

Baucis Visits *Way Bay*

Baucis views the first incarnation of the *Way Bay* exhibition in late spring of 2018 at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. Being California-centric, she is excited that the “nearly two hundred works” are all from the “collections of BAMPFA, The Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, and the Bancroft Library.” The organizers—Lawrence Rinder, Kathy Geritz, David Wilson, Matthew Coleman, and Jon Shibata—explain, “*Way Bay* explores the creative energies that have emerged from the San Francisco Bay Area over the past two hundred years.”

Baucis understands that some may misconstrue the presentation as a haphazard display of what is on hand. And that those and others may not believe that the sixteen groupings of work, as delineated in the gallery guide, have anything to do with the “poetic fragments” that introduce them. Baucis feels that these same people would look at the Milky Way on a clear night and complain about the placement and quantity of the stars. Baucis thinks it is to the organizers’ great credit that *Way Bay* is not constricted by clearly defined categories and logics. “It is not a neatly packaged gift finished with a bow,” she tells a friend. Additionally, Baucis has no objection to scholarship but feels smothered when exhibition wall texts are poorly written obligations (*Way Bay*’s works are numbered and all written information is found in the gallery guide booklet available for viewers to carry around the exhibition), and though exhibition catalogues and art publications fill her bookshelves and are stacked on the available flat spaces of her small apartment, she feels viewers should be curious and not all sentiments should be pre-packaged between shiny covers. For Baucis then, *Way Bay* is a welcome reprieve from canned contexts, from exhibitions seemingly designed by marketing departments with donors and board members standing in for muses; *Way Bay* is for Baucis a kaleidoscopic observatory. The works in their considered selection and diversity become portals allowing her to explore different aesthetic orientations, conceptual positionings, cultural and geographical identifications, historical moments, and understandings of time and lineage. Baucis is comforted by being able to find for herself connections and wild divergences. In *Way Bay*, in BAMPFA’s galleries, she feels she is in a sanctuary, not only in a space that encourages intellectual experimentation but one that briefly protects her from the alienating streets of commerce and the affront of news feeds.

Baucis thinks, “I want to find some words that will perhaps encourage others to appreciate my appreciation of *Way Bay*.” She looks around in her memory and on the web, and Jack Spicer offers himself as guide and spokesperson. She happily accepts his help, and she also acknowledges the organizers of *Way Bay* have already anointed Spicer by having him provide the language to head one of the sixteen groupings of works. Baucis embraces Spicer’s poem “Any fool can get into an ocean...” and the lines following this first line, “But it takes a Goddess / To get out of one.” Though Spicer ends up talking about “love and memory,” Baucis focuses more on the poem’s advice about creating a major work or viewing a major work—like viewing *Way Bay*. Baucis reads through the poem several times.

Any fool can get into an ocean
But it takes a Goddess
To get out of one.
What’s true of oceans is true, of course,

Of labyrinths and poems. When you start swimming
 Through riptide of rhythms and the metaphor's seaweed
 You need to be a good swimmer or a born Goddess
 To get back out of them
 Look at the sea otters bobbing wildly
 Out in the middle of the poem
 They look so eager and peaceful playing out there where the
 water hardly moves
 You might get out through all the waves and rocks
 Into the middle of the poem to touch them
 But when you've tried the blessed water long
 Enough to want to start backward
 That's when the fun starts
 Unless you're a poet or an otter or something supernatural
 You'll drown, dear. You'll drown
 Any Greek can get you into a labyrinth
 But it takes a hero to get out of one
 What's true of labyrinths is true of course
 Of love and memory. When you start remembering.

Baucis mouths an audible, "yes." *Way Bay* is an extended poem of visual and textual elements including others' poetry. She thinks, "This is the guidance I need to navigate *Way Bay*—this is how I want others to think of my approach to the exhibition." Always willing to demure, she thinks, "Clearly I am not a goddess or supernatural, but maybe I can mimic an otter." But today there is probably more of a goddess in Baucis than she or history would suggest.

Full of enthusiasm, Baucis thinks, "*Way Bay* is an ocean of opportunity for a viewer, but to get more than a little out of it also requires doing more than some light wading."

After wandering through the exhibition and returning a second time for a much longer viewing, she begins to think about the poetic headings in the exhibition guide and the groupings of works.

A cluster of works strikes her as having an easily identified connection to adventure and the self-actualization one may realize or hope to realize through it. There is something in these works that reminds her of youthful headlong rushing into whatever and the devil may care twinkle that she can still see reflected in her lovers' eyes. The works include Bruce Conner's 1978 photograph of a punk rocker leaping off a stage, *Roz Makes a Giant Step for Mankind: Negative Trend* from the series Mabuhay Gardens Punk Photos; Janet Delany's 1981 photograph of a bare-chested, leather vest and cap wearing motorcyclist, *David Ernst, Father Leo Joseph's Roommate, 60 Langton Street*; David Ireland's 1993 intaglio print of a not young David Ireland, one who never lost his adventurous spirit, *Me & My Years*; and the G. F. Nesbitt & Co. handbill, of about 1850, which as the gallery guide explains was "made to advertise the 'splendid extreme' clipper ship *Undaunted*" and "is of a type that was widely circulated in the port of New York, luring men to seek their fortunes in Gold Rush California." Baucis is distracted by the image on the handbill of the young man dressed as a Roman centurion. He seems to be from her old neighborhood; it looks like he is battling Jupiter, fending off his lightning bolts with a shield which one gathers would also have on it images of those same lightning bolts. Baucis

questions the choice of imagery for an advertisement for a dangerous sailing voyage. Perhaps the imagery was more appropriate than intended. She thinks of those unfortunate Titans in Tartarus and of the hundreds of ships lost off of Cape Horn and then of the oft-quoted line described ubiquitously on the web as a “maritime saying” that further confuses the metaphorical reading of the handbill’s image: “Below 40 degrees south, there is no law. Below 50 degrees, there is no God.” Perhaps there were gods, just not benevolent ones. As she is about to walk away from these works, Baucis silently exclaims, “Oh mein gott! The red horse hair plumage of the centurion helmet is the punk’s colored mohawk!”—not that the particular punk in the Conner photograph has a mohawk.

Baucis wants to further make her own associations among works in the exhibition but also wants to honor Larry’s labor—perhaps Larry will even notice. She considers his 2018 interview with Marcia Tanner about *Way Bay* in which Tanner comments on his “emotional, intuitive way of organizing,” and Larry, Larry Rinder, the Director and Chief Curator of BAMPFA, responds, “Yes. But I would say that another part of the work is to make some effort to figure out what *is* being said, what is the meaning of these groups.”

So, Baucis thinks she should look at the formal grouping of which her self-defined “adventure” cluster is a part. As mentioned, in *Way Bay* each grouping is listed under a heading of a “poetic fragment” in the gallery guide. The gallery guide includes the name of the creator of each work with the artist’s date and country of birth and the work’s title, date and medium—no dimensions are given. Some of the listings include a brief paragraph of explanation about the work and/or artist. The cover of the gallery guide reads “Please do not remove from the gallery,” but it is available online as a PDF: https://bamlive.s3.amazonaws.com/Way-Bay_gallery-guide_v2.pdf.

The “poetic fragments” introducing each grouping come from another part of the exhibition on view in the hall outside the main exhibition space which includes, in boxes mounted on the wall, Bay Area writers’ work printed on postcards free for the viewer to take—with the understanding the viewer will mail or distribute them. As is explained by the organizers in the gallery guide, “On the occasion of *Way Bay*, we invited Bay Area writers to select a piece of their own writing and a piece by a deceased Bay Area personal literary hero. Their selections were printed on postcards in the BAMPFA Art Lab, and are included in the exhibition.”

The grouping of artworks that Baucis is now studying is on the north half of the main west wall at the end of the main gallery and on the west portion of the adjoining main north wall; the works are referred to in fourteen listings (numbers 92-105) in the gallery guide (the number of works is in fact sixteen as one of the listings refers to a monitor on which are screened three works). This grouping falls under Tanea Lunsford Lynx’s line, the poetic fragment, from her poem “Mothers II:” “My mother is a weather system, she eats villages whole.”

Baucis had at first thought the grouping only comprised the works on the west wall and is eager to consider all sixteen and learn more about Lynx’s poetry. But first, from the interview with Tanner, she learns more about Larry’s thoughts about the function of the poetic fragments:

In *Way Bay*, the way in which I brought some light onto the content of the groups was through the poetic fragments that I brought in as epigrams: not so much to title the different sections but to be bit of a clue or a gesture towards this poetic content.

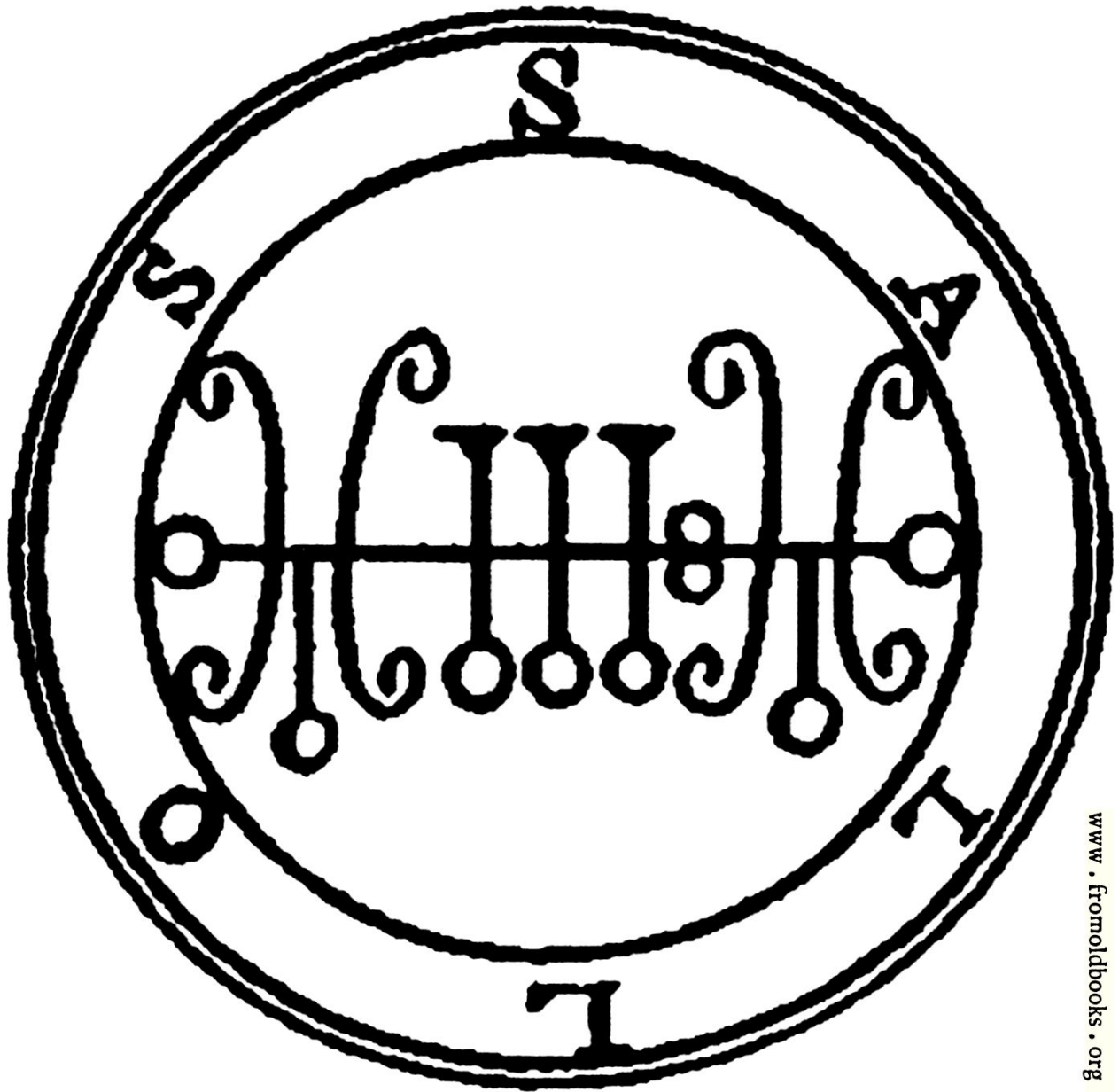
Larry does ascribe a sequence to the groupings and, again in his interview with Tanner, gives the grouping under Lynx's poetry a special place:

And then it goes to—in my mind, anyway—a kind of crescendo when you get to the section that's titled "My mother is a weather system. She eats villages whole." That's the climax, and then there's a dénouement, and it ends with a section that's about transcendence: "At the edge of the known world, we stand amazed . . ." a quotation from Jack Spicer. And the one about the smoke—it has a lot of images in that section that have to do with reflection, calm.

