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The founding of the Art in Embassies program and the misrepresentation of American art.

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THE FOUNDING OF THE ART IN EMBASSIES PROGRAM AND THE
MISREPRESENTATION OF AMERICAN ART

By

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B.A., Walsh University, 2010

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Fine Arts
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May, 2013

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A Thesis Approved on

April 22, 2013

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family,
Timothy and Jane Distel and Aaron and Samantha Everhart,
whose support of every kind and nature have brought
such opportunities within reach.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a great debt of gratitude to the faculty of the Hite Art Institute that mentored me throughout writing this thesis. My advisor, Professor John Begley, offered advice, support, and guidance from selecting a topic to completing the final draft. He frequently made himself available to meet on short notice and dedicated time to helping me attain research funds. Many thanks to Dr. Jongwoo Jeremy Kim, who took a personal interest in seeing my thesis completed to the highest standards. His critiques, advice, and support, most often generated and delivered in his free time, were invaluable. I must also thank my family, Timothy and Jane Distel and Aaron and Samantha Everhart, who have supported me in manners too numerous to recount throughout my academic career. I am also indebted to the many friends and colleagues in Kentucky, Ohio, and elsewhere whose encouragement and support provided motivation and perspective during the most arduous times of writing.

ABSTRACT

THE FOUNDING OF THE ART IN EMBASSIES PROGRAM AND THE MISREPRESENTATION OF AMERICAN ART

Zachary Scott Distel

April 26, 2013

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s New York's Museum of Modern Art commodified the paintings of Abstract Expressionist artists. By commodifying the artwork, the Museum of Modern Art could then present it as a product of American capitalism thereby making it a powerful diplomatic tool for Cold War diplomacy. This was achieved through the Museum of Modern Art's curatorial decisions, exhibitions, covert dealings by the Museum's leadership, and formalist analysis during the period. Formalist analysis is focused on aestheticizing works of art. The State Department's Art in Embassies Program was directly influenced by the Museum of Modern Art and practiced the same commodification in its curatorial practices for exhibiting not only Abstract Expressionist but also Pop art. This curatorial practice undermined the anti-capitalist goals of both Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the invention of the term Abstract Expressionism by New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in the context of United States international diplomacy during the 1950s. My inquiry is centered on MoMA's pivotal influence on the development of curatorial practices of the Art in Embassy Program (AIEP) under its first director, Nancy Kefauver. Organized by the U.S. Department of State in 1964, the AIEP still places original works of American art in diplomatic offices and residences abroad. By theorizing the movement as a direct outcome of a capitalist democracy, MoMA established Abstract Expressionism as a powerful diplomatic tool. Johnathan Harris writes, "the institutional enshrinement of Abstract Expressionism...culminated in the Museum of Modern Art's show *The New American Painting*, which toured eight European capitals in 1958 and 1959."¹ This popular notion of Abstract Expressionism was asserted through exhibitions, clandestine dealings by MoMA's leadership, and formalist analysis of the artwork.

¹ Johnathan Harris, "Modernism and the Culture in the USA, 1930-1960," in *Modern Art Practices and Debates: Practices and Debates*, Paul Wood et al (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 62-3. See Appendix 1 for a list of artists included in the exhibition. In the catalog accompanying the exhibition, Alfred H. Barr argued that: "Abstract Expressionism, a phrase used ephemerally in Berlin in 1919, was re-invented (by the writer) about 1929 to designate Kandinsky's early abstractions that in certain ways do anticipate the American movement—to which the term was first applied in 1946." Here, Barr takes credit for inventing the concept of Abstract Expressionism. Alfred H. Barr, "Introduction," *The New American Painting: As Shown in eight European countries 1958-1959* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1959), 16.

MoMA's approach to Abstract Expressionism is revealed in its treatment of paintings by Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, and others as commodities. The historical triumph of consumerism, which is evident in the commodification that MoMA proposed in its exhibitions in the 1950s, was organized to parallel the diplomatic agendas of the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations, irrespective of Congressional and official government opinion of the artwork. Paul Wood defines a commodity as "something which is exchanged in the market for money or other commodities":

It is usually manufactured or subject to some kind of productive labor or singling out and is produced for exchange before its ultimate consumption. Production for private consumption is not commodity production; "commodity" is the term given to products when the process of production is centered upon market exchange.²

An important distinction between a commodity and, for example, a good is that the former is not produced for immediate or "private consumption," but is intended to be traded in the market. A commodity's value is predicated largely on its exchange value on a commodities market.

The American avant-garde of the mid-twentieth century critically engaged or disengaged with commodified society. Wood notes that "modern art has been fundamentally and doubly marked by commodification":

On the one hand this marking extends from the depiction by artists of a world of commodities to more diffuse forms of meaning expressive of the effects of commodification... On the other hand the productive system of art in the modern period itself became commodified. This is an important matter since its effect is implicitly to challenge the modernist work of art at its root, insofar as its actual condition as commodity within a productive system, an economy, stands at odds with its rhetorical condition as autonomous, pure, or free.³

² Paul Wood, "Commodity," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 383-4.

³ Wood, "Commodity," 382.

When MoMA commodified Abstract Expressionist paintings it negated their purported independence from the market as “modernist work[s] of art” as well as the artists struggle to be “autonomous, pure, or free” from American capitalism. In its later curatorial decisions, the AIEP continued this process by commodifying Pop art, too, neglecting to recognize its direct engagement and critique of the denigration of art as mere objects of exchange values. Wood describes the fundamental difference:

The principal ideological underpinning of the concept of expression in art had been the claim for its ‘directness’ as distinct from the mediations and conventions of commodified modernity. Always philosophically questionable in principle, this claim was now exhausted in practice. The commodity had, so to speak, triumphed again.

