

# Introduction

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**M**osaic 54.1 is a general issue, but in each of the essays published here, vision takes a hit. This, of course, is nothing new for critical work, little less than the main lines of twentieth-century art and poetry, yet this convergence on the problem of visibility in an un-curated issue featuring the writing of scholars from a range of disciplines and working from vastly different theoretical perspectives is both surprising and surely exacerbated by the increasingly troubled times in which we live. Today more than ever colonialism, the inequalities of race and gender, climate change, capitalism have risen up at the horizon of things to become an increasingly urgent and overlapping set of discourses that buttress and support the very possibility of the visible. For the art historian in me, these pressures placed on the visual are acutely felt. Painting as a long time object of study and the paradigmatic form of visual art withers. With its fabled autonomy nearly bled dry, horrors that were once fenced off correspond more and more closely with the inside. For photography in the age of Instagram this is magnified tenfold, for the cruel logic of the world drives our fascination with it more and more literally from the side in the name of psychographics, consumption, spectacle. By extension, and given that this symptomatology is pervasive (with contradictions piling on top of contradictions daily), we must all ask ourselves how to continue doing the work we do even as our chosen fields of study look

increasingly unsustainable, exhausted, ripe for total overhaul. The practice of close reading that is a cornerstone of the scholarship we publish at *Mosaic* is especially fragile under these circumstances. Though its approach to the text is variable, and always keyed to the object, its unique version of seeing through a hyper magnified lens and a special proximity hinging on attachment tends towards peripheral blindness.

The issues are not new. These are longstanding problems. In “The ‘Flesh’s Vision’: Dylan Thomas’s Poetics of Sensation,” Sophie Laniel-Musitelli guides us through the poet’s consistent evasions of the despotism of sight towards what she describes as a deeply embodied notion of “poetic process” and a “poetic sensorium.” In Lindsey Richter’s “Reimagining Vision in the Surrealist Cinépoe *L’Etoile de mer*,” the author unpacks a sensory epistemology hinging on the primacy of the haptic over the spectacular seductions of vision. In “The Mother as Social Activist in Muriel Rukeyser’s ‘The Book of the Dead’ and Maxo Vanka’s Murals,” Aaron Rován works against the dominant visual framework of the New Deal to uncover the unforeseen role for women in combatting capitalist exploitation. In a complex and probing essay titled “The Sense of the Visible: Relational Poetics in *Harmonium*,” Ian Tan sheds a phenomenological light on a “much enlarged” notion of vision bound by projection and imaginative relation.

In the essay “Cannibalism in Joyce and Mo Yan: Famine Memory in *Ulysses*, *The Republic of Wine*, and *Frog*,” Hye Ryoung Kil reads the works of Joyce and Mo Yan off of one another and the respective histories of famine in Ireland and China to bring into focus trauma of a very literal kind. James Martell’s “Malabouian Plasticity Beyond Surfaces” interrogates Catherine Malabou’s interest in plasticity as a neurological process existing beyond surface capture. The world as text is re-anchored to a notion of the sculptural that exists without support. In “The Trouble: Family, Genre, and Hybridity in Octavia Butler’s *Kindred*,” Kimber L. Wiggs introduces us to the complexities of interpreting the writing of Octavia Butler in and as the problem of hybridity. Finally, in “Animal, Subject, Constitution,” Jacques de Ville carefully outlines the contradictions and compensatory logic implicit to the establishment of human sovereignty above the non-human. Just how laced through with Kantian anthropology our own most basic assumptions about the animal, the subject, and civil society are is shocking.