Baucis is pleased that she has gravitated towards the grouping which Larry defines as the "climax." She's also glad that Larry took special care to mention Spicer, whose quote is connected with the "dénouement." Baucis is particularly drawn to Katherine Sherwood's large painting of the year 2000, *Salos II*. The work is a wonderful orchestration of pale greens and darker warmer colors, and it looks attractively dirty, as if Sherwood had applied a layer of scum to the surface and partially wiped it off. Baucis is intrigued by the text in the exhibition guide:

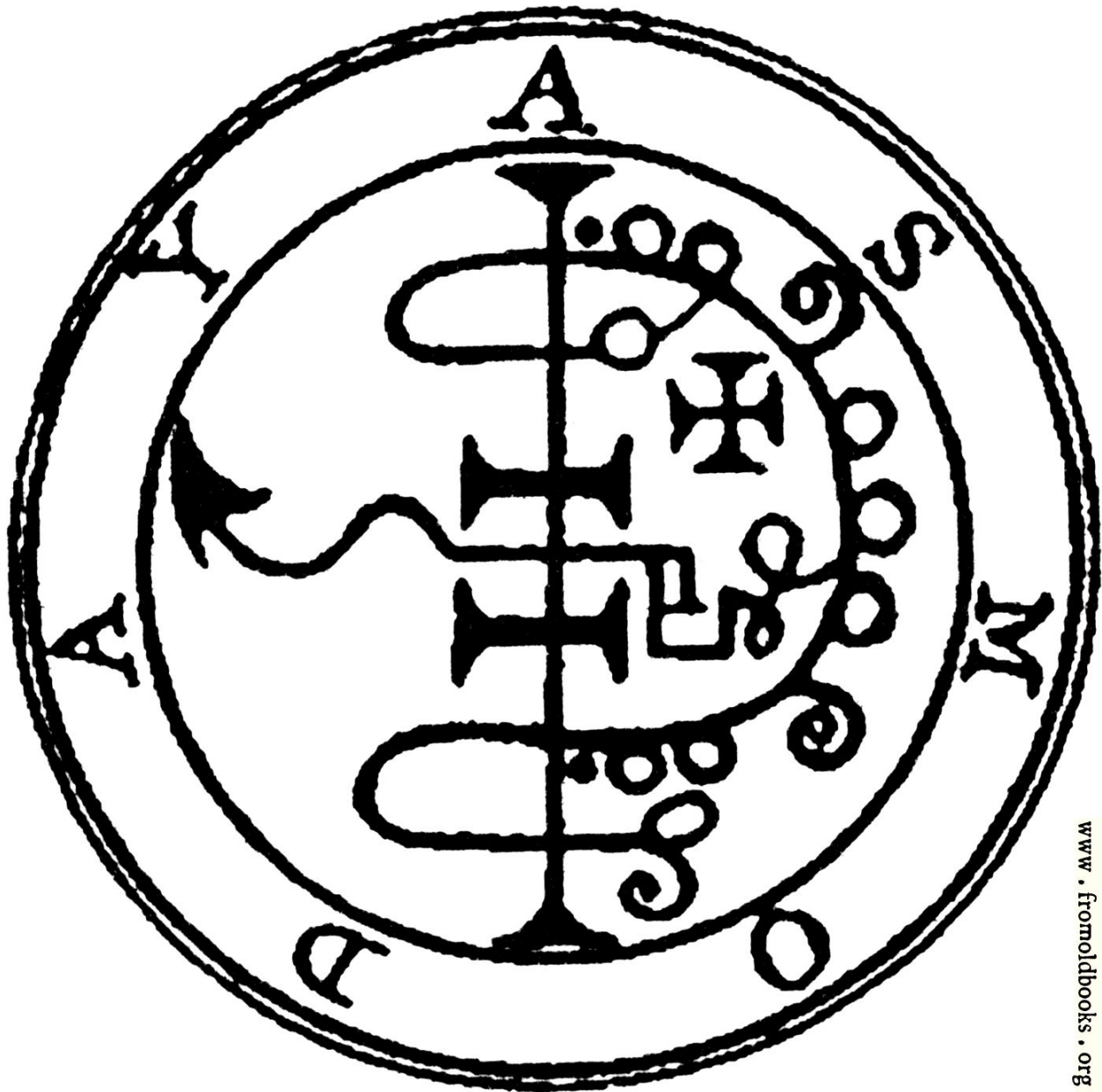
UC Berkeley Professor of Art Katherine Sherwood suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage in 1997. Her subsequent work incorporated highly magnified imagery of blood vessels with arcane symbols, such as the Sallos seal, which represents a 'Duke of Hell' who is identified as a pacifist and believed to cause men and women to fall in love.

Baucis knows nothing of Sallos and looks to learn more.

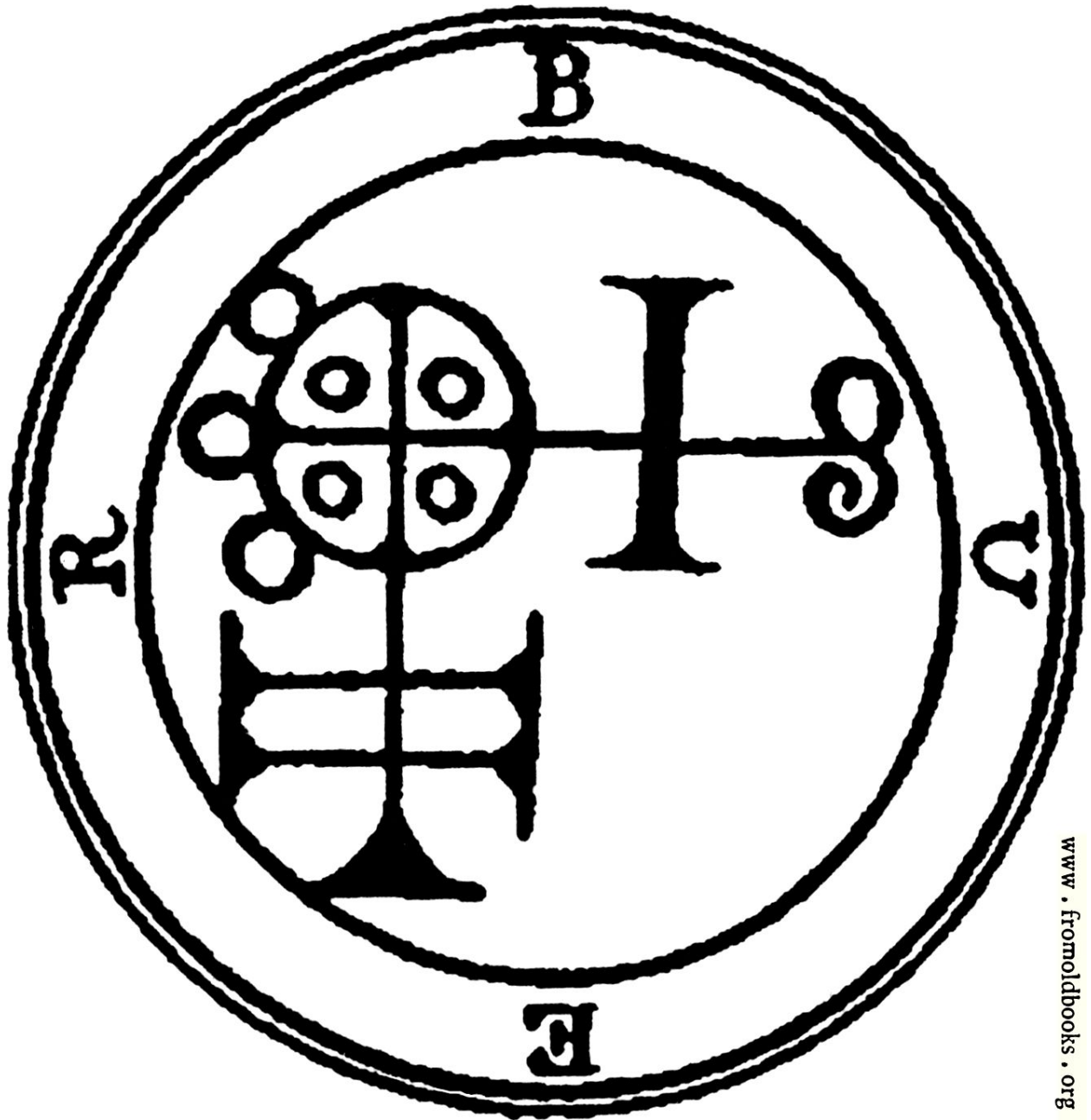


www.fromoldbooks.org

Spicer's warning against drowning at sea comes to mind as Baucis looks more closely at Sherwood's website and her use of seals associated with the seventy-two demons, of which Sallos is one, from the "17th Century grimoire" *Ars Goetia* of the *Lesser Key of Solomon*. Baucis cruises back and forth between Wikipedia descriptions and wonders if Sherwood has a copy of the Aleister Crowley version, *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King*. The heading "biography" on Sherwood's website is marked with Asmodeus's seal—the demon of wrath.

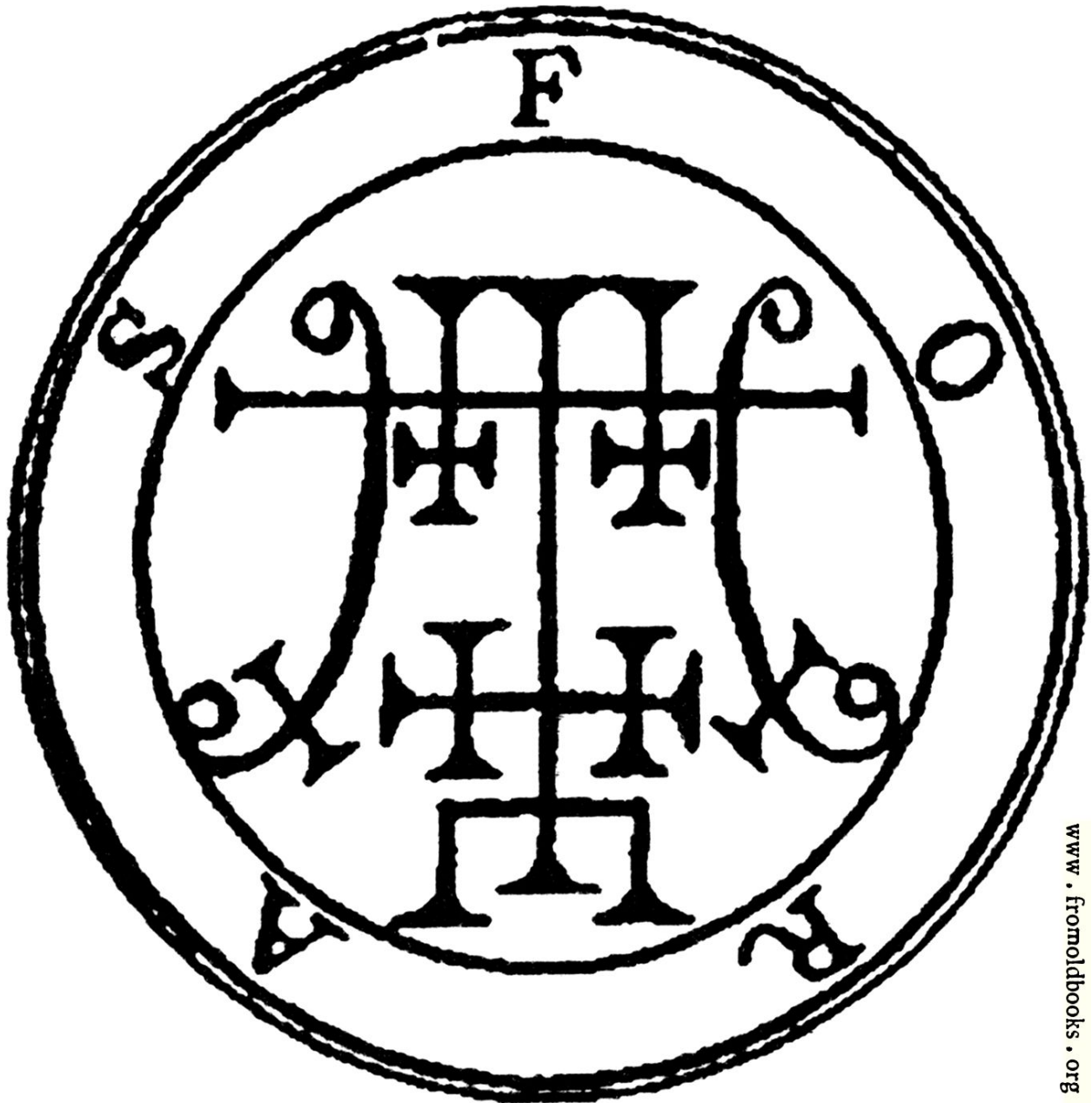


The heading “art” on Sherwood’s website is marked with Buer’s seal—Buer, also according to Wikipedia, is the Great President of Hell, a teacher of “moral and natural philosophy” and a healer.



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The heading “articles” is marked with Foras’s seal.