With authentic expression reduced to cliché such truth as was available had now to be won not merely from but through the jungle of commodities. The strategy that emerged from this in the late 1950s and 1960s was one of citation, born of the perception of a distinction akin to that made in philosophy between ‘use’ and ‘mention.’⁴

The artists characterized as Abstract Expressionists rejected and withdrew from commodified society while Pop artists utilized the symbols and products of commodities in their artwork. By the end of the 1950s, Abstract Expressionist painting had become a systematic, clichéd method, forcing young avant-garde artists to seek new modes of expression. Rather than trying to isolate themselves from commodification, Pop artists engaged with it in a critical manner.

In the AIEP’s curatorial decisions, Abstract Expressionism and Pop art appeared as unvaried parts of the same Cold War consumer culture. The 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow was dominated by a utopian, consumerist vision of capitalist culture. Vice President Richard Nixon lauded the prowess of American capitalist society to Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev in what would come to be known as the “Kitchen Debate.” With the two leaders sparring over the merits and superiority of their respective

⁴ Wood, “Commodity,” 401.

society's way of life, it was a contest of capitalist and communist ideologies. Speaking to Khrushchev, Nixon declared:

To us, the right to choose...is the most important thing. We don't have one decision made at the top by one government official.... We have many different manufacturers and many different kinds of washing machines so that the housewives have a choice.... Would it not be better to compete in the relative merits of washing machines than in the strength of rockets?⁵

Consumption was at the heart of the American identity of the 1950s and 1960s.

MoMA's establishment of Abstract Expressionism as a commodity and the AIEP's application of that theory to Pop art rendered the artwork as another product akin to washing machines within the context of American capitalism. Historian Elaine Tyler May defines the American postwar ideology as "successful breadwinners supporting attractive homemakers in affluent suburban homes."⁶ A "good" American was a prolific consumer of products. Thus, Nixon used American products from cleaning supplies to refrigerators as the manifest evidence of his society's superiority. Simultaneously, MoMA exhibited Abstract Expressionist works as commodities evidencing the superiority of American capitalist society. Examination of the AIEP's curatorial choices and interpretive text demonstrates how it adopted this theory for exhibiting Abstract Expressionism as well as Pop art.

⁵ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 20.

⁶ May, *Homeward Bound*, 21.

THE ART IN EMBASSIES PROGRAM: FROM MOMA TO THE STATE
DEPARTMENT

Although the United States' history spans more than two centuries, its participation in utilizing art for diplomacy is still young. Only in the last half-century has the U.S. government officially supported exhibiting American art in embassies and consulates. The first federal program in support of the arts did not occur until the New Deal, which created several public art programs such as designing graphic art for publications, training draftsmen for industrial sketches, and decorating public buildings such as post offices. In comparison to other Western powers in the middle of the twentieth century, the U.S. government was far behind in its efforts to support the arts at home and especially abroad. In this policy vacuum, instead of the government, private initiatives took up the task of promoting American art abroad.

Not only did the U.S. government fail to promote the arts, it was unusual in that it did not begin a nationally owned art collection until the 1940s. Countries such as England and France have vast networks of national art museums filled with collections spanning multiple millennia. These collections were drawn upon to decorate foreign office. In comparison, U.S. diplomats had no national collection from which to draw artwork.⁷

While the Smithsonian had been in existence for over a century and the National Gallery

⁷ Douglas McCreary Greenwood, *Art In Embassies: Twenty-Five Years at the U.S. Department of State 1964-1989* (Washington D.C.: Friends of Art and Preservation in Embassies, 1989): 17.

of Art opened in 1941, their collections were not numerous enough for mass lending to diplomatic buildings such as their European counterparts. The vast majority of art in the U.S. was, and is, held in private, non-profit collections. This would have rendered the search for, organizing, and processing of loans to embassies or consulates much more cumbersome and time consuming.⁸ This was especially true because each loan from a different institution means a different loan agreement and stipulations on the duration and nuances of the loan. In spite of these difficulties, there was still a desire within the U.S. government to utilize art for diplomacy.

Nelson Rockefeller served as a primary generator of the use of art for diplomacy.⁹ The first American use of art diplomacy was a series of exhibits organized by Rockefeller that went to Latin America during WWII to counter Nazi influence there. He did this during his first appointment to a federal position—Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs—under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The AIEP considers its earliest roots in this office and Rockefeller’s efforts.¹⁰ The quantity of exhibitions was not prolific, but this was not as significant as the fact they took place; Rockefeller established the U.S. initiative for art diplomacy.

While the U.S. government did not directly support the arts for the majority of the twentieth century, there was one other early foray into using art diplomacy in a State Department sponsored exhibition. In the summer of 1946 the State Department purchased 79 oil paintings for a total price of \$49,000 from a group of leading modern artists including Georgia O’Keefe, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Jack Levine, and Ben Shahn. A State

⁸ Because U.S. diplomats did not have a single, government owned collection to draw upon, a separate loan contract would have been required for each loaning institution.

⁹ Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2005): 363.

¹⁰ Greenwood, *Art in Embassies*, 19.

