine positing that the spread of the United States throughout the continent, and of American society throughout the world, was inevitable, justified, and hegemonically necessary. It was considered to be ‘God’s will.’

Pl  in-aire – French term for outdoor or open-air painting.

PWAP – stands for: Public Works of Art Project, a division of the 1930s era **WPA** (see below).

Queer – formerly a pejorative term for homosexuals, reappropriated by gay people to signify pride in difference. Many people, things, or theories, are now referred to as ‘**queer**,’ and the term is used alongside, or in place of, the previously preferred ‘**gay**.’

‘**Queer-bashing**’ – the practice of physically attacking a person solely because of that person’s presumed sexuality. The practice sometimes results in an attackee’s death. ‘Queer Bashing’ is outlawed but persists.

Serigraph – Serigraphy is also known as silkscreen printing with several screens producing several colors.

Stereotype – an oversimplified, mistaken, yet widely held idea or perception of a person or thing.

Subversive – the intention to undermine an established system or institution; an action accomplishing same.

Vaquero – cowboy or ranch-hand. It is derived from Spanish and is/was used in Spanish-speaking portions of the U.S. including early California.

Wabi, Sabi, and Yugen – three terms derived from the Japanese language, specifically from Buddhism. They may be defined as follows: **Wabi** - the glorification of artificial poverty. **Sabi** – the beauty of things mellowed by age. **Yugen** – the realization of profundity through open-ended suggestion.

¹⁵¹ See Tsujimoto and Baas, 1998, p. 21.

WPA – stands for Works Progress Administration – part of the ‘New Deal’ of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, promoted as a means of ending the 1930s era economic depression. See also **PWAP** (above).

Appendix C
GSA Forms

Research Student Submission Form



This form should be completed by staff and students, as stated below. It should be handed in to Registry together with relevant copies of the thesis for examination and the documentation required in the handbook.

SECTION 1 (TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT)

Student's name: David Gracie

Supervisors: Dr. Sarah Lowndes, Sue Brind

Submission Date:

12/March/2015 _____

Viva date: _14/October/2013_____

Viva venue: Skype_____

Examination team

	External Examiner	Internal Examiner	Convenor
Name	Dr. Dominic Paterson	Ross Sinclair	Dr. Nicky Bird
Address			
Email			
Telephone			

Mode of submission selected, as stated in the Intention to submit approved by RDSC

- ☐ Portfolio with Documentation
- ☐ Portfolio with Written Commentary
- ☐ Joint Portfolio with Dissertation
- ☒ Thesis

Student Declaration (to be copied and submitted with thesis)

I, David Gracie, declare that the enclosed submission for the degree of Master of Philosophy, and consisting of a Thesis, meets the regulations stated in the handbook for the mode of submission selected and approved by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.*

I declare that this submission: is my own work, and has not been submitted for any other academic award.

Signed:

Student David Gracie

* If the submission does not meet the regulations, the student should attach a letter addressed to the examiners stating exactly how and why, explaining why he or she has decided to submit, and requesting the examiners' tolerance in not meeting the regulations

Student Submission Checklist (Please note that students are required to submit all of these documents and that the GSA Registry may refuse incomplete submissions)

- ☒ 3 copies of portfolio and/or thesis
- ☒ Copy of declaration within 3 copies of portfolio and/or thesis
- ☒ Abstract suitable for publication (250-1000 words)
- ☒ Research Degrees Schedule form (see VLE)
- ☒ Library Access form (see VLE)
- ☐ Where appropriate, three copies of a list of formal course work successfully completed

SECTION 2: FOR REGISTRY USE ONLY**Examiner letter checklist**

Date of issue of letter: _____

- ☐ Handbook
- ☐ Payment details
- ☐ Expenses claim form
- ☐ Preliminary report form
- ☐ Oral examination report form (for information only)
- ☐ Deadline for submission of preliminary reports. Date: _____

☐ Viva date, time and location

Preliminary reports returned to Convenor?

☐ Yes Date: _____ ☐ No

Post examination

Outcome of examination: _____

Re-submission deadline: _____

Response by: ☐ Internal ☐ External ☐ Convenor

2nd Viva? ☐ Yes Date: _____ ☐ No

☐ requested decision on 2nd viva after review of resubmission

1	Personal Details
1.1	<p>Full Name (this is the name which will be printed on your certificate)</p> <p>David Gracie</p>
1.2	<p>Address</p> <p>██████████</p> <p>████████████████████</p> <p>██████████</p>
1.3	<p>Full Title of Submission</p> <p>Subversive Art as Place, Identity, and Bohemia: The San Francisco Bay Area 1945-1965</p>
1.4	<p>Full list of Qualifications</p> <p>2008 MRES (Masters of Research in Creative Practices) The Glasgow School of Art.</p> <p>1983 BFA California College of Arts and Crafts (Currently California College of the Arts).</p>
1.5	<p>Your Plans after Graduation</p> <p>I will teach, research, and write within my fields of expertise and inquiry. I am particularly interested in the fields of painting, ceramics, and art history, especially the latter as pertaining to California. I further plan to produce a book based on the research conducted for the purposes of this MPhil study.</p>

Submission Access Form

THE GLASGOW
SCHOOL OF ART

1	Personal Details
---	------------------

1.1	Name
	David Gracie

1.2	Submission Title
	Subversive Art as Place, Identity, and Bohemia: The San Francisco Bay Area 1945-1965.

I understand that in the interests of good scholarship, thesis/portfolios of the Glasgow School of Art are normally made freely available for consultation in the GSA Library, or within another library, immediately after deposit but that a candidate may stipulate a period of either one or three years after deposit during which his or her written consent must be sought before such access is given. (The Supervisor usually advises a Candidate if commercial or patent reasons make this restriction desirable).

I, therefore, agree to grant access to and permit copies to be made for other libraries or individuals without my specific authorisation.

2.1	Immediately on deposit	Yes	
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2.2	One year after deposit		No
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2.3	Three years after deposit		No
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I fully accept that candidates who stipulate written consent but from whom no reply has been received within three months of a request from the GSA Library posted to their last known address will be assumed to have ceded this power to the Research Degrees Sub Committee

Signature David Gracie			
Date	03	May	2015

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