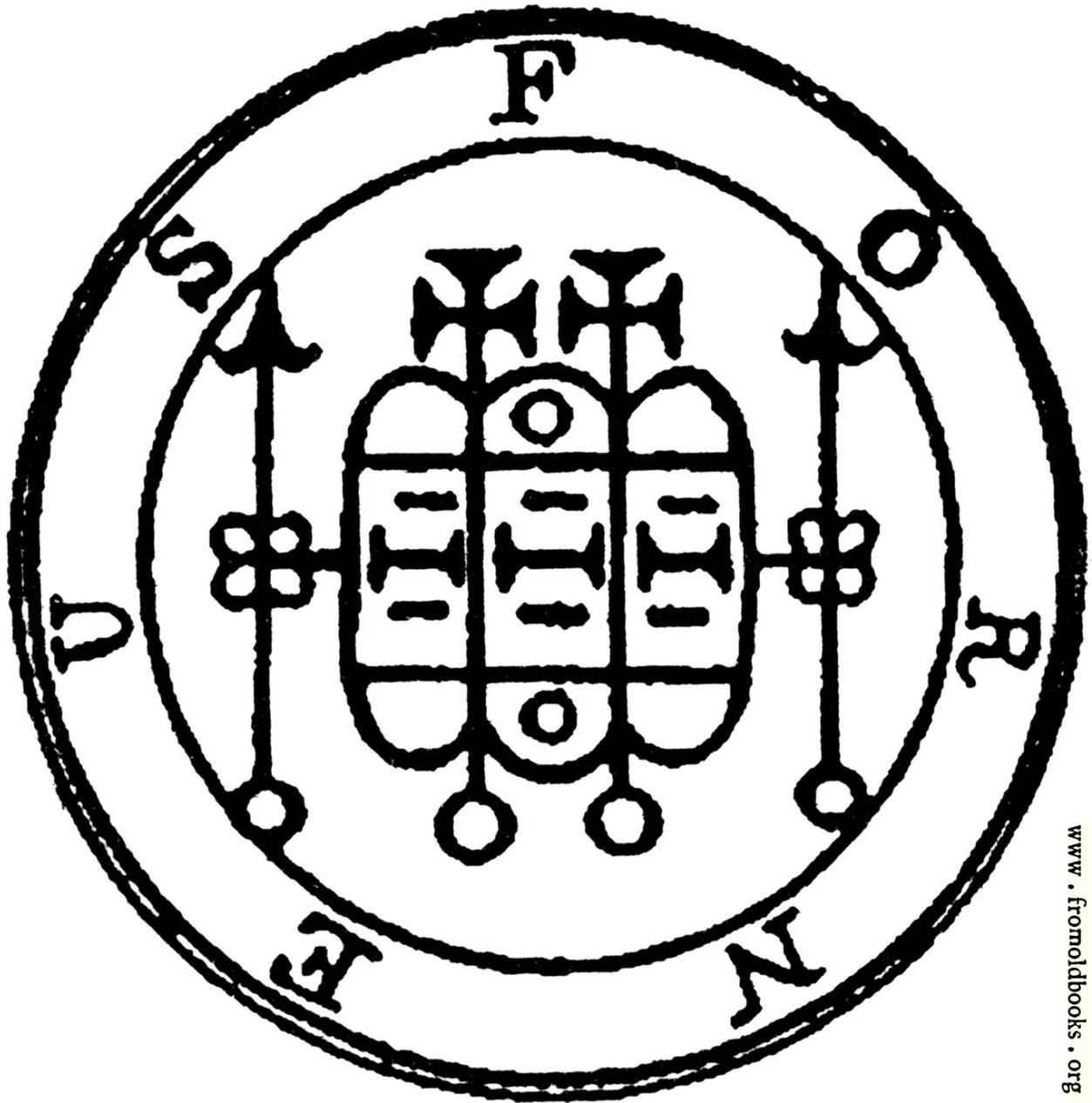


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According to fromoldbooks.org, Foras has an array of talents:

The Thirty-first Spirit is Foras. He is a Mighty President, and appeareth in the Form of a Strong Man in Human Shape. He can give the understanding to Men how they may know the Virtues of all Herbs and Precious Stones. He teacheth the Arts of Logic and Ethics in all their parts. If desired he maketh men invincible [or invisible], and to live long, and to be eloquent. He can discover Treasures and recover things Lost.

The heading “classes” on Sherwood’s website is marked with Forneus’ seal.



www.fromoldbooks.org

Forneus is involved with teaching, as one might expect. The site fromoldbooks.org explains:

The Thirtieth Spirit is Forneus. He is a Mighty and Great Marquis, and appeareth in the Form of a Great Sea-Monster. He teacheth, and maketh men wonderfully knowing in the Art of Rhetoric. He causeth men to have a Good Name, and to have the knowledge and understanding of Tongues. He maketh one to be beloved of his Foes as well as of his Friends.

Sherwood's site indicates her status as an instructor, "Katherine is a professor emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley." And it lists classes she has taught, "amongst others:"

Art 13 - The Language of Painting
 Art 102 - Approaches to Painting
 Art 117 - Drawing and Composition
 Art 164 - Topics in Visual Studies - Art & Meditation
 Art 165 - Art Medicine & Disability

Often with the images found on the web, the seals associated with the *Ars Goetia* include the name of the demon encircling the symbol of the seal. On Sherwood's site the seals have no names associated with them and Baucis finds herself matching the images to others on the web that feature the names. Baucis is not overly interested in esoterica, but the seals are seductive—their intricate precision suggestive of knowledge not tethered to earth.

Baucis feels she is getting a bit ahead of herself and despite her best intentions has gone straight to the work before considering Lynx's poetry. Further, in discussing Sherwood's work, she has skipped over the actual painting in favor of suggested references and tangential considerations.

Baucis says to herself, "Let's look again at the painting. Then I'll look up Lynx." With the painting in front of her, Baucis writes some notes:

The painting has a horizontal orientation. The ground is off-white with vertical bands of light blue-green running top to bottom on the extreme left side and the extreme right side. In the lower half of the painting is a large barbell shaped form—somewhat like an old fashioned globe barbell—running the width of the canvas. This form is made up of other forms and a range of colors. On the rounded ends of the barbell form, forming parts of the globes, are crescent-shaped pours of grass green paint. Next to this color, on both sides of the form, is a darker umber color—more predominant on the left side. Also on the rounded ends of this barbell form are pours of a red burgundy that also appears as dots in about six other spots on the painting. The bar portion of this globe barbell form is created by horizontal pours of several colors. These pours (of the same light blue-green as on the sides, a light greenish umber, and a pale greenish yellow) split off, before connecting with the rounded end forms, into tendrils that may go above and below the form. These tendrils have nodes at their tips which may be the same color as the tendril or may include the red burgundy color and a darker brown color. There is also a dark brown portion to the horizontal bar that does not break into tendrils. This same dark brown color forms a rectangle at the bottom of the painting that has three vertical lines of the pale greenish-yellow color connecting the top of the rectangle to the bar of the barbell form. Behind the barbell form and the tendrils are a cluster of circles—some outlined with the light blue-green color—that include in their interiors renderings that give the impression of looking at a photograph taken through a microscope. The blackish and greyish paint of these renderings does not seem to be poured as with the other forms—it is thinner and grittier. Looking closely at the slick surfaces of the poured areas, one can see a brownish patina caught in the ridges and edges and pockmarks of the pours that looks as if it had been put on as a film and then partially wiped off. This dirty part gives

me chills—the good kind. How would viewing this painting be different if it had an entire room to itself?

Before backing up to discuss the poetic fragment introducing this grouping of paintings, Baucis considers the other large painting of the grouping—Oliver Lee Jackson’s *Painting* (6.4.83). Baucis thinks, “Even without the date writ large on the painting, it looks like a product of the 80s.” She thinks of all the big fast paintings, the Fettings, the Schnabels, she viewed in the 80s, but Jackson’s work is something different. She looks at the dark brown and orange figures in the painting and wonders what it is about. The figures look at once confined, contorted, and in motion. She likes that most of the rendering takes place near the top of the painting. The figures and the heavy brushwork have space underneath them; they have room to float. Baucis gets distracted by a numerological game. In 2018 Jackson is the same age as the date on his painting—83. In 2018, he has been showing his work in the Bay Area, at Rena Bransten Gallery, and in New York. When he painted the work now in *Way Bay* he was 48 or so. 1948 was the year George Orwell completed *1984*, and 1984 is, well, just the year after 1983. Baucis reconsiders the comparison to the painters that dominated the art news of the 80s; many of them were of a younger generation than Jackson. When Fetting and Schnabel were still wet behind their pink ears, Jackson had already finished a stint with the U.S. Military. His website describes further activities of his early life:

In the 1960s Oliver Jackson was active with community cultural projects in St. Louis. He served as Assistant Director of People’s Art Center (1963-64) and as Director of Program Uhuru (1967-68), which he created at Pruitt & Igoe public housing to bring to low-income African Americans a constructive means of developing dialogue through arts programs. During those years, Jackson became involved with the Black Artists Group, through his association with Julius Hemphill and others, acting as consultant and collaborator on multimedia arts presentations for the African American community (he was not an official BAG member). BAG was founded by musicians, theater artists, dancers, and visual artists who demanded a greater place in the cultural landscape for African American creative expression. In 1971, Jackson was a founder of the organization known as the African Continuum, conceived as a vehicle for showing the fullness and continuity of African creative traditions.

Baucis considers how much time it would take to fully appreciate all the offerings in *Way Bay*. She thinks, “Each viewer’s journey back to the shore is their or her or his own.” She returns to the grouping of sixteen works under the heading of Tanea Lunsford Lynx’s line from her poem “Mothers II:” “My mother is a weather system, she eats villages whole.” Baucis wants to read the rest of the poem. She cannot find it or even the line online, but she does find Lynx’s webpage and piece entitled “Still Here.” Lynx introduces the piece and the associated event, held May 30, 2018 at the African American Art & Culture Complex, 762 Fulton Street, San Francisco:

I wrote and performed this piece for Still Here VI: Existence as Resistance, a show featuring queer Black San Franciscans. This show was part of the National Queer Arts Festival and was the first I’ve ever curated. I prepared for the show in the community of fellow artists, performers, and loved ones—it was a labor of absolute love and pleasure and hope for Black folks in my city. I really really love us.

Here are the first lines of “Still Here:”

I used to live here

My whole hood a museum now. and my whole city a playground with rules against me.

This used to be a good place for a young witch to practice raising hell with two too-small hands

A place for getting on the back of the bus without paying and still feeling dignified shouting BACK DOOR.

This used to be a good place to be nobody. To hide from the too-rough fingers of the world under thick fog until you caught your breath and could run again. Or so I'm told. By the time we got here four generations ago all the good hiding spots for catching your breath were taken or we wasn't allowed to buy.

Certainly the spirit of the line "My mother is a weather system, she eats villages whole" is found in these lines of "Still Here" and in the remainder of the work which can be read on Lynx's website: <https://tanea-lunsfordlynx.squarespace.com/lynx-thinks/>.

Seemingly out of character but not, Baucis reflexively hears Chuck D's voice, "Fight the power," and then, more for herself, Sherwood's experience still on her mind, she lets Dylan Thomas' poem, or more the line which has become a minor anthem for her, "Do not go gentle into that good night," float through her mind. She pauses to acknowledge her affinity for these sentiments and translates them into a strengthening of resolve to stand strong for poetry, for art, for humanity, for herself.

In *Way Bay*, the organizers have Lynx introduce the section for dreamers, schemers, fighters, iconoclasts, outsiders—a tribute to those who have been marginalized, and who, beyond remaining defiant, create another reality, a tribute to a Bay Area that has long been a place where those denied home elsewhere had a chance at creating one. Baucis sees none of this at odds with her own basic bent towards kindness—though the villagers that have experienced Lynx's mother may not agree.

And she well sees how of the sixteen works in this grouping, the six she has already considered, the Conner, the Delany, the Ireland, the G. F. Nesbitt & Co handbill, the Sherwood, and the Jackson, suit the spirit Lynx offers. What about the others? The experimental video and dance presented on a period video monitor (Bacius assumes it is a device similar to those used in the 60's or 70's)—Bronetz Purnell's *Free Jazz* of 2013, Skip Sweeney's *One Dance* of 1975, and Joanne Kyger's *Descartes* of 1968—are all adventurous and genre challenging, if not genre defining as with Kyger's work. In an entry in the book *California Video: Artists and Histories*, Rani Singh describes some of the background of Kyger and *Descartes*:

In 1967, Kyger was one of the first artists to be invited for a residency at the National Center for Experiments in Television (NCET) in San Francisco, which, under the visionary leadership of Brice Howard, became a think tank for poets, painters, craftsmen, writers, musicians, dancers, and filmmakers to experiment with the new medium of video, which had yet to develop formal rules or language.

Called one of the seminal works to come out of the innovative explorations at NCET, Kyger's video DESCARTES (1968) tackles the philosophical work of René Descartes with

NCET's distinctive utopian vision of melding television and art on all levels. Uniquely attuned to the technological developments in play at NCET, Kyger translated her adaptation of Descartes' six-part essay "Discourse on Method" (1637) into the video medium with keen awareness and expansive mind. Her tape stripped away the banal and mundane conventions that surrounded the poet and, like Descartes' work itself, attempted to understand the mind-body problem and the nature of reality.

Mike Brodie's photograph *3018* from the mid to late 2000s of "freight-hopping youths" depicts free spirits with unassailable credentials; Margo Humphrey's 1972 lithograph *James Brown's Sounds of Escape-ism* references James Brown's 1971 song "Escape-ism" and offers a colorful view, in the signature style of an artist well known for her printmaking, of a record player, the sort one would have used to listen to the revolutionary sounds of James Brown; Helen Clark Oldfield's painting of the late 30s or early 40s offers a modernist take, think cubism, in *Floral Still Life* (and need it be said, in a style most often associated with male practitioners); and Marie Belknap's work "Sharpie marker and felt tip pen on paper" of about 2008 has been created using the artist's practice of making patterns and structures using multitudes of small colored marks—this particular work in *Way Bay* has a further descriptor which is not reprinted in the gallery guide which is "Flowering Tree 1" (according to the Creativity Explored website) —and in this work colorful rays of sometimes similar hues and sometimes contrasting hues are each made up of bands, at some points interrupted by discrete objects, all comprised of small marks. These rays all seem to emit from a central vertical brown element, made up of bands of brown and reddish brown, which could be read as a trunk (other examples of the "flowering tree" or "tree" motif can be seen in works from 2006-2011, again, on the Creativity Explored website). Belknap's work was included in the 2011 exhibition *Create* at BAMPFA which Larry describes:

Create presents work made at three pioneering centers for artists with developmental disabilities, Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland, San Francisco's Creativity Explored, and NIAD Art Center in Richmond. The artists in this exhibition possess the level of talent, independence, and depth of feeling that makes the most powerful art possible. Yet, as disabled artists, their work has not been widely seen. **Create** showcases twenty artists whose work demonstrates both the excellence and the variety of work made at the three centers. This major survey exhibition brings well-deserved attention to their compelling work.