Department official explained this unique purchase: “The United States has demonstrated its superb ability to manufacture tanks, airplanes, guns, and all the other implements of war...The United States must demonstrate that it also has an interest in and a vigorous movement in the fields of art, music, and allied fields.”¹¹ There was also a more subtle rationale for supporting this exhibition. According to Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs William Benton, “Exhibitions of this kind also make an impact among Communists overseas because they illustrate the freedom with which and in which our American artists work.”¹² The initiative was dubbed *Advancing American Art* and after a successful trial exhibition in New York, the collection was divided with one selection going to Europe and the other to Latin America. Each exhibition was successful as it traveled from city to city. In Prague, for example, the exhibit was so successful that the Soviet’s organized a counter-exhibition but it failed miserably, only adding to the success of the U.S.’s. But while the exhibitions enjoyed acclaim abroad, criticism mounted within the U.S.¹³

Advancing American Art was cancelled following an outcry of criticism from Congress and President Truman as well as some private citizens. In a private letter sent April 2, 1947, President Truman expressed his distaste for *Advancing American Art* and modern art in general because much of it was not representational.¹⁴ The basis for further criticism of the exhibition was that it was a waste of tax dollars on “nonsensical ‘modern art,’” that the art was of poor quality and taste and did not represent America, and, more significantly, that the artists were suspected of “communistic ‘backgrounds’ or

¹¹ Michael L. Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters For The Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005): 28.

¹² Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 27.

¹³ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 35.

¹⁴ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 43.

‘affiliations.’”¹⁵ One of the paintings exhibited was Ben Shahn’s *The Clinic*, 1941. Shahn was born in Lithuania creating a blatant link to communism for critics to attack. His painting condemned him further because it depicts two working class women in a prenatal doctor’s waiting room where a sign hangs which pictures Christ and the caption: “Do I deserve prenatal care[?]” The painting calls attention to a topic deemed inappropriate for Cold War America, female sexuality, and advocates for equal access to prenatal care regardless of socioeconomic status. Shahn became a favorite villain for modern art opponents.

The exhibitions were recalled in June 1947 after spending less than a year abroad, and over the following months *Advancing American Art* had its budget drastically reduced. The State Department had no choice but to end the exhibition due to the communist imputations of its artwork. Critics of the exhibition succeeded in ending it by branding it “un-American” and linking it with communism.¹⁶ With the closing of *Advancing American Art* and in light of State Department statements about never exhibiting communist art, according to Frances Stonor Saunders: “the perception of avant-garde art as un-American had now been incorporated into official policy.”¹⁷ The closing of the exhibitions drew the battle line for proponents on each side of the modern art debate, but, perhaps most importantly, unleashed a public wave of criticism of modern art. Many in the art community lamented the lack of support for modern art and the significant criticisms coming from officials in the federal government. President Truman often liked to arise early in the day to visit the National Gallery before it opened and he

¹⁵ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 38.

¹⁶ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 56.

¹⁷ Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999): 257.



Figure 1. Ben Shahn, *The Clinic*, 1944-45, tempera on paper, 15 5/8 x 22 3/4 in., Georgia Museum of Art.

commented upon viewing the old masters: “It’s a pleasure to look at perfection and then think of the lazy, nutty moderns. It is like comparing Christ with Lenin.”¹⁸ One of the most boisterous assaults came from Representative George Dondero of Michigan who claimed “All modern art is communistic” and criticized avant-garde styles:

Cubism aims to destroy by designed disorder. Futurism aims to destroy by the machine myth...Dadaism to destroy by ridicule. [Abstract] Expressionism aims to destroy by aping the primitive and insane. Abstractionism aims to destroy by the creation of brain-storms...Surrealism aims to destroy by the denial of reason.¹⁹

Following the cancellation of *Advancing American Art*, critics, artists, and the art community were bitter and angry while the State Department was “gun-shy” to engage with art diplomacy.²⁰

Even with the avalanche of criticism that fell on *Advancing American Art*, a number of proponents for art diplomacy survived in the federal government and worked to redevelop ways to utilize art. After the political fiasco of *Advancing American Art* it seemed as though the federal government was wholeheartedly against modern art and art diplomacy, and many government representatives supported this supposition. This was, however, never entirely true. Throughout the 1950s there would nearly always be individuals who supported utilizing modern art for diplomacy, but there was little or no cohesive effort to defend this position. The federal government, and particularly the state department, became immobilized, never being able to fully rid itself of support for modern art nor ever be fully in control of official opinion. Those officials in support of policies to use art as a diplomatic tool were driven by the escalation of the Cold War as well as Soviet cultural programs.²¹

¹⁸ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 252.

¹⁹ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 253.

²⁰ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 51.

²¹ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 62-3.

The real challenge became making art diplomacy amenable to critics which required a fundamental shift in how officials perceived modern art. According to Michael Krenn, following the *Advancing American Art* disaster, “instead of as a tool to create a better world, art was increasingly portrayed as a weapon that might serve the need of American diplomacy and, perhaps, help thwart the march of communism.”²² With the transition to the Eisenhower Administration looming, proponents began to speak out for art diplomacy, and for a particularly American form of art as most representative.

Prominent individuals associated with MoMA and its diplomatic agenda for modern art described its utility for U.S. international diplomacy. Writing in the *Magazine of Art*, Robert Goldwater, a prominent art historian on the faculty of Queen’s College, critic, and curator, asserted: “We do not believe modern art is in any way subversive of democracy but rather an expression for American artists.”²³ In this statement Goldwater supported the capitalist vision of Rockefeller and MoMA for modern art.²⁴ The use of modern art for diplomacy (particularly against communism) was championed by the first Director of MoMA, Alfred Barr: “The modern artists’ nonconformity and love of freedom cannot be tolerated within a monolithic tyranny and modern art is useless for the dictator’s propaganda.”²⁵ Art was an exceptionally viable tool for diplomacy not only because of the situation presented by the Cold War, but also because “art exhibits projected truths about the U.S. beyond language, truths that came nearer than other means

²² Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 54.

²³ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 58.

²⁴ Goldwater was well connected in the elite circles surrounding MoMA during the 1950s. He co-curated an exhibition with Rene d’Harnoncourt and wrote the catalog for it: Robert Goldwater and Rene d’Harnoncourt, *Modern Art in Your Life*, The Museum of Modern Art (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1949). Meyer Schapiro organized gatherings of art historians that included Robert Goldwater and Alfred Barr. Goldwater was also the first director for Nelson Rockefeller’s Museum of Primitive Art.