It is in this general spirit of antagonism towards the visual in the field of the visual—an aesthetic problem if there ever was one and what Jacques Rancière has called “the distribution of the sensible”—that we feature the work of Louise Lawler. Lawler’s work has always been particularly resistant to interpretation, impossible to pin down, and presumably because of this, typically framed by critics in no uncertain terms through a compensatory logic of capture. If carefully wrought and possessed of



1. Louise Lawler. *Why Pictures Now*, 1981. Gelatin silver print, 3 x 6 inches, 7.6 x 15.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist; Metro Pictures, New York; and Sprüth Magers.

self-reflexivity tending towards *mis-en-abymes* of reference, it is also a supremely open work that is additionally shot through with a cool distance on its supposed content. Lawler first came to prominence in the late 1970s with the Pictures Generation—a group of artists that came into visibility at the Metro Pictures Gallery in New York, and jelled around concepts of the post-modern, especially allegory, spectacle, and the simulacrum. The extra-discursive orbits involved in this crucible would be formative for Lawler’s practice. *Why Pictures Now* (1981), a photograph heavy with the earmarks of advertising culture and depicting an ashtray and purpose designed matchbook emblazoned with the phrase, is the standard reference (see Figure 1). A questioning title addressed to the lips of the viewer confronts the self-same question deep within the fictive space of the image. And though the doubleness here seems to propose an analytic of two distinct critical trajectories, one echoes through with the other just the same. Another crowd pleaser with ironic mimicry built in is *Birdcalls* (1972/1981), a sound work featuring the artist singing out the names of male artists, both to galvanize as well as change the picture of the general ecology on the banks of New York’s Hudson River in the early 1970s where she had been working (Marcoci 20). *Arrangements of Pictures*, Lawler’s signature, first one-person exhibition at Metro Pictures in 1982, saw her mount a group show of works by the galleries stable as her own. Alongside photographs of works by Andy Warhol, Sherrie Levine, etc., and her own pictures of art displayed in various settings, Lawler’s “reversal of presentational positions,” as Andrea Fraser puts it, substituted her work for the work of others and vice versa (125).

Generally speaking, Lawler's work is understood through the optics of institutional critique, i.e., art about the institution of art, or art which performs an internal critique of the institution from a position outside, or minimally beside, the institution. Inasmuch, it is pitted against the generational legacies of modernism, the latter's visual pleasures, its fictions of autonomy, authorship, originality, expression, as well as the centrality and unmediated nature of the image. Recourse to Marcel Duchamp often worms its way into discussion on these points, but feminism, performance, sound, and design are equally foundational. Invariably this leads the artist to unpacking all manner of "inside/outside" relationships (Buskirk et al. 106). For instance, design, which is not traditionally included in the art field proper and seeps into her exhibition practice and use of photography, as well as overlaps with her production of ephemera (matchbooks, posters, a gift certificate, cocktail napkins, gallery announcements, a business card, paperweights, glasses), is often used to identify thresholds and supporting structures that are otherwise occluded by the art field proper. Lawler's *Monogram* (1984), featured on our front cover, is a good example. Minimally speaking, we see a painting of the American flag drained of its colour and white as a ghost in a bedroom designed down to a "T." With less naivety, we should detect the mediation of Lawler's photography, which consistently gains leverage into the category of art through design. In effect, and by virtue of the photographic frame which distributes hierarchical norms of value, painting blends into home décor from out of the pages of *Vogue*. We glimpse art in one of its little known haunts, what the artist refers to as one of its natural "habitats": precisely not the museum or white cube, but rather the collector's boudoir. Inasmuch, art bleeds out into that many-headed hydra known as the broader institution of art, which includes the wall-space above the sofa or bed, collectors and collections, the art market, and so on.

The painting we see in *Monogram* is Jasper Johns's *White Flag* (1955-58), and through a kind of visual slip, our eyes slide downward from one of two of Johns's signature motifs to a tasteful bedspread and ultimately an emblazoned monogram. This fall from grace, which is equally reversible as a genetic pattern with monograph as origin and painting as nadir, re-affirms the crucial locus of Lawler's thinking, even if we are tempted to let things spill out beyond this tightly controlled unfolding and folding back of narrative, say, utterly or completely into the interior space of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine's home where Lawler took the photograph. In the tradition of Hans Haacke, we cannot help but follow the money, but in *Monogram*, limits are set and these targets are internal to the photographic frame. Value here appears as a hollow fiction: *White Flag* surrenders its intrinsic worth to a syntactical context, a second target that maintains (and simultaneously drains) the first target of its significance.