The artists included in *Create* were "Mary Belknap, Jeremy Burleson, Attilio Crescenti, Daniel Green, Willie Harris, Carl Hendrickson, Michael Bernard Loggins, Dwight Mackintosh, John Patrick McKenzie, James Miles, Dan Miller, James Montgomery, Marlon Mullen, Bertha Otoy, Aurie Ramirez, Evelyn Reyes, Lance Rivers, Judith Scott, William Scott, and William Tyler." Of these artists, **Mary Belknap**, **Judith Scott** (whose mixed media yarn piece is across the main *Way Bay* space from Belknap's piece in a grouping of thirteen works introduced with the poetic fragment "seconds before sleep / seem all tangled up" by Steffi Drewes from "for the fact finders" of 2017), **Dwight Mackintosh** (whose print of multiple figures—which seems to be the way Mackintosh's figures often come, in multiples—is just a few steps away from Belknap's in a grouping of thirteen works introduced with the poetic fragment "A glaze of a berg of what we are" by Josephine Miles from "Berg" of 1959), **Dan Miller** (whose dense ink on paper work presents an uncountable number of swirling lines that are less dense at the edges and form a tangled cloud that occupies most of the paper—and Baucis does acknowledge fits in the category, as Larry suggested, of "transcendence" and perhaps more of the process of trying to achieve it rather than a representation of it—is in the last section of the exhibition introduced

with the poetic fragment “Smoke that we might find each other in the near future. / Smoke to come down to the bonfire. / Smoke that we are going to be ok / But there is no telling yet if that is true” by Juliana Spahr from “October” of 2017 and found after the “dénouement” grouping introduced by Spicer), **Evelyn Reyes** (whose work *Carrots*, a powerful oil pastel of three blue renderings of a vertically oriented abstract form with a chevron shape at its base and a rocket like body with a rounded top and a pipe-like shape at the right top of each form all set against a black ground—after looking at a number of Reyes carrot works Baucis realized that this pipe-like form does not just protrude from the top but is drawn all the way down the right edge of the form, which can be hard to decipher because it is the same color as the main form—is in a grouping with eight other works, including a floor piece by the ceramicist Peter Voulkos which is not in clay but in bronze, and is in the grouping introduced with the poetic fragment “She dances the city back into balance, / Every weekend she dances for the city” by Kim Shuck from “Unhomed” of about 2015), and **Lance Rivers** (whose work *Subway Tunnel Landscape* is in a grouping with sixteen works introduced by the poetic fragment “I decided I was a mountain in horizontal lines” by Mg Roberts from “Fatfall” of 2017 and brings to mind for Baucis the tunnel works of the great Mexican-Californian artist Martín Ramírez) are the six who are also in the *Way Bay* exhibition.

Baucis notes that of the 175 listings for the main gallery, six are for artists who participated in the 2011 *Create* exhibition—this means more than 3% of the works visible in the main gallery exhibition are by individuals with developmental disabilities who are artists. “Impressive,” Baucis thinks.

Baucis sighs, “Such worthy tangents, I would like to spend more time just with these works,” and aims to refocus on the remaining works in the original grouping. But before moving on she takes a moment to look at a bit of cogent writing by Larry in *Raw Vision* #95 about Evelyn Reyes’ work:

Reyes’ manner of working through repetition with slight shifts in composition and style, recalls the method of artists such as Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol and Richard Serra. This is a quintessentially Modernist approach, in which artistic progress is judged not by progressively more accurate representation of external reality, but by iterative transformation from one work of art to the next. The work of art, in this modality becomes a representation of its own truth. It’s not so much art for art’s sake (it is for our sake, after all) as it is a sustained exploration of art in its most reduced and essential form, which asks us again and again to drop our assumptions about aesthetics and habits of seeing in order to confront beauty, naked and unmasked.

Baucis is most intrigued by Reyes’ work. A collector could do worse than to go to the Creativity Explored website and purchase one of Reyes’ original oil pastel carrot works for \$400 (as of this moment).

Baucis acknowledges to herself, “I’ve left off before getting to the end; there are still three of the sixteen artists to discuss of the ‘My mother is a weather system, she eats villages whole’ grouping.” Richard Kamler’s *Rapture* of 2008 is a Prismacolor oil pastel and charcoal on paper drawing of what appear to be people rising into the sky—there are also some people, far fewer, in pools of blood on the ground. Baucis was never very clear on the concept of the rapture. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the “North American” definition of “The Rapture” is

“(according to some millenarian teaching) the transporting of believers to heaven at the Second Coming of Christ.” This is further confusing to Baucis because as far as she understands The Rapture and The Second Coming are considered by many to be separate events. “I’m fed up with gods,” Baucis thinks and looks more closely at the work *Rapture*. The blood red is darker than the red color with which the figures are rendered. Amidst the figures rising there are some light brown crosses—there is even a figure on a cross. And some of the blood red seems to be, in just a spot or two, smeared atop the lighter red figures rising. Kamler was an activist artist. In his mid-90s work, *Table of Voices*, Kamler, as he did for much of his life, focused on crime and punishment and prisons. He explains *Table of Voices*:

An installation on Alcatraz Island for four months that brought together the real voices of parents of murdered children and perpetrators in an effort to create a common ground around The Table; a context for communication to occur. Visitors to the installation would pick up a phone on one side of the 6'x5'x54' table and hear the voice of a parent of a murdered child, real voice, real time; move to the other side of the table and listen to the voice of the perpetrator, real voice, real time "talking" to each other.

Kamler also made work about, among other subjects, the murdered women of Juarez, the Holocaust, and Christianity. Hanging just below Kamler’s work in *Way Bay* is an oil on canvas painting from about 1860 by Joseph Whittle entitled *San Francisco Bay with Alcatraz and Steamship Princess*. Baucis mentally guffaws, noting the fun the organizers are having at showing an image of the place Kamler’s *Table of Voices* was shown.

On the web, Baucis finds much information about the history of Alcatraz and some information about other sidewheel steamships that ran in San Francisco Bay but nothing on Steamship Princess. “The word ‘princess,’ so problematic,” she starts to follow this thought and stops herself, “for another day.”

In 1860 Alcatraz had been a U.S. military fortress for about a decade and during the American Civil War its prison was put to a more diverse use than jailing soldiers. The National Park Service website explains:

It was during the Civil War that the military began to house a different kind of prisoner. When President Lincoln suspended **the writ of habeus corpus** in 1863, the judicial system could arrest individuals and imprison them without trial in a court of law. The Union government in San Francisco now used the Alcatraz guardhouse to imprison private citizens, accused of treason, as well as soldiers. At this time, treason was broadly defined to encompass any pro-Confederate or anti-Union sentiment, from rejoicing in the Union’s loss of a battle, refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the Union, or recognizing the Confederate States of America, to plotting or privateering for the Confederate cause. Many local politicians and citizens, whose loyalty to the Union was suspect, were arrested and jailed on Alcatraz to serve time. These prisoners could be detained without a trial and despite a lack of sufficient evidence of their crimes.

From 1934 to 1963 Alcatraz was a federal prison. Native Americans occupied Alcatraz from 1969-1971. Baucis thinks about the first work in *Way Bay*—the only one with its own poetic fragment, from an Ohlone song, “See! I am dancing! On the rim of the world I am dancing!” The work is a “Chalon/Ohlone” basketry tray. The gallery guide explains part of the story of the

Ohlone in California in the years before statehood and the use of the object included in the exhibition:

Chalon is one of eight linguistic divisions of the Costanoan (or Ohlone) people, who are the original inhabitants of the Bay Area. Between 1795 and 1814, many of the Chalon-speaking people were forcibly relocated to the area of Mission Soledad, where they were made to work on the Mission's farms and industries and denied the right to practice their culture. This tray was made primarily for sifting acorn meal.

Baucis has lived in California for many years, but it was not until she recently read *An American Genocide: The United States and California Indian Tragedy, 1846-1873* by Benjamin Madley that she more fully understood the horrors visited upon California's indigenous people during the early years of statehood. She is feeling emotional and overwhelmed by the continuing resonance of the rage that occurs after hearing the voices and dictates of the, as she tells her children, "personages of Donald Trump and Jeff Sessions." She sees the denial of due process to asylum seekers, asylum seeking children separated from their asylum seeking parents and representing themselves in court, and the creation of an industry that incarcerates asylum seekers and non citizens as coming from the same sensibility that fueled the white colonization of California and the programmatic murder of its indigenous people. The policies of the United States have often not been kind—and Baucis is certain that cruelty only breeds fear, more cruelty, resentment, and—in a world that cannot afford to be tribal—cultural and political degradation. Survival takes work, but it doesn't necessitate murder.

Madley does more than just use "genocide" casually; he is trying to make the argument that California is built on the crime of genocide as we understand it today:

In 1943, legal scholar Raphaël Lemkin coined a new word for an ancient crime. Defining the concept in 1944, he combined "the Greek word *genos* (tribe, race) and the Latin *cide*," or killing, to describe genocide as any attempt to physically or culturally annihilate an ethnic, national, religious, or political group. The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide...more narrowly defined genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such," including: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Baucis takes note of Madley's emphasis on the United Nations' language and that this language gives special attention to the treatment of children. She writes a note to herself in one of her many notebooks, "As little as I associate my identity with the identity of the nation state, we are in the end the people responsible for so many international and domestic cruelties, and, to bring the discussion of the United Nations up to date, this administration's withdrawing from the United Nations Human Rights Council is suspicious." The notebooks, like her art catalogues and magazines and copies of bills, are stacked around her living space and her studio. They are not organized. She picks up any notebook that surfaces and uses it and then the next time may use another. Some notebooks lay hidden for years before she uses them again. When the notebook is full it goes on a shelf with other completed notebooks. As a result, any one notebook may

include, from completely different months or even years, studio notes and general musings, like the above, and sketches and to do lists and so forth. When returning to a project, she may need to find three or four or more separate notebooks to gather her thoughts.

Baucis appreciates more and more the political artist. She partly wishes it were not true, but Kamler's work *Rapture* resonates differently for Baucis as she thinks about the artist's deep interest in the human condition, in justice. Baucis muses on when to consider a work as a work and when to consider the artist and the work and when to consider the artist first and then the work. She writes another note, "We as viewers always bring our history to each work we view—when do we draw a frame around the work?" She thinks about Reyes' work—if the artist were a white male with an attitude and a big studio full of assistants and a blue chip gallery to provide promotion, "how much would the work sell for then?" She considers how this issue has come to the fore recently in looking at the behavior of entertainers and other public figures. How does the work change when we learn that the artist is abusive, criminal. How do we look at James Brown differently in 2018 than in 1972? Do we listen to his music differently? Do we make use of Einstein's theories differently given that we know he was more than a little racist in his private journals? This seems almost impossible. Not really up for addressing the issues, Baucis writes, "Everything changes always and nothing is as it was the moment before."

The problem of cruelty nags at Baucis. She considers Maggie Nelson's discussion in her book *The Art of Cruelty*. Nelson looks at the cruelty imbued in various modernisms' approaches to art and questions its utility. Nelson makes a point of not drawing hard conclusions and puts emphasis on nuance:

This book does not shrink from expressing strong opinions, from "taking sides," when it feels the need to do so. But at the end of the day, its greater aspiration is Barthes's: to live according to nuance. By definition, there is no master sketch for what such a thing might look like. It can only be an experiment.

Baucis more and more understands how the appreciation of nuance allows for a different kind of culture than a culture without it—nuance presupposes consideration which presupposes listening and presupposes acknowledgement of points of view and of the difference between the verifiable and the fictive and the spaces between them.

Baucis is eager to consider the last work in the "My mother is a weather system, she eats villages whole" grouping. It is a work about being a "mother." Baucis' own children have long left the area to pursue their own lives, and she is more than comfortable with their infrequent visits and regular but not overburdening communication. Unlike some of her friends, she does not feel the need to see her grandchildren with great regularity. She feels fortunate at the balance.

Irene Pijoan's 1994 mixed media on paper work *Kick Count Chart* is large. The gallery guide briefly explains what it is: "This monumental work is one section of a three-part piece that represents stages of childbirth." The main element is a very tall and large black paper cutout that looks something like a multitiered chandelier coming to a pendulum-like shape at the bottom of the work. The chandelier form has many intricate cutouts and is somewhat symmetrical off the centerline. How the imagery connects to the grid of a kick chart keeping track of fetal movement is not entirely clear to Baucis. If she did not know the title she would not consider whether a prominent spherical form stood in for the fetus or whether the long vertical

form was meant to reference the birth canal or stages in a pregnancy or something else related to motherhood. The black cutout is set against three rectangular pieces of paper that have rendered on them patterns in lighter colors. Baucis thinks of how this work must read differently for different mothers, for those who are not mothers. She is back to the consideration of looking at work without knowing titles or biographies. She admits, “It is unlikely I would associate this work with childbirth if I just came across it.” Baucis reads through the excellent interview with Pijoan in the publication *Conversations*. Richard Whittaker interviewed her shortly before her death from breast cancer in 2004 <http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=147>. Baucis finds useful Pijoan’s comment, “My first commitment was to process, which really is a meditative pursuit, as opposed to product.” Baucis likens Pijoan’s commitment to her own approach to viewing and reflecting on *Way Bay*—it is meaningful and beneficial to her, but can that process be translated into a “product” of value to others. She is uncertain about that.

Baucis is beginning to feel at home in *Way Bay* and considers the wealth of exhibitions within the one exhibition. These would not just be the sixteen groupings introduced by the “poetic fragments” but the exhibitions the viewer puts together in her mind of one or two or three or many works in order to make sense of those works and/or the whole exhibition and/or of the experience of viewing the parts or the whole. She returns to her consideration of Spicer’s poem and of the problem of tracing a route through the exhibition—of swimming not only into *Way Bay* but of finding one’s way back.