²⁵ Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 268.

to revealing the national style, spirit, and soul.”²⁶ The term “art” is very general, however, and the debate that raged over it included many styles and mediums. The debate was fiercest and most clearly demonstrable in regards to one newly defined style, Abstract Expressionism.

The American art diplomacy of the mid twentieth century celebrated Abstract Expressionism. Ann Eden Gibson describes this avant-garde movement as “a rebellious movement... aimed not only to revolutionize representation by superceding America’s regionalism, realism, and recognizably national styles like French Cubism, but in doing so also to oppose America’s isolationism, imperialism, and ethnocentrism.”²⁷ An alternate definition is that it is a state of mind. It is characterized by a wide array of artist “ranging from the drip paintings of Jackson Pollock to the intensely coloured floating shapes of Mark Rothko.”²⁸ As a style, however, it was promulgated as distinctly American in nature and origin. Frances Stonor Saunders declares that “America’s cultural mandarins” championed Abstract Expressionism because it was “non-figurative and [purportedly] politically silent, it was the very antithesis to Socialist Realism. It was precisely the kind of art the Soviets loved to hate.”²⁹ In a politically conscious statement made for expressly diplomatic purposes, Nelson Rockefeller declared Abstract Expressionism was “free enterprise painting.”³⁰ Conversely, the Soviet Union championed Socialist Realism, a style aimed at imbuing the greatness of the USSR and

²⁶ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 364.

²⁷ Ann Eden Gibson, “Introduction,” in *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), xix.

²⁸ “Abstract Expressionism,” *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.echo.louisville.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t4/e5>[retrieved 11/18/12]

²⁹ Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 254.

³⁰ Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 258. The significance of this sentiment cannot be overstated. This idea propelled Rockefeller’s future endeavors in commodifying Abstract Expressionism to be utilized in diplomacy.

communism through *visually* realistic depictions of the idealized daily life of the proletariat. Its images and symbols were portrayed as rigid, monolithic in size, and a conglomeration of proscribed attributes rather than original creations. One CIA agent, indicating how art might deserve some government support, declared of Abstract Expressionism: “We recognized that this was the kind of art that did not have anything to do with socialist realism, and made socialist realism look even more stylized and more rigid and confined than it was.”³¹

Even with praise coming from the private and public sector, those that opposed using Abstract Expressionism for art diplomacy found it easy to brand as un-American. One aspect that made it an easy target was the fact that Pollock, Rothko, and other artists had been Communist activists in the 1930s, spurring a general dislike of Abstract Expressionism.³² Another fundamental issue was its non-representational basis. It was new and while it has figurative predecessors, opponents saw it as highly unfamiliar and non-traditional. One opponent went so far as to suggest, “If you know how to read them, modern paintings will disclose the weak spots in US fortifications, and such crucial constructions as Boulder Dam.”³³ Abstract Expressionism was the ideal style for proponents and the ideal target for opponents.

Nelson Rockefeller sought to showcase new American artwork to the world. He did not focus on art in general, writes former cultural diplomacy agent Richard T. Arndt, but specifically modern art from his native country: “Rockefeller *seemed* [emphasis

³¹ Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 260. The stark differences between Abstract Expressionism and Socialist Realism are easily perceived by viewing Jackson Pollock’s *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, one of his most popular paintings, and Boris Ioganson’s *Lenin’s Speech at the Third Congress of the Komsomol*, a highly praised painting which won the Stalin Prize for excellence in art in 1950.

³² Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 253.

³³ Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 253.

added] to have had no deeper motive in art export than displaying to the world the quality of his country's artistic production."³⁴ Rockefeller had other more complex motives than simply exporting his native country's artistic achievements. This was evident by his involvement in multiple organizations participating in art diplomacy geared toward extolling capitalist democracy.

Nelson was the grandson of Standard Oil founder John D. Rockefeller and one of the five brothers which founded the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The arts were always a part of his life and education; due in large part to his mother, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller³⁵, who was one of the primary founders of MoMA. Rockefeller's resume during the 1940s and 1950s includes several government and private positions which allowed him to influence art diplomacy, including the exhibits sent to Latin America during WWII. In 1954 President Eisenhower appointed Rockefeller his Special Adviser on Cold War Strategy. In his private life, Rockefeller was a trustee of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF). The Fund not only sponsored a think tank on foreign policy but also gave him philanthropic influence to support institutions and programs of his choice generously. Rockefeller's influence allowed him to sponsor a program that launched art diplomacy from an idea to an effort.

Under the leadership of Nelson Rockefeller, MoMA created its International Program to carry out art diplomacy neglected by the federal government in 1952. Rockefeller not only proposed the idea to the Museum board but also provided support

³⁴ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 363.

³⁵ 1874-1948. Married John D. Rockefeller Jr., sole heir to Standard Oil. She had six children. One girl, Abby, and five boys who would create and operate the Rockefeller Brothers Fund: John Davison, III, Nelson, Laurance, Winthrop, and David.

from the RBF as its “Treasurer and most active member.”³⁶ Rockefeller explained the basis of the International Program was to create “exhibitions presenting in foreign countries and the United States the most significant achievements of the art of our time, with the aim of promoting greater international understanding and mutual respect.”³⁷ He believed the International Program was necessary because “The United States government, unlike those of other countries, had not recognized the need for this form of cultural exchange, but it was hoped that the Museum’s initiative might ultimately lead to governmental support of a comparable program.”³⁸ Following the backlash to *Advancing American Art*, proponents of modern art perceived a bleak situation. This was believed not only due to the lack of government programs for exporting American culture abroad, but also because Congressional forces were attempting to stymie its very existence.