What is secondary becomes primary and through subsequent metaleptic reversals, a curious kind of mirroring ensues that is as natural to Johns's corpus as Lawler's. We all know that art ends up over the sofa and poetry in the bookcase, but the juxtaposition between the embroidered monogram and the heavily worked encaustic surface of *White Flag* throws vision into special relief, opens up closed doors, and begins to formulate still other obstacles and structures of support. Indeed, *Monogram* comes to us from a long term project of photographing works of art in the famous Tremaine collection, and importantly tracing the fortunes of these works in the aftermath of the collection's breakup and sale.

For instance, in 1988 *White Flag* was sold at Sotheby's for a record breaking \$7.3 million to Los Angeles based talent agent Michael Ovitz (Finkel). This is a paltry sum now, and was even the day after when a second Johns went for \$17 million (Wilson). It was even more so in 2010, when the estate of Michael Crichton sold Johns's *Flag* for \$28.6 million at Christie's (Crow)—Ovitz was Crichton's close friend and literary agent—and Steven A. Cohen bought his own *Flag* (1958) for an estimated \$110 million at Sotheby's (Fontevicchia). Some (though certainly not all) of these questions relating to capital and the equation of price and value under Neoliberalism's "efficient market hypothesis" come packaged in a work related to *Monogram* and the sale of the Tremaine collection, titled *Board of Directors* (1989). The photograph shows a close up of the encaustic and newsprint surface of Johns's *White Flag* on the fabric-lined wall of Christie's New York auction house during the November 1988 sale (see Figure 2). Headlined in bold with the phrase "Contemporary Art from The Tremaine Collection," a card tacked next to the painting details the minutia of provenance—"signed, inscribed with title and dated 1955-58 on the reverse." Attention is split: the left edge of the painting's wooden frame perfectly divides the photograph in two. Coarse fabric vies for attention with the encaustic surface, and equally the lines of text. Parts of two of three of the attached canvases which make up *White Flag* divide things again. On a mat surrounding the photograph, another piece of the action is doled out to the board of directors. Bedfellows of a different sort than Johns and Robert Rauschenberg or Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine are called up here. For no one is left out of the act, especially since this fragmenting or breaking up of tightly quartered visual space and its immediate surrounding corresponds to a range of spatial topologies that are also traceable back to the artist as well as the beholder. With an irony that is uncharacteristic of institutional critique, the question begged is just who is in bed with whom? Certainly, the board of directors and both auction houses that are the guarantors of provenance; presumably Ovitz and Crichton; clearly the MET, which has a second version of *White Flag*; undoubtedly David Geffen and Eli Broad, both of



2. Louise Lawler. *Board of Directors*, 1988/1989. Gelatin silver print with text on mat: “BOARD OF DIRECTORS / L. Guy Hannen, *Chairman* / Christopher Burge, *President and Chief Executive Officer* / François Curiel, Stephen S. Lash, *Executive Vice-Presidents* / J. Brian Cole • Ian G. Kennedy • Karen A.G. Loud / Stephen C. Massey • Anthony M. Phillips, *Senior Vice Presidents* / Daniel P. Davison • Geoffrey Elliott.” 14 3/8 x 21 5/8 inches, 37.5 x 54.9 cm. Courtesy of the artist; Metro Pictures, New York; and Sprüth Magers.