A grouping that began to form in Baucis’ own imagination soon after she began wandering through the exhibition was one related to symmetries, mirror images, and dualities. She feels this category is both her entry into a deeper conversation with the work and a way for her to come to terms with the totality of the exhibition. Baucis begins to take extensive notes about her observations:

The four chambered heart of *Way Bay* is the *double’s double*—mirroring which occurs within works and between works and the world. The blood for this heart first flows through Bruce Conner’s *Inkblot Drawing (December 19, 1991)*. Hundreds of small ink blots—the left side of each mirroring the right side—surround a central blank triangle. The shapes resemble Rorschach test shapes, a test in which Conner famously took no stock. If this last section in which Conner’s second work in the exhibition appears is associated with “transcendence,” then Conner is the flawed spirit guide I seek. He made mark after mark after mark trying to keep some doors closed—to keep at bay, for example, the blinding light of nuclear annihilation—and trying to force other doors open—struggling to see a little further beyond. To look for myself in specific quantifiable responses to my viewing of each of the hundreds of inkblots, and I know this reflexively, will not provide the mirror I seek. But to allow artistic investigation to be open enough to reflect the complex diversities of the light of each soul and to allow it to be also colored by the backdrop of the atavistic physicality of the quotidian world is a practice worth continuing.

The *Way Bay* organizers have doubled Thomas Hill’s offerings in the exhibition, make a diptych out of his paintings of sequoias on, perhaps, sequoia wood—another kind of doubling, of message and medium.

The diptych as a form allows a comparison of the two individual parts—how is one part different or the same as the other part—and helps a viewer ask more expansive questions like, what are the relationships between these parts? To what larger narrative are they connected?

One of Hill's works is entitled *The Grizzly* and the other *The Wawona*. Both works are listed as being from around 1890. The names are not only names of Hill's paintings but also the names of specific sequoia trees.

The Wawona no longer stands, having been compromised by the 1881 roadway tunnel created through it—the tunnel is visible in Hill's painting; the tree eventually fell after a heavy snow in 1969. It was estimated to be about 2300 years old.

The Grizzly remains standing near its fallen comrade in Mariposa Grove in Yosemite National Park. The National Park Service estimates it is about 1800 years old, stating that scientists have recently re-evaluated its age, concluding it is younger than previously thought. "*Ars longa, vita brevis*" may or may not apply when depicting sequoias. Will Hill's artwork *The Grizzly* be around longer than *The Grizzly* it depicts? Conner's 1976 CROSSROADS is not in the exhibition, but in yet another kind of mirroring it flickers in the back of my mind, as does A MOVIE, whenever I look at any Bruce Conner work. Made from footage of 1946 nuclear weapons' tests at Bikini Atoll, CROSSROADS holds up for me one of many possible cultural mirrors that reminds that predictions are tricky about what is in store 500 years into the future for California and its people and its art. As Conner feared, humanity may not have as many seasons left as the sequoias of the Sierras. When *The Grizzly* was a seedling 1800 years ago, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus was just beginning his stint as emperor of Rome and the Han dynasty was coming to a close in China; American Indians had already been living on the west coast for about 17,000 years and it would be another 1300 years or so before Europeans would come to California. I wonder if, when choosing to include Hill's work, the *Way Bay* organizers had in mind Mariposa Grove's recent, after a long closure, reopening—asphalt was torn up and other changes were made to protect the trees from people.

The media listed for Hill's works are "oil on wood panel." There is no mention of whether the wood panels might be the red wood of *Sequoiadendron giganteum* or of *Sequoia sempervirens*—the coast redwood, what one would typically think of as a redwood. Are Hill's works on the wood of the more massive inland tree or its taller relation on the coast?

Doubling, not wood, was my focus when starting these notes. But the sequoia and redwood as symbols of California are strong, and the physicality of the wood and the sequoia's connection to the altitude and summer heat of the Sierra's and the redwood's connection to both the life-sustaining fog and the earth of the coast are all deeply entwined in the rhizome of my memory, and I feel the need to investigate another possible underlying discussion in *Way Bay*. Do the works on and of wood in the exhibition secretly speak to each other? If we had the equipment could we see lines of vibration, perhaps colored auras—like those depicted in the 2009 work of Anna Von Mertens, *Bacchus's Aura, after Caravaggio*, in the last grouping of *Way Bay*—running

between Hill's work and, across the room, to the only work that has redwood listed among its media, Jeremy Anderson's 1965 sculpture *Riverrun*? Is there more redwood in the gallery? Do wood types communicate freely? I can imagine pine and redwood in muted discourse, but are the engineered woods, those plywoods constructed of toxic resins and glues like urea formaldehyde, melamine, and phenolic glue, able to participate in conversation—has industry desensitized them? I would like to be optimistic and imagine a material-based discourse between all the woods, perhaps done both with a wink to the inevitable double entendres and even an accounting for the writings of new materialists like Jane Bennett or Rosi Braidotti, little of which I've read, and their rejection of anthropocentrism. Having been a humanist for so long, I would like to believe there is room in the world for the consciousness of that which is not human as well as the posthumanist humans.

In this imagining of wooden discourse, hah, the following *Way Bay* works resonate together: Thomas Hill's paintings of sequoias ("oil on wood"); Jeremy Anderson's sculpture *Riverrun* ("Redwood, pine, enamel"); Chris Duncan's abstract painting with its glowing fluorescent orange top edge that reflects off the white wall ("India ink, paint, gouache, wood putty, marker, graphite, color pencil on wood panel"); Chris Johanson's work *Untitled (Man with Knife)* ("House paint on wood"); Nayland Blake's work *Untitled (Miracled Birds)* ("Mixed media in wood and glass case")—and here everything falls apart because I've just been including items from the gallery guide that include wood in the media list and Blake's happens to include the wood of the glass case that is part of the work but also could be seen to be part of the work in the way a frame can be part of a work, and of course there are other works in *Way Bay* framed in wood or that perhaps include wood that do not have wood listed among the media; and Chiura Obata's *Death's Grave Pass* ("color woodcut"), which I include because the process included wood—does the paper remember the imprint of the wood, does paper remember itself as wood? I would like to think all the materials in the exhibition have stories to tell. What they were when they were alive or in the earth and how they came to be accessible to humans, what journey they took to end up in the hands of artists, and what sensitivity the artists had to their specific materiality are all elements of stories that are at once intertwined with and transcend narrative and cultural context. The artist alone in the studio with her carefully culled materials is no stranger to posthumanism. What did Chiura Obata feel when he held a block of cherry wood? What would that block or its imprint want to tell us?

The list of the *Way Bay* works that have wood listed among their media is unfinished. Also joining this wood to wood conversation, let the double entendres rip, would be George Herms' *All I Wanna Do Is Swing n' Nail* ("Wood, paper, fabric, metal, leather, twine"); James Sterling Pitt's *Untitled (White Pine/Whistle)* ("Acrylic on wood"); and Xara Thustra's *This is what we are for and this is what we'll get* ("Latex enamel on plywood").

I want to leave the different woods to their own conversation—I empathize with their possible need for communal reflection and perhaps even with their pain, but I cannot speak their language. I want to return to thinking about my exhibition within the exhibition, the *double's double*. I started with Thomas Hill's work which briefly brought Jeremy Anderson's work into the *double's double* discussion. I'll start this time with Donna Brookman's *Palace of Memory V* of 2013, which through some special refraction,

also finds content mirrored in Jeremy Anderson's sculpture *Riverrun*. The alignment with Donna Brookman is not directly through her piece in the exhibition, *Palace of Memory V*, but through U. C. Berkeley's 2015 purchase of Brookman's book, a collaboration with poet Anne Barrows, also called *Riverrun*. Anderson's California filtered interests in modernisms, surrealist shapes, and perhaps even slightly Duchampian-esque boxed tableaux would suggest his title *Riverrun* refers to a modernist work of another locale and generation—James Joyce's Dublin-centric work of high modernism *Finnegan's Wake* which famously begins mid sentence with the word "riverrun." How does one return from this ocean of reference? I purchase a Kindle version of *Finnegan's Wake* for \$1.99 and reading the last and first page may or may not help: "A way a lone a last a loved a long the / riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs." And we are back to the cyclic as doubling—the spiral where the next loop and the loop before can be seen all at once; the pages of Brookman's and Barrows' book fold out to reveal the connected drawings of the passage of the waters of the Sierra.

I started with the discussion of the *double's double*—the doubling within the work and the mirroring of the external, other works, and the world. Like with Brookman's unfolding river imagery in *Riverrun*, the mirroring of imagery in Brookman's *Palace of Memory V* expands the work. In *Palace of Memory V*, imagery wavers between boldly rendered form and wispy detail where the mirroring of the left and right side amplify suggestions (and perhaps this is my Rorschach test as Brookman's starting points seem to be glaciers and other large events in nature), of the vulval, floral, labial, insectoid, humanoid, totemic. But isn't this just the logic of the mirrored image—the center line becomes the spine, forms close at the center becoming orifices, and lines off the center are paired, creating in our minds lips, mandibles, eyes, limbs, ungues? Where there was one image there are now two, or more, a third—a sum greater than its constituent halves. This work, *Palace of Memory V*, is a digital print, and as such a print would allow, the mirroring from left to right side appears exact—one side a mirrored clone of the other. Brookman, though, also has several series of *Palace of Memory* paintings. These works also feature left and right sides that mirror each other but the reflections are not exact. It appears, from the web, that some of the background painting, in *Biologia I* for example, is not mirrored left to right and that other paint in the foreground has been mirrored, following perhaps the Conner/Rorschach method, by folding over the linen and printing the wet paint of one side onto the other side. Or perhaps the mirroring is done on another surface and then transferred to the surface of the linen. Other works like *Glacis (Palace of Memory)*, also a large painting, have left and right sides that are similar but not identical. I find this difference between exact mirroring and deliberately inexact mirroring important. I would like to see these paintings in person and as a group. I feel I am missing quite a lot by just looking at them on the web. On her website Brookman comments on the *Palace of Memory* series:

I was a feral child before the technological era, and grew up roaming hills and streams. For years I have painted abstracted landscapes of feeling and memory. The *Palace of Memory* paintings evoke a kind of haunting, with disappearing glaciers and eroding forms, but also assert hope and the possibility of survival.

In nature we are accustomed to the close approximation. We expect, when we look closely, to find differences that make one tree, one leaf, distinct from another and to find those differences, whether marks of experience or genetics, that make one family member different from the other.

This also holds true for viewing individual works of art through time. An image cannot be viewed the same way the third time as it was the first, and it cannot be viewed the same way once the discussion includes a pairing with or reference to another work. A smaller grouping now exists within my exhibition within the exhibition. This grouping includes one work suggested by *Way Bay*, Brookman and Barrow's *Riverrun*, and two works in *Way Bay*, Anderson's *Riverrun* and Brookman's *Palace of Memory V*, and, further, a textual work suggested by the titles of two of the the works, Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. What kind of grouping is this when two of the works only have a tangential relationship to *Way Bay*, discovered by perusing the web, and one of the works I have not seen and another I've only read piecemeal? It is a selection like that of any exhibition; it exists only as a whole in our mind.

I have been writing about the *double's double*, my curation within the larger curation, as an entry through specific works into *Way Bay*. I have been speaking about works that expand the scope of the mind's eye by including within them an obvious doubling or mirroring of imagery. And I want to emphasize the idea of the second "double" in the title and of the more personal doubling and mirroring; I look outside the work and find the work's reflection or double elsewhere, in another artwork or in some circumstance in the world—and as I become more familiar with those reflections that perhaps exist solely for me, my understanding of the individual works of *double's double* and of all the works in *Way Bay* and of the exhibition as a whole changes and grows.

Tom Marioni's *Religious Picture* from 1977 is giving me a little trouble. I am not finding much information about it online. It was shown at the Berkeley Art Museum in MATRIX 39 in 1980. In the text for that exhibition is a clue—the work is described as "an etching made by drum brushing." This seems to be confirmed on the Crown Point Press website that describes the work as being made with "brushed marks"—Crown Point Press was the publisher of the etching (Doris Simmelink was the printer). Marioni's drum brushing works were made on a number of surfaces; Marioni would make them with a metal brush in each hand. For the viewer—given that the abstract forms often exhibited a kind of duality and might, for example, have the appearance of a pair of wings—it is usually fairly easy to imagine them as a two-handed effort. This *Religious Picture* print is pale yellow and the image is faint. The proof, *Working proof 2 for Religious Picture* in the collection of Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, is in darker tones and is easier to decipher. In fact, a center line where the paper appears to have been folded can be easily seen in this proof. By looking at this print, I think my suspicions are confirmed—much like Brookman's work this is a print that has a mirrored left and right side. How this was done, I'm not sure, but the effect is the same as in the Brookman. But in this case, what probably I alone brought to *Palace of Memory V*, a sense of the vulval, seems likely overt in the Marioni piece. I would be less confident except for the following. Marioni has made a number of works viewing women's genitalia in the fashion of Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du monde* (*Landscape with Finger Line* of 2015 and *Blue*

Nest of 2011, for example). Also he has made at least one drawing of the body of the nude figure in Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés (Life for M.D. of 2015)*. I had trouble finding these works, but they are on the Carl Solway Gallery website and seem legitimate—they are shown in a grouping with *Religious Picture*. Finally there is the title. For me the title is a pareidolia joke—in 1977, the same year Marioni's work was made, the image of Jesus Christ was seen on a flour tortilla in Lake Arthur, New Mexico by Maria Rubio. The attention given to the apparition resulted in the opening of the Shrine of the Miracle Tortilla which was for some period of time visited by 600-1000 people a day (according to the grade school study site I'm consulting). So, it seems not unlikely that Marioni is saying with the title "perhaps you see Jesus in this abstract image" or "perhaps you see a vagina in this abstract image." As discussed above, when an image is mirrored it is easy for the eye and brain to read the center line as the middle of a body, with the mirrored elements in their symmetry becoming the parts of the body. Further, the texture suggested by the print has the appearance of skin. To use a tired phrase from tired political reporting, in part because I've never used it before, I'm going to double down on Marioni counting on the viewer seeing genitalia and not Jesus. So now, after this journey, Courbet and Duchamp have joined Marioni in the room with the rest of the *Way Bay* exhibition.