According to Helen M. Franc, writing on behalf of MoMA, by 1952 when the International Program was initiated:

The government had either foregone any responsibility for cultural exchange or had shown itself completely subservient to the Red-hunting forces in Congress—not only Senator Joseph McCarthy’s relatively short lived hearings of the 1950-53 but also the much longer-lasting operations of the House Un-American Activities Committee.³⁹

The International Program was a capable organization but was unequipped to achieve the goals MoMA had for it.

A year after the creation of the International Program, the International Council was established October 8, 1953. The general purpose of the International Council was to serve as an advisory body for the International Program and coordinate with other

³⁶ Helen M. Franc, “The Early Years of the International Program and Council,” in *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: At Home and Abroad*, ed by John Szarkowski and John Elderfield (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995): 109.

³⁷ Franc, “The Early Years,” 109.

³⁸ Franc, “The Early Years,” 109.

³⁹ Franc, “The Early Years,” 114.

institutions across the country to foster the exchange of cultural materials.⁴⁰ Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III⁴¹, serving as its chair, stated of the International Council:

[it] is to help provide for the interchange of ideas and the exchange of cultural materials which can lead to a greater understanding and mutual respect among nations... While many national governments abroad have recognized this need and supplied official means for this exchange, our own government, particularly in the field of modern art, has left this responsibility to individual enterprise and support.⁴²

Mrs. Rockefeller concisely points out the government's failure to support art diplomacy and eagerness to avoid modern art. Within the first year of the International Council's existence it coordinated with the wife of Ambassador L. Corrin Strong located in Oslo, Norway, to send an exhibition of American artwork to hang in the embassy residence.

The AIEP considers this exchange the first embassy exhibition in its lineage. It would be another decade, however, before the State Department formally initiated the program. The exhibition in Oslo was done on a trial basis but laid the foundation for future efforts and Mrs. L. Corrin Strong would be an essential character to future development. This exchange also solidified MoMA's position in the legacy of the AIEP.

It did not take long for the art-conscious public to notice the International Program's and International Council's activities. In 1954, *Art Digest* proclaimed of MoMA's activities:

'the naiveté of our officials is in some degree compensated for by the cultural sophistication of our private citizens, institutions and agencies.' This was 'the most effective antidote to the virulent anti-Americanism that exists today all over the world. We can be grateful that we have private citizens and institutions of sufficient conscience to undertake them and sufficient means to pay for them.'⁴³

The first exhibition organized by the International Council was *12 American Painters and Sculptors*. It received extensive press coverage at home and abroad with a diversity of

⁴⁰ See Appendix 2 for list of initial Council members

⁴¹ Wife of John D. Rockefeller III, son of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller.

⁴² Press Release, "International Council to be Founded to Aid Art Exhibition Program," The Museum of Modern Art, 4/1/1954

⁴³ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 84.

reactions. Significantly, the exhibition was free to display works by controversial artist such as Shahn and Pollock because it was privately funded.⁴⁴ The International Council did not desire its exhibits to be completely privately funded but did so to maintain its own agenda, under the guise of high standards of artistic integrity and quality. At the same time the International Council was founded, the federal government also founded a program with similar goals use art as a diplomatic tool.

President Eisenhower created the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1953 opening an avenue for art diplomacy. USIA was established to be an “independent organization responsible for all the country’s information activities abroad.”⁴⁵ Its stated purpose was “to submit evidence to people of other nations...that the objective and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will continue to advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress, and peace” and to avoid “strident and propagandistic material.”⁴⁶ The use of propagandistic material is nearly certain and is a discussion for another essay, but it is clear USIA and MoMA shared the diplomatic goal of using American “products” to demonstrate the superiority of American society. While USIA was created to distribute a vast array of materials, one of its activities was art exhibitions. Initiatives like USIA were wholeheartedly supported by another unique private organization besides the International Council.

Privately organized in 1948, the Committee on Government and Art completed a study of the relationship between the arts and government in 1954. Lloyd Goodrich, then Associate Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, was chair of the Committee when he wrote: “one of the most essential governmental art activities today should be

⁴⁴ Franc, “The Early Years,” 118-9.

⁴⁵ Franc, “The Early Years,” 116.

⁴⁶ Franc, “The Early Years,” 116.

exchanges of art exhibitions, *material* [emphasis added] and personnel with other nations.

In the present world situation, the importance of this is too obvious to need lengthy discussion.”⁴⁷ By referring to artworks as “material,” Goodrich uses commodifying language that agrees with MoMA’s framework for making modern art into a diplomatic tool. Goodrich asserted such diplomacy could not be done without government support.

In a Committee Report from 1954, Goodrich states:

[The Committee] recognizes that contemporary art is extremely diverse, including many valid but differing viewpoints, and that to represent these viewpoints in a balanced manner is one of the chief problems involved. It believes that governmental policies should be guided by bodies which are free from political influence.⁴⁸

Goodrich uses an aestheticizing argument for the artwork by calling for advisory bodies free of politics. Such bodies, according to Goodrich, would select works of art strictly on their artistic merits, not for their utility as diplomatic tools. Aestheticizing artwork was a fundamental aspect of commodification, a topic which will be discussed further in section 4. The following year, significant figures from the federal government spoke in favor of the same idea.

Speaking at MoMA in 1955, George Keenan and President Eisenhower affirmed their belief in art diplomacy. Both men lauded the efforts of the International Program and International Council when they delivered speeches at MoMA. Keenan, the architect of Cold War “containment policy” stated at a dinner at MoMA:

‘we are gradually becoming aware for the first time of the frightening extent to which negative conceptions about us prevail to one degree or another abroad.’ America was increasingly viewed as ‘vulgar, materialistic nouveaux riches, lacking in manners and in sensitivity, interested only in making money, contemptuous of every refinement of esthetic feeling.’ Therefore it was important to ‘show the outside world both that we have a cultural life and that we care something about it.’ If this could be done, ‘*I for my part*

⁴⁷ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 60.