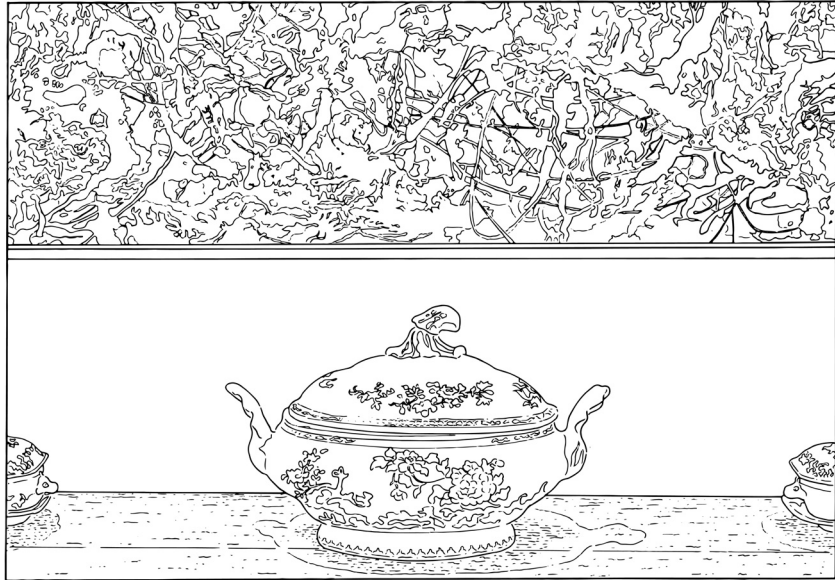
whom own their own *Flags*; and of course, as is well-enough known from Rauschenberg’s *Bed* (1955)—a collage the artist made from the pillow and bed sheets which he shared with his lover—Johns and Rauschenberg as well. Thus the second of two similarly sized works Lawler has shown with *Monogram*, each with titles in press type underneath. One, *Untitled*, included Rauschenberg’s combine painting, titled *Monogram* (1955-59). And thus, too, the second of Johns’s signature motifs: the target, which seems to implicate Lawler in the goings on as well.

This dizzying web of supplementary information—whether pertaining to auction houses, blue chip collectors, asset management, museum holdings, storage facilities, lovers, recurrent tropes, secondary modes of distribution like art periodicals or journals—is the low cloud and endless drizzle that the force of gravity as a play between art and design makes perspicacious. But if these supplementary histories are condensed in Lawler’s photograph, they also exist on either side of the work in question. Lawler’s slippery object of study is the complicated network of chiasmic relations, situational transactions, mirror plays, time stamped histories, and futures that

point forward and point backward. Mediating or funneling these backstories and futurities is the image that acts as an optical condenser, which is wide open at both ends. Indeed, all of Lawler's works perform like-minded acts of focal attention—a point Rosalind Krauss makes in an early seminal essay restricted to the artist's paperweights (196)—as well as variously accommodate reproduction, dispersal, and dissemination.

Lawler's *Two Glasses (traced)* (2013), which is featured on our back cover, emerges from a related set of concerns, works, ephemera, and practices of exhibition making that radically reconfigures things. The "tracing" is based on a photograph by Lawler, titled (*Beer*), that features two beer glasses she designed and inscribed with the phrase "No Drones." Its upscale brewpub lighting takes one back to the moodier *Why Pictures Now*, but the staging of the two glasses and the phrase reads as much as an invitation to not only continue the conversation over drinks, but to broaden it out. Likewise, the froth and the unequal levels of beer inside the stanges smack of excess. One glass whose phrase is cut short is completed by the other. Thus, across the visible surface of the two cylindrical stanges one reads NO DRO...DRONES; one phrase written twice as if scrolling across the visible surface of a ticker tape screen. Lawler has shown similar "tracings" based on the Tremaine photographs, though not all tracings are of the Tremaine images and not all of the Tremaine images are traced. The general title *No Drones* has been used for exhibitions at the Sprüth Magers Gallery in London (2011) and later at Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2013) and Metro Pictures (2014). The "tracings" themselves were first shown in 2013 at Museum Ludwig. Though her 2011 exhibition in London was titled *No Drones*, it featured no tracings. Instead, it included a photograph of a Gerhard Richter painting she titled *No Drones* (more on this in a moment). My particular favourite from the series of "tracings" is *Pollock and Tureen (traced)* (1984/2013), with a sliver of Pollock's late *Frieze* from 1953-55 (see Figure 3). It shows up the variability of Lawler's practice, for in the Pollock, the artist's emphasis on design confronts its polar opposite rather than a mirror of reproduction. Pollock was an artist who worked hard at assimilating design beyond the pictorial frame for painting.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the original photograph of *Two Glasses (traced)* and her exhibitions which have been titled *No Drones*, we should also mention one other key work specifically titled *No Drones* (2011). This is a mounted, sidelong installation photograph of Gerhard Richter's painting, *Mustang Squadron* (1964) (see Figure 4). A second version is titled *No Drones (adjusted to fit)*. As with the "tracings," when this photograph is shown, it is "adjusted-to-fit" (Lawler's words) the variable parameters of display in the institutions in which the artist shows. In an informative essay subtitled "*No Drones*," Mignon Nixon reconstructs a complex origin for the work and its title. She tells us there was a Richter retrospective at the Tate featuring the work that coincided with



3. Louise Lawler. *Pollock and Tureen (traced)*, 1984/2013. Adhesive wall material, dimensions variable at any scale determined by exhibitor. Courtesy of the artist; Metro Pictures, New York; and Sprüth Magers.