The gallery guide text introducing Anne McGuire's *Dark Universe* and her *Bright Universe*, both from 2016, explains her intention to provide an inverse double to *Dark Universe*: "The drawing *Dark Universe* is based on a photograph of open star cluster NGC 7380, popularly known as the Wizard Nebula. *Bright Universe* is the artist's invention, a means to 'find balance with the dark.'"

I am excited to go beyond the origin of the world and to contemplate the origin of the universe, but first I am intrigued by McGuire's titles. *Dark Universe* could refer to the dark matter that, according to NASA, makes up about 27% of the universe and the dark energy that makes up another 68%. The Wizard Nebula is made up of normal matter we can see, meaning it is part of the 5% of stuff we actually know about in the universe. The title *Dark Universe* could also refer to the 1961 science fiction book by Daniel G. Galouye in which the protagonist engages in a quest for light. It could also refer to the 1993 low budget movie *Dark Universe* that appears to be about aggressive and hungry aliens. The movie uses found footage which might appeal to McGuire as the creator of *Strain Andromeda The* which is her reediting of the 1971 film *The Andromeda Strain* by reversing the order of all the scenes in the movie so that the last scene occurs first and so forth until the first scene is seen last. To be clear, the film is not played backwards, the actions still takes place in forward motion.

By providing *Dark Universe* with a companion, *Light Universe*, McGuire might also be pointing out that when we look at the universe we look mostly into blackness—this blackness permeates our view whether we focus in on the closest star after our own sun, Proxima Centauri, which is about 4.22 light years from Earth or look at the Wizard Nebula which is about 7,000 light years from Earth but still in the Milky Way or at the Andromeda Galaxy which is 2.5 million light years away yet also the next closest galaxy of the billions or trillions with which our home galaxy the Milky Way shares the universe.

And why is space black? This is the problem at the root of Olber's Paradox. Olber wondered—back in the 19th Century—why if there were infinite stars in an infinite static universe these stars didn't light up the sky at night like the sun does during the day? From my understanding, the most important part of the answer is because the universe is only 13.8 billion years old, because the speed of light is a constant, and because the universe is expanding there is a limited amount of light, a limited number of stars, to which we have visual access.

In defense of creative writers, it is worth considering, as Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences website points out, "...the first published solution to Olbers' Paradox is attributed to Edgar Allan Poe." Poe spent six productive years in Philadelphia and perhaps Penn State feels their own local pride as they quote from his essay "Eureka:"

Were the succession of stars endless, then the background of the sky would present us a uniform luminosity, like that displayed by the Galaxy – since there could be absolutely no point, in all that background, at which would not exist a star. The only mode, therefore, in which, under such a state of affairs, we could comprehend the voids which our telescopes find in innumerable directions, would be by supposing the distance of the invisible background so immense that no ray from it has yet been able to reach us at all.

If *Dark Universe* were made looking at the Wizard Nebula how were the shapes and patterns of *Light Universe* determined? McGuire is meticulous in her process, and it would not be surprising if they were determined by some precise calculation. Both *Dark Universe* and *Light Universe* are made by filling small squares on a many squared grid one by one, making a square spiral that fills the majority of the paper of each work. As the viewer moves away from the surface of the work, the coloring of the squares and the spaces between coalesce into an image. *Light Universe* indeed offers a view with less darkness than *Dark Universe*, and through it perhaps McGuire is offering an alternative to the dark, cold end that seems to await our expanding universe.

There is much symmetry in nature, but, and not for any good reason, time seems to be asymmetric. The end comes after the beginning—the seed is sown and then the tree grows and then it dies. Art movements do not affect past practices retroactively. *The arrow of time* remains uni-directional. But McGuire with *Light Universe* and *Strain Andromeda* offers another model. If an artist can change our acceptance of the laws of thermodynamics and causality, then perhaps those laws themselves are not far from losing their dominion.

Judith Belzer's painting *Half Empty Half Full #7* from 2017 puts us in the middle of something. Forms on the left seem to be repeated on the right. A triangular shape in the foreground reflects the forms, backed by a wall of uniform color topped with a bit of blue. I'm cheating, having looked at a number of Belzer's *Half Empty Half Full* works before

writing these lines. Seen as a whole, it is clear Belzer's series of paintings is referencing dams. The symmetry within the works is the kind that comes about when we find ourselves inside something like a hallway, a tunnel, a cistern, a canyon, a reservoir. We are surrounded and find what we see on one side of us is repeated on the other. I like Belzer's loose lines and easy traversing of abstraction and more formal representational rendering of object and surface. In my category of *double's double* what mirror is Belzer holding up for us? I will let her explain, as she does on her website:

It's probably no accident that sometime around the 2016 elections I began to think about dams, particularly the Hoover and Glen Canyon dams, both on the Colorado River. I'm interested in what the dams of the American West have to say about our national urge to repress and control nature in order to expand our purchase on the land and create wealth. The consequences of these impressive and majestic engineering fetes [sic] have been decidedly mixed. Built to last 750-1000 years, the dams will most likely outlast their utility; some will be decommissioned along the line on account of water scarcity caused by climate change. But the sheer amount of concrete used in their construction make the structures impossible to remove in many cases. The dams are beautiful iconic forms that will most likely endure as monuments to our American hubris and greed.

How does one make a political painting? *The arrow of time* is back and nagging at any artist with an axe to grind. That sharp axe isn't going to allow for Obama's last Supreme Court pick to be confirmed. That sharp axe isn't going to reset the clock on global warming. The works of McGuire and Belzer do not reference recent events, but all the same, they seem deeply political. The viewer, just by having to reflect on a timeline expanded beyond the duration of her lifetime, can center on the implications of big pasts and big futures and even the aesthetics of the works and how conceptual and painterly practices look post-2016. I feel like the artists are saying, "Hey, come on. Don't get stuck."

Doug Hall's work *UNIVERSITY* from 1993 puts the viewer in the midst of a university hallway. Doors to the right, doors to the left. From the gallery guide we understand the university in question is U. C. Berkeley:

Doug Hall's photographic series *UNIVERSITY* was commissioned by BAMPFA on the occasion of UC Berkeley's 125th anniversary in 1993. Composed of twelve images shot on the UC Berkeley campus, Hall's photographs underscore the relationships between architecture and pedagogy, focusing especially on academic compartmentalization and hierarchies of knowledge.

The gallery guide gives the media as "Black-and-white gelatin silver print, silkscreened text, video." I may have missed it, but I didn't see the video in the exhibition. Perhaps the video is there, but regardless, it reminds me of the display of this work in Hall's Berkeley Art Museum MATRIX exhibition of 1993. The 1993 exhibition included photographic

works, video, and wall text, and following is an excerpt from what Larry wrote for the MATRIX brochure:

The video component of the exhibition, produced by Hall in collaboration with Jordan Biren and Mitchell Goodman, introduces a human somewhat comical element. Using environments within the university, several of which also appear in the photographs, the artists have staged situations that foreground some of the ordinary academic activities that take place within the university. In their tape, the university is treated as a stage set—a theater of knowledge in which the activities of amassing, collating, and dispersing knowledge constitute the play. The institutional nature of these activities is suggested by placing the monitor on the wall with the kind of commercial bracket associated with television displays in public buildings such as airports, hospitals, and colleges.

The installation includes a series of twenty-four quotations, selected by John Rapko, a graduate student in the UC Berkeley Department of Rhetoric. Rather than functioning didactically, these quotations instead place the *concept* of the university within an overall context of the philosophical problem of knowledge and knowing per se. The quotations accomplish this by expressing simultaneously contradictory viewpoints: from the idealism of Hegel and Simone Weil to the anxiety of Kierkegaard and Leo Lowenthal to the social critique of Habermas and Weber.

Perhaps the strain of humor running through *Way Bay* necessitated the work by Hall be of a hall. Hall himself is now a reflection of the institution—when I catch sight of myself in the mirror and am briefly surprised by what time has wrought, often my first response is to laugh.

Hall, as an artist, is using depictions of the surface of the institution to further along institutional critique. Thinking about surfaces raises questions of how other members of the institution approach the question of surfaces. This is a bit leading, but if I look just up the hill a bit, or on the web, I can find out what the Mathematics Department is up to.

The Mathematics Department at UC Berkeley has colloquium that meets once a week. Here is the posting for the last presentation of the spring semester of 2018.

Mathematics Department Colloquium: Metric collapsing of hyperkahler K3 surfaces

Colloquium | April 26 | 4-5 p.m. | 60 [Evans Hall](#)

Speaker: Song Sun, UC Berkeley

Sponsor: [Department of Mathematics](#)

A K3 surface is a simply connected compact complex surface with trivial canonical bundle. Moduli space of K3 surfaces has been extensively studied in algebraic geometry and it can be characterized in terms of the period map by the Torelli theorem. The differential geometric significance is that every K3 surface

admits a hyperkahler metric (a metric whose holonomy group is $SU(2)$), which is in particular Ricci-flat. The understanding of limiting behavior of a sequence of hyperkahler K3 surfaces gives prototype for more general questions concerning Ricci curvature in Riemannian geometry. In this talk I will survey what is known on this, and talk about a new glueing construction, joint with Hans-Joachim Hein, Jeff Viaclovsky and Ruobing Zhang, that shows a multi-scale collapsing phenomenon, and discuss the connection with the Kulikov classification in algebraic geometry.

I am in no way pretending to understand the meaning of the descriptive paragraph, but when I look up images related to the specific terms, “K3 surface” or “Ricci curvature” for example, I find renderings of 3-dimensional shapes associated with these mathematical discussions. Shapes which if they were encountered in a gallery would likely foremost and first be seen as nonrepresentational sculpture. It is my understanding, after speaking with a mathematician friend, that the kind of math referenced in the above paragraph also defines surfaces in dimensions beyond three. This would pose a problem for a 3D printer. My friend describes this math as “beautiful.” I am attracted to these worlds of beauty that cannot be rendered in three dimensional form or viewed with our eyes. I realize this is the first paragraph of mine, Larry did mention it earlier, in which the word “beauty” has appeared. For many of us, it is not something we ask directly of art.

I see other works that could be part of my *double's double* curation, but a few more will suffice. I think about Spicer's admonishment as I head for shore.

Franklin Williams' untitled work from 1968 made of acrylic, yarn, glitter, plastic tubing on canvas is one of my favorites in the exhibition. The work is 50 years old and looks just right for now. In this work the physical sensibility of the work, for me, overwhelms any suggestion of narrative. The work is an orchestration of texture, color, and form. Some yarn is sewn and cut to make frizzy tufts that outline form. Other yarn is used to make a formal grid in which are repeated abstract forms. Patterning is created with other tufts of yarn and painted dots and small renderings suggesting flowers and three dimensional forms attached to the surface, also painted and tufted with yarn, and large colored forms that may be read as arabesque or biomorphic. And, yes, this work also has a left right symmetry—lip-like forms frequently make an appearance in Williams' work. In this one, centered on the canvas, are red forms that could be said to indicate an open mouth. As I've previously illustrated, I will not take Conner's approach to an actual Rorschach test—which was to reply only in formal terms—but will label forms in William's work which could also be left well enough alone. So, a face from below the eyes down (no eyes are depicted) is centered on the canvas. The outline of the frontal view of this face is the same on the left as on the right. There are doubled forms in front of the face. Williams has put together two green shapes in such a way that they could read as a flower or labia or the head of a penis. From between the two forms rises a stamen like form—where one would expect to find anthers are tendril-like forms which splay out over the open mouth asymmetrically. The light color that defines the opening of the mouth sits behind this stamen and could be read to be flowing into or out of the green forms. Certain suggestions are inherent in certain juxtapositions—put anything in front of a pair of lips and some percentage of viewers' first thoughts will be oral sex. Unlike, though, in a Wesselmann, *Great American Nude* of the same year for example, there is not overt

gender specificity in the depiction of the figure in Williams' work—in fact, if an interaction between organisms is being depicted it isn't even clear if it is kingdom-specific. Perhaps, in addition to William's still fresh looking take on materials, there is something contemporary in the degree and type of abstraction in his work and in the amount of distance he keeps from specifics—whether they be related to gender, or sex, or biology in the most general sense. The closer I look, the less true this seems.

Williams' work has multiple layers of imagery, some are more specifically suggestive. In the area gridded off by yarn, each square—some fifty squares are fully or partially visible fill the “face” area outside the “lips”—contains the same, but not exactly identical, images. One central image in a cool dark color appears to be in the shape of an embryo (about Carnegie stage 17—sixth week); in the square in front of the embryo is a version of the two green forms in the foreground of the painting. Here the forms are rendered in ochre umber and are slightly more curved at the top. This curvature takes some of the ambiguity out of the shapes and more closely associates them with those one might find in a medical cross section drawing of the cervix. What was the stamen-like form in the foreground has now become more of a four-armed starfish shape, with the vertical arms going behind and above the embryo and the horizontal arms going both in front of and behind the ochre umber cervix-like forms. Maybe this starfish form could suggest an umbilical cord, but its arms have points and designed curves—this shape remains highly ambiguous. As mentioned, attached to the canvas are three dimensional forms. They are yellow and also have the shape of an embryo—in this case perhaps Carnegie stage 14—and have dots painted on them, including larger dots that seem to represent eyes. The described forms are not the extent of the forms rendered in the work. There are white striped black snake-like forms, one mirroring the other, that seem to come out of the central mouth space and further into the foreground. There are white dots that seem randomly placed except for the ones at the three ends of a worm-like form with one bifurcated tip. There are patternings within forms and additional shapes that are duplicated in the same position on the right and left sides of the work. Finally as one looks again at the work, what previously appeared to be a likely reading seems more like the product of artistic subterfuge—those red arabesque forms outlining the face now make much more sense as fallopian tubes, and those fuzzy yellow and green patterned crescents in the upper corners of the work, shapes I was ignoring, now read as ovaries. So much for my comments about lack of specificity. What then about the lips? I could spend much more time with this work and its mix of—to name a few possible—funk, pop, and high concept approaches.