⁴⁸ Lloyd Goodrich, “Government and Art: Committee Report,” *College Art Journal* vol 14, no 1 (Autumn, 1954), 52-3.

*would willingly trade the entire remaining inventory of political propaganda for the results that could be achieved by such means alone.[emphasis added]*⁴⁹

President Eisenhower also stated at a MoMA dinner in 1955 how he embraced modern art as a “pillar of liberty.”⁵⁰ The President elaborated on this sentiment:

As long as artists are at liberty to feel with high personal intensity, as long as our artists are free to create with sincerity and conviction, there will be healthy controversy and progress in art...How different it is in tyranny. When artists are made the slaves and the tools of the state; when artists become chief propagandists of a cause, progress is arrested and creation and genius are destroyed.⁵¹

With the addresses of Keenan and President Eisenhower there were significant proponents from the public sector which supported the efforts of the International Program and International Council to utilize modern American art for diplomacy.

Due to continued opposition throughout the federal government, however, the sentiments of Keenan and President Eisenhower were not implemented. One such example came when the USIA refused to continue support of an exhibition because of some of the artists represented. The exhibition was organized in 1956 in co-sponsorship with the American Federation of Art(AFA). It featured 100 paintings by 75 artists, “surveying the major trends in American art from the turn of the twentieth century to the present, including representative examples from realism to abstraction.”⁵² USIA deemed ten of the artists “social hazards”⁵³ and demanded the AFA remove them. The AFA refused to censor the show so the opinion of the White House was sought to resolve the issue. The exhibit was cancelled and from then on “there would be no government sponsorship of overseas exhibitions that included paintings made after 1917 (a significant

⁴⁹ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 90.

⁵⁰ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 271.

⁵¹ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 272.

⁵² Franc, “The Early Years,” 117.

⁵³ Franc, “The Early Years,” 117.

date because it was that of the Russian Revolution).”⁵⁴ Art diplomacy proponents were aghast at the President’s actions given his statements a year earlier at MoMA.⁵⁵ The President’s actions also demonstrate a further aspect of the government’s inconsistency in regard to the official opinion of modern art. Verbal support for the International Council as well as the establishment of the USIA came from President Eisenhower, but at a decisive moment he discredited modern art for diplomacy.

Government officials had once again contradicted their position on the debate over modern art by hindering the activities of the USIA. The official policy set by President Eisenhower indicated the State Department and USIA would not fully support “freedom of expression” or cease blacklisting artists.⁵⁶ Rene d’Harnoncourt, then director of MoMA, declared: “since the USIA had to work within a framework determined by political, *rather than solely artistic*[emphasis added], considerations, its presentations inevitably were tinged with an atmosphere of propaganda.”⁵⁷ D’Harnoncourt asserts MoMA’s dedication to aesthetics, a crucial aspect of the Museum’s commodification of the artwork. It was clear the bulk of the initiative for art diplomacy would continue to rely on the International Program and International Council.

Instead of the U.S. government, MoMA organized the majority of American presence and representation at the international art shows held in Venice and São Paulo throughout the first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁸ The first Venice Biennale was held in 1895 and its general purpose was to serve as a world’s fair exclusively for art. U.S. representation at the Venice Biennale was privately organized until 1964 when the USIA

⁵⁴ Franc, “The Early Years,” 117.

⁵⁵ Franc, “The Early Years,” 117.

⁵⁶ Franc, “The Early Years,” 116.

⁵⁷ Franc, “The Early Years,” 140-1.

⁵⁸ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 370.

took over. In the decade before official support was granted, the international community took note of the lack of U.S. government involvement. One of the earliest efforts of the International Council as stated in a press release was the “organization of exhibitions for the United States Pavilion at the[1954] Venice Biennale, just purchased by funds provided for the International Program.”⁵⁹ At the 1954 Biennale where the U.S. representation was organized by MoMA, it was the only privately facilitated effort among twenty nations.⁶⁰ USIA staff was prohibited from participating because of the inclusion of artists such as Shahn in the exhibition.⁶¹ Just one year earlier at the São Paulo Biennale, the U.S. was the only major power not to support its national presence.⁶² MoMA continued to organize exhibitions in São Paulo, commenting on its efforts in 1957: “The United States section unlike those of other countries was not government sponsored but was organized at the invitation of the Bienal authorities by the International Program of [MoMA] ...and presented under the auspices of the newly established International Council.”⁶³ With the International Program and International Council organizing the exhibitions, MoMA was free to send a collection of paintings by controversial artist Pollock, which was the feature of American representation in 1957. The Venice and São Paulo Biennials served as defining moments for official, especially State Department, support for the arts, in which the government clearly abdicated its ownership.

⁵⁹ Press Release, The Museum of Modern Art, 4/1/1954.

⁶⁰ Franc, “The Early Years,” 122.

⁶¹ Franc, “The Early Years,” 122.

⁶² Franc, “The Early Years,” 120.

⁶³ Press Release, “American Artists Win Recognition at Sao Paulo Bienal,” The Museum of Modern Art, 9/20/1957.