Lawler's exhibition in London, and that this folds out into the city's history of aerial bombardment, anamorphically incorporates the contemporaneous "war on terror," and references the outwardly aggressive psychoanalytic problem of projection. Nixon's writing provides a very comprehensive account of Lawler's practice, the author's primary aim being how Lawler's work incorporates "the nexus of militarization, art and the humanities" (27) into itself. She concludes that "*No Drones* is pointed, but its angle is oblique" (37).

It is hard to argue with much of Nixon's essay, as her basic tactic of reading the work off these various "anti-aesthetic" orbits (whether institutional, site-specific, historical, or psychoanalytic) feels correct, but we can build on it and complicate things. Following her logic, one might reconsider the context for the re-exhibition of the "traced" works at Lawler's MoMA retrospective, titled *WHY PICTURES NOW*. Although the tracings were shown in this exhibition, they were not given the secondary title *No Drones*. This said, a kind of substitutive logic that hinged on the inclusion of Lawler's purpose-designed glassware, titled *No Drones*—by which I do not mean the photograph of the glasses, titled (*Beer*), nor the tracing, *Two Glasses (traced)*, but the glasses themselves—held the secondary title's place in the exhibition as if by proxy.





4. Louise Lawler. *No Drones*, 2010/2011. Chromogenic color print, 29 1/4 x 19 3/4 inches, 74.3 x 50.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist; Metro Pictures, New York; and Sprüth Magers.

Considering the proximity between her “tracings” and the Bell-47D1 helicopter displayed in the design section of the museum, the *No Drones* glasses came off as a necessary insert into hallowed halls. The anesthetizing effects of the distinction between art and design and the happy look of the helicopter’s plastic bubble make it easy to forget its military service in Korea and Vietnam. Yet viewing Lawler’s work through this optic also falls short. The picture (whether a photograph, a matchbook, glasses, a title, a “tracing,” or an exhibition) does not only trail off into issues without aesthetic value, it focuses this very relation, formalizing loss through gain. And in any case, recourse to a model that merely substitutes a discursive outside for what is inside cannot accommodate the topological model at hand, nor the allegorical plug-ins and play of substitutive references just narrated, little less than the project’s open ends, which point in two directions.

Thus, unlike the variously “stretched” or deformed works Lawler also showed at the MoMA, the “tracings” point back to photographic referents, more than likely with an emphasis on analogue photography; and they point forward to unknown futures. These are expanded to mirror the walls they are shown on. “Adjusted to fit,” here, means precisely that the “traced” works keep their original ratios but can be produced at any scale, regardless of the wall they are installed on. The bare bones method of children’s illustration made in collaboration with artist and children’s book illustrator Jon Buller, which not only empties the “traced” works of much of their prior content but begs to be filled in anew, is example of this. This point is also corroborated by a further iteration of the “tracings” presented in the form of a colouring book. Given that colouring these days is a form of therapy, it would appear the “traced” works are not only open to come what may and expect a certain reduction of terms to crayon, but betray a worry about picture-hood manifest as a kind of auto-immunity vis-à-vis referents. In sum, the optic of institutional critique short-circuits this two-sided, temporal topology and fails to see the distortions and condensations of Lawler’s lens work vis-à-vis the institution itself. Upstream from these issues, it should also be said that respondents of all kinds cannot help but search for an intrinsic source for the titling protocols that underwrite the phrase “No Drones.”