Last year in 2017, the Petaluma based Williams had an exhibition at The Art Museum of Sonoma County. At the time he was interviewed by Dan Taylor for *The Press Democrat*. In the interview Taylor gets to an important consideration for all artists—how does an artist balance life, career, and practice:

Roughly a quarter century ago, he shifted sharply away from promoting his art and focused more tightly than ever on creating art.

"I was making a lot of art, and also having exhibitions during those years, but I did detach myself from the politics of the art world because it's an ugly game," the 77-year-old artist said.

Now you can get a glimpse inside the world of Williams' vivid imagination at the current exhibit "Eye Fruit: The Art of Franklin Williams," running through late August at the Art Museum of Sonoma County in Santa Rosa.

The artist is happy with the decision he made to live and work on his own terms.

"It paid off in a most beautiful way, because in the studio, where you're isolated from all of those interruptions, you have a flow from one piece to another, and I just made a lot art for all those years," he said.

On the same wall as Williams' work, in the corner of that wall and the next wall, and the next, is Barry McGee's untitled installation from 2008. As there is a kind of left right doubling that occurs when a viewer is inside an object, there is also a type of automatic mirroring and doubling that occurs when a viewer looks at works installed in a corner. The works at once face each other and the viewer. This is what causes James Turrell's projections of rectangles into dark corners to look like three dimensional cubes for the viewer. Turrell is not in the exhibition—except in the way Courbet and Duchamp are.

McGee's corner installation comprises thirteen works framed in black, all hung contiguously with four of the works on the left wall meeting three of the works on the right. The seven total works on the left side are all ballpoint pen drawings of what look like masks made out of hair. McGee uses the monochromatic ballpoint line to great purpose so that the forms appear to have reflections on them like one would see on slick oiled hair. The eyes, noses, and mouths are just gaps where lines are not drawn—in most instances, eyeballs are included in the gaps. One mask has three "eye" gaps and two "mouth" gaps. On the right side of the corner are five of the mask drawings (including the largest of all twelve) and the sixth work at the top is a bright red orange acrylic painting of three block letters (with periods) drawn in perspective. The initials are "D.F.W." which, as McGee explains below, is more of a battle cry than an openness to extreme partying.

This year McGee had a solo exhibition at Cheim and Read in New York; Paul Laster interviewed McGee in February of 2018 for conceptualfinearts.com on occasion of the exhibition.

You're quoted as saying "I'm not a sweet person. I'm OCD, ADD, but DFW and say thank you obsessively." Do you remember the context for it?

I don't, but it sounds like something I would say, for sure—in a nervous rant. There's a little bit of truth in everything.

Are you still that way now?

I'm a little less Down for Whatever, DFW. I'm still OCD. Yeah, it depends on the situation. I could still be down for whatever—if the shit hits the fan. In San

Francisco I feel like everyone has the playbook ready. I've seen people gather quickly here. They know how to cause a ruckus when it's time. There's an internal, unsaid playbook, which is comforting. It's understood.

These mask works appeal to me. They may come from somewhere I cannot identify, but they mostly look like the result of what happens when an artist is drawing and experimenting and the medium and process themselves begin to direct the form. Is San Francisco DFW? I hope so.

My *double's double* exhibition now has eleven artists in it (Conner, Hill, Anderson, Brookman, Barrows, McGuire, Marioni, Belzer, Hall, Williams, and McGee), and I will add five more (Xara Thustra, Katherine Sherwood, Dwight Mackintosh, Irene Pijoan, and Trevor Paglen) to make an exhibition of sixteen artists.

Xara Thustra's very large latex enamel plywood piece from 2002 *This is what we are for and this is what we'll get* is the first piece I started writing about while in the exhibition. My notes read, "About 12 x 24 feet of pieced together plywood. Two horses in middle, having cut themselves in half. Horses have red fluid welled up in them about to pour out. This is paralleled by the bombs and planes that also seem cut in half. Buildings on either side. Each side somewhat parallel. On the the left side is a ferris wheel with a 'design ribbon' touching down on it. Text above reads— 'this is what we're for.' Text on the right side reads— 'this is what we'll get.'" The gallery guide explains some of the context for the work.

For the past twenty years, Xara Thustra's art has been inseparable from the Bay Area social justice struggle and community empowerment movements. Her work has included agitprop street art, performance, and filmmaking. This mural, which references the 9/11 attacks, was first shown in the 2002 *Bay Area Now* exhibition at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

The work reminds me of a comment I heard on a bus going from Staten Island to Manhattan on Thursday 13 September 2001. The bus was full—the ferries were still not running—and mostly quiet, and two men were speaking about the attacks of two days before. One summed up the situation saying it was a case of, "chickens coming home to roost." I assumed he was referencing Malcolm X.

I wrote some about Katherine Sherwood's large painting *Sallos II* from 2000. I go back to the work and look again at the rough symmetry between the left and right sides of the painting. Sherwood's mostly abstract work is now interesting to consider in the context of Williams' mostly abstract work. Both hold a mirror up to our insistent yet fragile human biology, as does Irene Pijoan's 1994 mixed media on paper work *Kick Count Chart*, which has also previously been discussed. Like in Sherwood's painting and in a good number of the works discussed for *double's double* the left to right symmetry is not intended to be exact. Knowing that the paper cut out could refer to the birth canal makes me also think of Hall's work of the hallway. As adults we clearly understand the difference between a hallway and what is not a hallway, but I think we would be hard

pressed to remember the details of a hallway even after having just walked it. Most often a hallway is a conveyance from one event or place to another. Most mothers, on the other hand, clearly remember the births of their children, but infantile amnesia is absolute. What stories would we all have to tell, what art would we make in response (have to make in response), if our memories began while in the womb?

Dwight Mackintosh's figures in his drawings are often doubled in several ways. When faces are drawn the elements of the face can be drawn two or three or more times. A forehead mouth or chin may be drawn with one line and then it will be redrawn again and then again. Eyes may also be repeated or outlined numerous times as may the head and entire body. Clothing may be drawn as well as what is underneath the clothing. In addition, in making a drawing, Mackintosh may repeat the figure in the same drawing. This isn't always the case, but Mackintosh's figures do not always look the same drawing to drawing, but within a single drawing two, three, or four figures drawn in a similar way may be present. Text is also present in Mackintosh's drawings. Letters flow together into long lines of combinations that are not coherent to me. His drawings are valued. We see in them an artist working to articulate a particular vision—and the logic of the vision, the meaning behind the doubling of lines and forms, may not reveal itself to the viewer even if it is resolved enough that the constancy of vision expressed in the drawings can clearly be understood to be derived from an understanding unique to Mackintosh.

The last artist in *double's double* is Trevor Paglen. Trevor Paglen's *Four Geostationary Satellites Above the Sierra Nevada* is a view of a night sky. In a time lapse image, if the satellites are geostationary (they are fixed above the equator and rotate along with the earth, along with the photographer), they should appear as dots in the photograph and the stars should appear as streaks. Other objects orbiting earth, other satellites, do travel across the night sky at speed—the International Space Station, for example, takes just a few minutes to cross the night sky of an earthbound observer. In a time lapse photograph the space station would appear as a long streak passing through the points of the stars. I have not looked closely enough at Paglen's image to see the dots of light indicating the geostationary satellites, but I do see a streak I assume to be a star, and also in the work in the BAMPFA gallery I see the reflection of a fluorescent bulb on the surface of the piece. The photograph is hung high and from certain vantage points this reflection looks like a large bold streak across the sky. Here, what for another work would be unwelcome interference becomes an exaggerated element of the work. The large bright "streak" might be read as a bright star or the International Space Station itself. I see it as a signification of the kind of simplification that is prevalent in our media. Every point is made in overly bold outline that misses the "nuance" of complicated circumstance and the implications of the point. In the case of Paglen's work the doubling within the work is difficult to see (where are those four duplicated points of light mirroring the sun back to the camera?) and the mirroring in the work that is easily seen comes from outside the work and only coincidentally can be read as part of the narrative—change the lighting and the mirroring will disappear.

My *double's double* exhibition is complete yet easily mutable.

There is one more painting I want to mention. It is the one I would take home with me if such an offer were made. "Sure, Baucis, take one work, any one, but just one." I would say it is the work I would steal, but I am not a thief, and besides, word would get around. And this work, though not in my *double's double* selection, gets its own kind of reflection in Kevin Killian's line from "Candyland III:" "I did go out to look at the moon." This is the poetic fragment chosen to introduce the eight works in this particularly sweet section of *Way Bay*. The painting I want is Joan Brown's *Dog Watching Moon*. A dog with a green muzzle, an orangish ear and neck, and some yellow highlights is amidst some brighter orange brushwork and looks recalcitrantly, perhaps a little aggressively, up across a thickly, confidently painted black expanse at a hewn slug of a yellow moon set against dark blue-black paint with a little white mixed in. It is a beautiful painting.

Baucis finishes her notes. Her hand is tired and cramped from writing longhand with a fountain pen. On a fresh page, she writes her signature in the middle of the page. While the ink is still wet she folds the page and creates a symmetrical ink blot. She looks at the ink blot and in the patterns she sees the symbol of her own striving. She writes one more note.

As a woman, I have survived as a result of my own efforts, even returned from the open ocean, and now that the gods are dead, I can say clearly I am angry my kindness was taken by the gods and others as condoning abuses of power, and I am further angry my accepting the gods' favor to my advantage is seen as complicity when the alternative was death.

Baucis is not yet ready to leave the exhibition. She is interested in looking further at works that discuss peoples marginalized and/or are by people of marginalized groups.

Baucis looks at Erica Deeman's work in *Way Bay*. It is from a different series of work than was represented in Deeman's 2017 exhibition at BAMPFA. The *Silhouettes* series shown in 2017 was many positive things, at once clever, easy to comprehend, strongly unified with each work also a fully realized artwork in itself, and imbued with layers of complexity and reference. Larry, who organized the exhibition, well explains:

This exhibition presents Erica Deeman's series *Silhouettes*, thirty large-scale photographs of women from the African diaspora. The manner in which these images were shot and printed emphasizes the subjects' stark silhouettes against a white background; however, these are actually color photographs, and prolonged looking reveals nuances of tone that call into question our initial assumptions about the technique and, by extension, the subjects themselves. Indeed, the artist's goal is to create complicated expressions of identity analogous to her own journey of self-discovery: of dual English and Jamaican heritage, Deeman (b. 1977) was raised in Nottingham and is now based in San Francisco.

Deeman's portraits employ the silhouette in conscious reference to the technique's use in the eighteenth-century pseudoscience of physiognomy. As developed by the Swiss philosopher Johann Kaspar Lavater, the portrait silhouette was used to demonstrate how individuals' character traits were reflected in their facial forms. Lavater's ideas were widely adopted not only in science and criminology but also in literature, and in the

nineteenth century, silhouettes became a popular form of portraiture among the bourgeoisie in Europe and the United States.

For the series, begun in 2013, Deeman found her subjects by placing ads, approaching strangers on the street, and asking friends and family to pose. In her studio, the artist instructed her sitters to maintain a neutral expression for their portraits, which repeat the same composition—a shoulder-length silhouette generally centered on the head.

“Today, we are living through an important time,” comments Deeman, “where tough questions are being asked about how both people of color and women are treated and depicted.” As the artist has also noted, it would not have been common in the past for a woman of color to be the subject of an artistic portrait of this kind, and even today such images cannot help but call to mind—by virtue of their rarity—issues of privilege, class, and race. Deeman’s work reveals the beauty of diverse physiognomies and suggests her subjects’ power and strength of character through the scale and grace of her images.

The question of using physiognomy to categorize people has numerous contemporary counterparts in the computer age. You may have in mind the 2017 kerfuffle over Stanford’s Michal Kosinski and Yilun Wang and their “AI” that supposedly detects, through a study of physiognomy, whether a person is straight or gay. According to some accounts Kosinski had some connection to the company Faception that makes and sells “AI” to determine personalities. The “classifiers” the company has its algorithms score are “High IQ, Academic Researcher, Professional Poker Player, Bingo Player, Brand Promoter, White-Collar Offender, Terrorist, and Pedophile.” On first viewing Baucis thinks the site is a send up and says, “You have got to be shitting me.” What should the proper response be if your security system indicates an unusually large number of brand promoters have just entered your building? Just to be clear that Faception, based in Tel Aviv, Israel, is also pursuing physiognomy, here is their practice described in their own words:

Faception is first-to-technology and first-to-market with proprietary computer vision and machine learning technology for profiling people and revealing their personality based only on their facial image.

Baucis is impressed with Deeman’s *Silhouette* series and with the *Brown* series which the work *Marvin* in *Way Bay* is a representative. The gallery guide explains the approach in the *Brown* series.

Marvin is from Deeman’s recent portrait series *Brown*, for which she photographed male friends and acquaintances against a backdrop representing her own skin color as a gesture of both solidarity and contrast.

Baucis considers how Deeman is playing with the complexity of the skin color question—starting with the physical complexity. The backdrop behind Marvin is an even shade of tan or light brown. How was that determined? Skin color is never just one thing—it changes with changes in type and intensity of light, it changes in direct light and in shadow, it changes as it reflects different colors in different environments, it changes on different locations of the body, it changes with exposure to the elements, and it changes for many other reasons. Anyone that has purchased a tube of paint called “skin color” knows you cannot paint anything more than a

cartoon with a single hue. So, Deeman perhaps did some averaging and made a decision about what one “skin color” would stand in for her skin color. The viewer only has to look at Marvin—who Baucis finds quite handsome—to understand a real person does not have a single skin color. And what would those Stanford boys’ AI say about Marvin, “Straight or gay? Oh that’s right they only developed the ‘AI’ for white subjects, total bullshit on top of bullshit,” thinks Baucis. She is getting a bit cranky and might need some lunch. But Baucis persists.