There were, however, limited instances during the 1950s where the USIA and State department provided indirect support. The government programs' support came in the form of subsidizing transportation costs and exhibition catalogues while the International Council supported art and artists unable to gain government support.⁶⁴ It is important to recognize that by organizing the catalogues, federal agencies were then able to control the interpretive texts and critical framework for exhibitions. When the USIA staff was prohibited from participating in the 1954 Venice Biennale, it was not due to a lack of eagerness on the part of the agency. The ambassador to Italy vehemently opposed modern art and thwarted their efforts. In 1955 and 1956, exhibits were held in Barcelona and London. Barcelona received assistance from the Embassy in Madrid and the London exhibit was done in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy there. Ben Shahn and art historian Meyer Shapiro were sent to London to deliver lectures in conjunction with the exhibition. Each had their travel expenses covered, Shahn by the International Council and Shapiro by the State Department.⁶⁵ One of the purposes for founding the International Program and International Council was to encourage government participation and support which it did through such collaborations.

The exhibitions MoMA was creating were certainly successful in their own right, but were not eliciting the desired level of response from Washington. Porter McCray, director of the International Program, writing to Rene d'Harmoncourt in 1956 said:

Especially in view of the USIA's present orientation and the probability that exhibitions assembled under its auspices may become increasingly conservative, it seems that The Museum of Modern Art is the only institution likely to

⁶⁴ Franc, "The Early Years," 122.

⁶⁵ Franc, "The Early Years," 127.

organize this kind of representation for showing abroad and our obligation to do so is thereby all the greater.⁶⁶

This lack of response also frustrated the International Council, but allowed it to utilize the most contested style of the era—Abstract Expressionism. Throughout the 1950s, writes Franc, the International Program’s activities “coincided with the ascendancy of the first indigenous American style of modern painting to attract international attention, Abstract Expressionism” and its exhibitions, supported indirectly by the world’s foremost superpower, “led to recognition of its validity and worldwide influence.”⁶⁷ The exhibitions offered a mix of wartime US guests such as Marcel Duchamp with native artists and “the mix proclaimed that America had assimilated Europe’s best and become a new world art center.”⁶⁸ Abstract Expressionism was the leading American style and MoMA’s efforts were pushing it abroad. Even if there were private desires within the USIA or State Department to “push Abstract Expressionism, the reality of the McCarthy era was that the agency could not co-organize an exhibit of such vanguard art.”⁶⁹ For the first time in history the United States was the leader in the art world and sending its art abroad, just not in an official capacity. In spite of the government’s inability to directly champion Abstract Expressionism it continued to encourage programs to send American art abroad, which also coincided with MoMA’s own agenda.

These continued efforts resulted in the first program directly related to the AIEP and represented a major step toward its creation. President Eisenhower initiated the “People to People” program in 1957 which “established a subcommittee on American Art

⁶⁶ Michael Kimmelman, “Revisiting the Revisionists: The Modern, Its Critics and the Cold War,” in *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: At Home and Abroad*, ed by John Szarkowski and John Elderfield (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995): 49.

⁶⁷ Franc, “The Early Years,” 144.

⁶⁸ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 368.

⁶⁹ Kimmelman, “Revisiting the Revisionists,” 49.

in Embassies and Consulates”.⁷⁰ The program was underfunded and produced few results—only 18 paintings were donated to the State Department and fewer than 60 loans were made. MoMA recognized the “People to People” program was not succeeding and in response began its own embassy program.⁷¹

In 1960 MoMA initiated its Art in Embassies Project that expanded its original embassies efforts from 1953. About the project, a May 11, 1960 press release from MoMA states: “The purpose of the plan is to make available original works of art for the residences of our ambassadors and foreign service officers in order to represent American creative achievements and to demonstrate this country’s interest in the visual arts.”⁷² The release also traces the history of the “Art in Embassies” initiative:

The original impetus for ‘Art in Embassies’ was given by Mrs. L. Corrin Strong when she and her husband went to Norway when he was appointed United States Ambassador there in 1953. At her bequest a number of works of art were lent by the Museum of Modern Art and other collectors. The success of this trial experiment led Mrs. Strong and other members of the [Art in Embassies] Committee to raise special funds and to organize this project so that many United States Embassies in various parts of the world could borrow American works of art and works by artists of other nationalities to hang in their official residences.⁷³

MoMA’s Project was sending artwork not only by modern American artists but also modern European artists. In spite of the volatile nature of the artwork being utilized by the Project, the press release also states: “From its inception, the ‘Art in Embassies’ project, which is being administered by the Museum of Modern Art, has benefited from the advice and encouragement of the United States Department of State.”⁷⁴ Even though the federal government repeatedly expressed its distaste for modern art, the actions of the

⁷⁰ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 194-5. This program also initiated a “Sister Cities” program to exchange artists between U.S. cities and assigned international counterpart.

⁷¹ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 195.

⁷² The Museum of Modern Art, Press Release, 5/11/1960.

⁷³ The Museum of Modern Art, Press Release, 5/11/1960.

⁷⁴ The Museum of Modern Art, Press Release, 5/11/1960.

State Department do not reflect this to be a universal opinion, further evidence of the inconsistency of official opinion.

Two years after the Project's creation, reports indicate more embassies began displaying controversial artwork. A 1962 press release from MoMA lists Ben Shahn as having works in embassies. A separate report also stated that "A unique collection of Rothkos hung in Edward Stone's graceful embassy in [New] Delhi so successfully that the embassy had to set up weekend visiting hours."⁷⁵ MoMA considered the Art in Embassies Project as another necessity for it to undertake due to the lack of government action. Waldo Rasmussen, then director of the International Council, "characterized its project as an attempt to stimulate the government's involvement in the visual arts."⁷⁶ That is exactly what the Project did although the immediate reaction was of a defensive nature. The State Department was concerned with the artwork MoMA was placing on embassy walls.⁷⁷ The exhibitions were now encroaching on government property on an ad hoc basis at the bequest of ambassadors and other government officials abroad. According to Andrew Solomon, writing for the AIEP, while the exhibitions the International Council created for embassies were done in cooperation with the State Department, they were not sanctioned under any policy. As ambassadors increasingly relied on the International Council, "it became clear that the display of such exhibitions had political ramifications."⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 375.