My point here is that the hunt for any such interpretative grounds—the getting to the bottom of things, even if from the side—always amounts to a desire for visual mastery. This process is helpfully described in Elisabeth Weber’s account of CIA drone wars over Pakistan. The essay, which appeared in a prior issue of our journal (*Mosaic* 48.2) as part of the special proceedings of *A matter of lifedeath*, reads as a primer for the use of deconstruction as political critique. Ultimately, if Weber goes on to link the temporalities of the “war on terror” and “state sponsored terror,” then she begins her essay “Ages of Cruelty” by relating this wider field to the “traditional discourse of

philosophy as ontology” (2). For Weber the obsessive drive for vision is inseparable from the question of haunting and ghosts—her key reference is Derrida’s “hauntology”—and the inscription of death within the very “apparatus of sovereignty” (2-3).

I gloss Weber’s account not only because of its shared concern for drones, that Lawler’s works are open about their ghosts, move to a yardstick of relative value, or find equivalence across very different topographies, but most significantly, refuse to yield any interior origin for their titling protocols. In the works collectively titled *No Drones*, metonymy and synecdoche are as good as it gets. Thus the emergence of *No Drones* as a title roughly maps onto the summer of 2011, when America’s drone program came under what Samuel Moyn calls “scrutiny in the press.” Remember it was May 2011 when the “War on Terror” achieved its most highly sought after target. Also realize that if drones had begun targeted strikes under the Bush administration—with the CIA given “blanket authority”—that it was under Barack Obama when the drone program was “codified” under the auspices of “humane war.” This is a lot of headline news to digest, and in Lawler’s case I imagine it was mediated by Walter Benjamin on Karl Krauss. If in Benjamin’s account the critic of journalism was always careful to keep the ornamental, “empty phrases” of the news apart from the real “work of art” (241), then Lawler would seem to invert the relationship, making the text count in ways that the image or picture has always been incapable of.

The place of “photography in, or as, conceptual art,” and specifically the relationship between text and image in photojournalism, is undoubtedly a crucial part of the generational history here (Wall). Yet, for a long time I pressed the logic of the titles alone to understand their origin. Thus, for instance, the “tracing” specifically titled *Pollock and Tureen (traced)* has also been exhibited under the umbrella term *No Drones*. No single tracing is interchangeable with the general term, but why the slight discord and displacement? Why interpellation in the general case and not the other? As Nixon suggests, it blows in from the side to cast a shadow, while from the perspective of internal content, the general title comes off as forced, politicized, inserted from an outside with no relation to the inside. A set of questions: does the titling place the respondent of *Pollock and Tureen (traced)* on a “kill list”? And does the repetition of the general title alert respondents of overhead hazards with its semi-mechanical buzz? Of course, there is no either/or here: the threat of visual capture, sovereignty, and death is pervasive. Not only “clear skies are a death sentence” (7), as Weber reports on the latest “wide-area [...] continuous ‘stare’ [...] all-weather, day or night radar” drone technologies (9).

Drone attacks are something the titling both courts and resists, but we should foreclose the possibility of any easy equation proposed between drones policing the skies above Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and what we could refer to as the

dialectical ceiling of reception of Lawler's work that is always posed as a form of reproduction internal to the institution of art—though of course variably shrunk to fit individual respondents. To parse the matter further, *No Drones* functions as a limit case that the topological structure of Lawler's work cannot breach or flush through its system. It is inserted from an outside, but rendered blind on the inside, unable to find a perfect mirror therein. In short, titling, which comes off as very literal minded political critique, lays overtop the chiasmic exchanges between inside and outside that have been the bread and butter of Lawler's version of institutional critique. Beside this cloud and as an extension of it lies the operation of mining art as a topological structure that will never dry up because it is made inexhaustible by time and the subject. This draws upon temporal possibilities of reference and reception where inside and outside are in circulation but will never quite exhaust one another. And it imbricates the subject or transcendental signifier—a mobile spectator or institution—whose fantasies of control and visual mastery are themselves a form of aerial surveillance, policing, and death. But again, none of this can explain away the political critique of the text we read. This hails from the far side of these instrumental couplings and has all the persistence of a question that can never finally be settled.