She looks at Marvin and looks at the background color. And here Deeman’s project comes to life. Marvin’s portrait is a bust. His head and upper arms and chest are visible. The skin color of his face is on the whole darker than the skin color on his arms and chest. The color of his skin in shadow on his face is almost as dark as his dark beard, but how about the skin on his face that is in direct light? Certainly the areas reflecting light are lighter than the background color, and the areas in full light that are not as reflective seem a darker brown than the background color. And here other questions come into play. Deeman’s series title *Brown* can be as much a question as a descriptor. The world is obsessed with not only the value (meaning lightness and darkness) of skin color but also with the hue (warmer honey brown, cooler bluer brown, pale cool white, whitey pink, more yellow, more olive, and so forth). So, Marvin’s face is neither the same hue nor the same value as the background color. And to further complicate, the skin on his chest and arms is slightly mottled with the darker portions darker than the background color and the lighter portions lighter. Deeman sets up a comparison that on the one hand might offer a general sense of “solidarity” with others who consider themselves brown but also points to a kind of evaluation that a sensible person would ultimately see as not having importance. How Marvin’s skin color compares to Deeman’s composite of her skin color, or therefore to any other person’s skin color, has absolutely no bearing on Marvin’s value as a human being. “Which we all understand to be high; people still read the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, don’t they?” considers Baucis. As a refresher, here are the first ten of the thirty articles:

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Mike Kuchar's work *Faery Tale* of 1980 is just a few steps from Deeman's photograph. Kuchar's work is highly stylized—how will the AI of the future categorize it? When Baucis throws "Mike Kuchar" into Google the algorithm responds with many sites related to Mike Kuchar and the brain of the search engine also offers up the category "People also search for" which includes five names with images: George Kuchar (as Mike's brother and collaborator this offering makes sense); Curt McDowell (as a friend and collaborator this makes sense—McDowell was also a filmmaker and his drawings were just recently on display at Et al. etc. on Mission in the Mission); Marie Losier (as a fellow filmmaker and one who has worked with the Kuchars this choice also

makes sense); Red Grooms (as an artist of the same generation who had starred in one of Mike's films this choice makes some kind of sense too); and Mimi Gross (as an artist who also starred with Red Grooms, he was then her husband, in Mike Kuchar's *The Secret of Wendel Samson* this choice also makes some kind of sense), but if Google is going to give the viewer just five people that "People also search for" and highlight these choices with images, would these be the crucial five? On what basis are the five chosen—most common searches? Most recent searches? Baucis guesses that somebody well versed in Mike Kuchar's career would come to a different conclusion. Oh, by the way, Mike Kuchar's drawings usually depict strapping young men with firm butts, firm nipples, and cocks either pre or postcoital. The fantasy in *Faery Tale* reads as post.

Baucis walks across the gallery to Enrique Chagoya's *Codex Cosmovisionarius* of 2006. In looking at the work Baucis considers the media: Acrylic, water-based oil paint, pencil, solvent transfer, gesso, on 19th-century etchings.

The gallery guide explains some of the context for the work:

Enrique Chagoya has created more than a dozen codices, utilizing a form that derives from the pre-Columbian illustrated texts created by the Mayan and Aztec people to describe their history, culture, and cosmology. *Codex Cosmovisionarius* focuses on contemporary issues of globalism and immigration.

Using the Aztec/Mayan numbering system, Chagoya has divided the codex into ten parts. Part four (four dots in a row indicate the number 4) includes an image and a text that are relevant as ever to those who have the misfortune of encountering colonists or "U.S. foreign policy," Baucis says softly. The text, apparently written by Chagoya, reads, "MY COUNTRY IS YOUR COUNTRY" (written above an image) and "YOUR COUNTRY IS YOURS TOO" (written below the image). The image between the two texts is perhaps one of the 19th century etchings. It depicts two men wearing only a white cloth wrap or shorts-like garment. The men are barefoot. Each man has a chair affixed to his back—the back of the chair against his back and head. The chair has shoulder straps like a backpack and another strap that goes around the forehead. In one chair is a pale-skinned figure that appears to be a woman in European dress. In the other chair is another pale-skinned figure that appears to be a man in European dress. Both the men carrying the chairs are of brown color. The figures are set against a map-like landscape that shows a forested mountainous route that seems to be the route of portage on which the indigenous men are carrying the colonists. An interesting aspect of the drawing is that the two porters appear to be in close proximity in the drawing, but if we look at where they are on the dotted trail depicted in the drawing as map, they would be miles apart. Similarly, the mountain in the map is in the background but one of the porters is grabbing a vine on the mountain as if he were climbing it. Baucis enjoys the drawing being two things at once. The lack of humanity of the Europeans she finds disgusting. She wonders, "Did the pale people feel put out at having to ride backwards?"

Baucis remembers, if she remembers correctly, Chagoya explaining once the difficulty he had in viewing one of the Maya codices housed in Europe—the Paris Codex. As she remembers, Chagoya was not welcomed as one might expect an important artist would be welcomed but was given a rather hard time. Baucis finds it disheartening that the three Maya codices that are confirmed as authentic are all in Europe, the Dresden Codex, the Madrid Codex, and the Paris Codex—named for the cities in which they are housed. In the section marked seven (two dots above a line) is another text handwritten by Chagoya, “HISTORY OF POST-STRUCTURALISM (ILLEGAL ALIEN VERSION).” Baucis thinks, “I don’t think I have the energy to deconstruct this one, but I like the sentiment.” A yellow rectangle fills most of the section—within it are some smudges of paint and what appears to be the covered rendering of a figure on a horse. Just above the yellow rectangle are what appear to be the hands of Christ with a view of open vestments and the Sacred Heart of Jesus—thorns around the heart and a cross coming out of the top. In the second section of the codex (two dots), Chagoya has written the word “love” with a stylized large “L” and with the “O” within the crook of the “L” and with the “V” within the “O” and the “E” within the “O” and the acute angle of the “V.” Baucis writes a note, “I imagine the word ‘love’ is to stand in for the possibility of humans loving other humans; for those who have suffered from christian colonialism, the heart of jesus as a symbol of divine love seems to have offered neither divine love nor love from those in power who put the symbol to use.”

This grouping of the seven works of which the Chagoya is part is listed in the gallery guide under the poetic fragment “All people are our potential comrades in the struggle against this decrepit order of the world” by David Brazil, from “Our Community” of 2012.

This section fits Baucis’s mood. In this case there being a direct connection between the rallying tenor of the poetic fragment and the struggle of the marginalized suggest by the works on display seems appropriate. She finds the gallery guide texts particularly helpful in this grouping in rounding out her understanding of histories. She first reads through the text describing David Cannon Dashiell’s 1992 work *Study for Queer Mysteries*:

These drawings are studies for a room-size installation that explores queer sexuality through the framework of the Dionysiac murals of the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii. David Cannon Dashiell’s reinterpretation of these murals shifts the identities of the Classical characters to groupings of Edwardian dandies and sci-fi women. The burn marks are the result of a fire that consumed the artist’s apartment. The year after he made these drawings, Dashiell died from the effects of AIDS. In the words of writer Alison Mairi Syme, “Taking the idea of Pompeii and the Mysteries frieze in particular as the symbolic bedrock of Western psychoanalysis and psychosexual identity, Dashiell’s work constitutes an archaeological exploration of the formation of individual and group identities. Employing a system of visualverbal punning akin to Freudian dream logic, Dashiell’s alternative archaeology both recovers and remakes a monument to queer identities and communities, past, present, and future.

Baucis had assumed the burn marks were intentional—and without knowing otherwise, learning the work had the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii as a starting point would have reinforced that mistake. Baucis considers the *Way Bay* organizers may have a particular soft spot for Dashiell given the Syme quotation—very few of the specific works listed in the gallery guide include quotations from named writers. Baucis is impressed with the 1993 paintings of the same title she finds on the web. In the paintings, Dashiell has used the red background of the Villa frescoes to great effect in setting off his own mysteries. Baucis moves on to read about the work of Suzanne Lacy and Kathleen Chang and their performances of the 70's *Angel Island Times Past*. The gallery guide text refers to the 1978 “newsprint, performance document from *The Life and Times of Donaldina Cameron*” that is shown in *Way Bay*:

This broadsheet features stories of Asian Pacific women who arrived in San Francisco by various means—Chinese women smuggled into the country, Japanese war brides—with historical images of these women. It was distributed to audiences that participated in a daylong excursion to Angel Island in San Francisco Bay. As the ferry carrying the audience approached the dock, a schooner sailed past with Suzanne Lacy and Kathleen Chang in period costumes. The artists docked and followed the audience to the top of the hill, where they related opposing narratives of Asian women’s immigration, with Lacy playing the part of a zealous social reformer and Chang performing as her husband’s real ancestor, indicting the cultural erasure and economic exploitation that awaited female migrants. The performance was produced by The Floating Museum, a project of Bay Area artist Lynn Hershman Leeson between 1975 and 1978. The Floating Museum was an early, unprecedented, artist-curated model for exhibiting public and site-specific art.

Baucis continues with her reading, looking at the two offerings by Ludwig Choris: a copy of his book *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* and a hand-colored lithograph from 1822 entitled *Five portraits of California Indians*. The gallery guide description explains a bit who Choris was and a bit about the state of the Indian population in the early eighteen hundreds:

In 1816, the twenty-one-year-old German-Ukrainian artist Ludwig Choris spent one month in the San Francisco Bay drawing the landscape and the area’s Ohlone inhabitants. He had come as part of Otto von Kotzebue’s Russian expedition in search of a northeast passage through the Bering Sea. Choris’s drawings were subsequently published in books and as hand-colored lithographic prints. At the time of Choris’s visit, there are estimated to have been at least ten thousand people of various Ohlone-speaking tribes living in the area between the San Francisco Bay and Monterey.

Baucis finds these works fitting continuations of the discussion raised by the first work, the coiled basketry tray, of *Way Bay*. Baucis considers for a moment a few pieces she notices have not been included. There are not depictions of Ishi or examples of his artifacts. Baucis understands how this could be the result of trying to avoid a narrative laden with approaches of

times past. It also strikes her that there are no works by Hans Hofmann in this first incarnation of *Way Bay*. She knows that there will be a retrospective of Hofmann's work coming up soon at BAMPFA; she remembers in the old museum space when there was on permanent display an obligatory floor of Hofmann's, and she smiles to herself thinking of a favorite Mike Kelley work—a "Suspected Child Abuse Report" dated 1995 listing Mike Kelley as the victim and listing the parent, and suspected abuser, as "Hans Hofmann." Baucis thinks, "If they had really wanted to they could have squeezed one in."

The David Huffman work *Hunter Gatherer* (Mixed media on paper) of 2007 is a good introduction to Huffman's work. The section in which this work appears follows well from the section before, with Huffman's work addressing many of the issues related to the African American experience but also flying a bit further into the fantastic, and it is well introduced with the nice line by Robert Duncan "the world as we reach stretches" from "Upon Taking Hold" of 1955-56. The gallery guide gives context:

The son of a Black Panther activist, David Huffman extends the social-justice struggle into the realm of science fiction. In works such as *Hunter Gatherer*, the artist explores alternate and future scenarios in which cohorts of "traumanauts" wander a landscape of broken monuments and dreams. In the words of Huffman, "The traumanauts are the psychological personalities coming from the rupture of slavery for Africans. I would label them a TRAUMAnaut, rather than an astronaut, because of this traumatic rupture of existence. From being captured, brought to America and parts of Europe, as workers, as slaves, there's a cultural identity that's been decimated. The traumanauts are constantly looking for a location, for home.

Baucis makes another note in her journal, "Another Huffman work that should be in the BAMPFA collection, or some Bay Area museum, is *Sideshow*; I think it is one of the great Bay Area paintings of the last thirty years." The 2009 work is also from the *Traumanauts* series and features traumanauts participating in a sideshow (an Oakland invention of gathering and performing often dangerous stunts with cars). View the work here http://david-huffman.com/Sideshow_large.html. And for a bit more context here are some lyrics from Richie Rich's 1990 song "Sideshow:"

Down Bancroft, to the light
Let me warm it up, I hit a donut tight
There's a Chevy on my side, windows straight tinted
I think he got hype when he saw me spin it
I'm up outta there, sideways to the next light

Baucis is far from finished, but she needs a break. She plans to think more about works not discussed here. She plans to return to the second incarnation of *Way Bay*—*Way Bay 2*. And, perhaps she will have time for the *Way Bay* "film, video, and audio recordings" that can be viewed here bampfa.org/waybay. She would also like to read more of the selections by the Bay Area writers.

Baucis at this moment holds in her hand a *Way Bay* postcard with text by Jack Spicer (1925-1965), "selected by Emily Wholahan." Baucis hopes Spicer would see that she got both out into the ocean and back again. The card announces the source of the excerpt, "Jack Spicer, excerpt from 'Dear Lorca,' from *my vocabulary did this to me: the Collected Poetry of Jack Spicer*. Edited by Peter Gizzi and Kevin Killian, Wesleyan University Press, 2008:"

Dear Lorca:

How difficult to take a boy in a blue bathing suit that I have watched as casually as a tree and to make him visible in a poem as a tree is visible, not as an image or a picture but as something alive—caught forever in the structure of words. Live moons, live lemons, live boys in bathing suits. The poem is a collage of the real.

But things decay, reason argues. Real things become garbage. The piece of lemon you shellac to the canvas begins to develop a mold, the newspaper tells of incredibly ancient events in forgotten slang, the boy becomes a grandfather. Yes, but the garbage of the real still reaches out into the current world making *its* objects, in turn, visible—lemon calls to lemon, newspaper to newspaper, boy to boy. As things decay they bring their equivalents into being.

Baucis writes one more note for the morning, "What kind of lemon will I beget?" And thinks, as she closes her notebook, "I wonder if Carol Bove or Alison Peabworth will have work in *Way Bay 2?*"

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