Lawler has always come at art from the side, but she also works on top of other works, and continues to work. Her work is about visibility in its anamorphic relation to a generational grouping, previous work in her corpus, situational questions of the exhibition, the institution of art, tilting, the subject as mobile institution, and so on. Inasmuch, death from above is a figural problem whose grip is inescapable, because always captured and reproduced by inside/outside relations. The dominant reading of *No Drones* tends to replace figural problems with a clean view from an oblique angle. In so doing, symptomatic issues of reproduction are elided, all the while the sidelong perspective of design is distorted as a sign of complicity and its compromised status. The space between local acts of interpretation, militarism, and contemporary warfare cuts a very wide swathe that leaves no higher ground even when the necessary mutation of vision is adopted. In this sense we are all included in the “kill chain,” which is conceptualized as a visual manifestation of the textual system of *différence* Lawler first tackled in *Monogram*. This is simultaneously overlaid and made absolutely literal with the assimilation of text as title in all of the “traced” works, whereas it is inserted from the side in *Two Glasses (traced)*. This sequence of relationships is distinct from the theoretical notion of allegory leveraged by post-modern art theorists that emerged coincident to Lawler's work, and which reemerges with far more sophistication and continued clarity in Nixon. Haunting is an allegorical problem, where one sign refers to another sign that precedes it, a semiotic chain necessarily instantiated by

the transcendental signifier, which is in turn haunted by the sign, and nothing less than a technical prosthetic of it.

*Two Glasses (traced)*, based on the photograph titled (*Beer*), itself a photographic reproduction of the two glasses titled *No Drones*, comes from a moment in Lawler's practice when the image—as a distorting lens—focuses questions derived from a broader textual economy and superficially incorporates these on its surface. If at an earlier moment in her practice text and image were distinct economies, in *Two Glasses (traced)*, text and image are sutured or shrunk to fit one another. Primordially speaking, if photography focuses an image, text is something else. It sits on the surface of a support. It breaches the frame from the side and ultimately acts as means of dispersal and dissemination. With their optical distortions and condensations, the glasses in *Two Glasses (traced)* are an anamorphic device like the oblique view from the side of Richter's painting, but framed and mediated by at least two more such devices, i.e., photography and illustration. Optical devices abound within Lawler's practice. In the case of the matchbook in *Why Pictures Now*, the textual surface is flat if tangential to the picture plane; between painting and design it is a limit crossed, as titling it backlights text as an image; and in the beer glasses it is a cylindrical surface, which peels off into infinity and back, even though we read as if focussing on a seamless text.

Take *No Drones* as a takeaway then. And at the risk of using Lawler's project for ends other than those circumscribed by the inside/outside relationship of the institution of art, follow her example by seeking out absolute limits in one's own work. One of the futures of critique depends on its insertion from the side, seeing the spectacle of the side, its overlay on a warped or distorted surface that has come with too much privilege and value attached, and so on.

Some of this will be more fully developed in the next issue as collaboration, archival politics, and reproduction. Even a critical journal like our own suffers from the industrialization of the publication process (Benjamin 241). Pausing to reflect upon academic work as a technical instrument of reproduction, especially in a pandemic, can be life giving; it actualizes movement, instead of instrumentalizing performance.

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## NOTES

1/ Though the painter's work had fallen off a cliff by this time, his painting in 1950-51 had much to say about edges and decor. During Pollock's high moment, this amounted to a set of procedures that attempted to transform external pressures that were out of the artist's hands—like architectural setting, sizing, the material of the support, the colour choices of a patron, etc.—into tensions internal to the painterly frame. Pollock knew through and through that painting had a decorative function, which he both abhorred and worked hard to assimilate through his own reimaginings of surface. In Lawler's original photograph upon which the tracing is based, and presumably taken in the Tremaines' dining room, a brown-

red hue, as well as filigree, bounce between painting and porcelain. The colour was a key trope in 1950, especially after *Mural* (1950), a rare commission Pollock was asked to paint in the very colour for the Geller House designed by Marcel Breuer. But one should also be aware of Pollock's horizontal format—*Frieze* measures 66 x 219 cm. This too was one of Pollock's ways to work within and against the visible. And though lateral movement is limited by the tureen and Lawler's cropping, one typically scans or tracks along Pollock's horizontal friezes rather than taking them in at a glance. Inasmuch, visual distortion—and more precisely anamorphosis as learned from Diego Rivera (Shreyach 96)—is always a side effect of Pollock's horizontal friezes and vertical scrolls.

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