⁷⁶ Douglas McCreary Greenwood, *Art In Embassies: Twenty-Five Years at the U.S. Department of State 1964-1989* (Washington D.C.: Friends of Art and Preservation in Embassies, 1989): 24.

⁷⁷ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 195.

⁷⁸ Andrew Solomon, "The Art in Embassies Program: The American Tradition of Cultural Diplomacy," in *The Art in Embassies Program: In Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of The U.S. Department of State Art in Embassies Program* (Washington D.C.: The Art in Embassies Program, 2004): 3.

Robert H. Thayer, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, wrote a report in 1961 outlining how the State Department should take over the Project's activities in an official capacity. Thayer's report represented both sides of the argument over modern and contemporary art. He wrote embassies "can and should become windows through which the people of foreign countries can see American works of art of all kinds and periods."⁷⁹ The artwork going on embassy walls, however, should be selected by a panel which would "afford ample protection to the Department on the many controversial issues which exist in the field of the arts, particularly in the field of contemporary art."⁸⁰ The panel Thayer called for would protect the integrity of the art, but also the State Department from Congressional onslaughts. He outlined a detailed system of checks:

Ambassadors should be instructed by the Secretary of State that no changes should be made in the decoration of the Embassies or of the reception rooms of their residences without the approval of the Panel of Interior Design evidenced by a letter from the Executive Secretary of the Panel.⁸¹

Simultaneously, Thayer also declared that "criticism from the Congress and elsewhere is bound to descend on any group making a selection of contemporary art, but this is all the more reason for the appointment of a selection committee of the highest quality whose distinction and objectivity will withstand all political onslaughts."⁸²

Much of the report is dedicated to the machinery of Thayer's ideal State Department operated program, but lacked attention to theory. The Thayer Report was largely silent on the fundamental theories or opinions that would dictate the curatorial process of the AIEP. Thayer used phrases such as "accurately reflect American life" and

⁷⁹ Robert H. Thayer, *The Placing of American Works of Art in United States Embassies; A Study and Recommendations*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1961, preface 1.

⁸⁰ Thayer, *Placing of American Works*, preface 1.

⁸¹ Thayer, *Placing of American Works*, 6.

⁸² Thayer, *Placing of American Works*, 13.

offer “some of the cultural impact and flavor of the United States”⁸³ to describe his ideal kind of art. The report did not name any artists or particular styles other than contemporary and traditional. Thayer offered precise machinery to direct decisions, but little as to how those decisions should actually be made. It was further evidence of the lack of coherency in the opinion of the federal government in regard to utilizing modern art for diplomacy. The language in the report was appropriately vague to appease all parties. Thayer’s report was a departure from MoMA’s Project when he called for the government’s program to only display American artwork.⁸⁴ This was, perhaps, a politically savvy concession by Thayer to focus only on American artwork to appease conservative Congressional leaders opposed to modern art.

Two years after Thayer wrote his report President Kennedy acted on the suggestions and created the AIEP. The last appointee President Kennedy made before his assassination in 1963 was Nancy Kefauver to head the AIEP. The wife of the late Senator Estes Kefauver, Kefauver had taken art lessons in her native Scotland as well as in Paris, and was an amateur artist. She possessed little professional training as a curator and had not been highly active in the arts community since her youth. Later in his life, Thayer candidly wrote to a colleague: “Unfortunately, the first appointee [of the AIEP] was a purely political one, Mrs. Kefauver, who had had no experience in the arts and whose taste, frankly, was subject to considerable question.”⁸⁵ Despite her lack of experience, with little funding and a limited staff Kefauver aggressively began sending artwork to embassies following in MoMA’s footsteps.

⁸³ Thayer, *Placing of American Works*, 3.

⁸⁴ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 196.

⁸⁵ Robert H. Thayer to James A. Donovan, Jr., October 19, 1976, Robert Helyer Thayer Papers, 1920-1980, MSS76877, The Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

While differing in certain aspects politically, the AIEP was an extension of the International Council's Art in Embassy Project. The AIEP had two stated purposes at its founding. One was to "enhance the physical beauty of the embassy residences," but more significantly was "to suggest the depth and quality of a nation that in a little over two hundred years had come of age culturally."⁸⁶ At its founding, the AIEP "sent contemporary or recent work abroad" and "The early emphasis on newer material was an outgrowth of the policies of the International Council."⁸⁷ The AIEP adopted and continued MoMA's agenda to commodify Abstract Expressionist paintings to make them powerful tools of international diplomacy. It is also important to remember, writes Solomon, "that though American commitment to American art had been well established for many years, foreign interest in American art escalated in the '50s and early '60s."⁸⁸ The AIEP was a direct descendent of MoMA's effort to push Abstract Expressionism abroad. President Kennedy had to establish the AIEP by executive order which was "made necessary by the congressional refusal to fund art for embassy walls."⁸⁹ Congress maintained its opposition to modern art as well as activities reflective of the International Council.

Following its creation, however, the AIEP was not enthusiastically embraced nor excused from criticism within the federal government. The incoherency of official opinion toward art diplomacy remained into the 1960s. The political environment the AIEP was founded in, states Douglas McCreary Greenwood writing on behalf of AIEP, was not much different from when the International Program and International Council

⁸⁶ Greenwood, *Art in Embassies*, 18.

⁸⁷ Solomon, "The Art in Embassies Program," 7.

⁸⁸ Solomon, "The Art in Embassies Program," 7.

⁸⁹ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 375.

were founded: “Implications from the McCarthy era that contemporary art was either subversive or Communist-inspired, or both, lingered long into the Sixties.”⁹⁰ President Nixon in a White House memo dated January 26, 1970 stated: “As you, of course, know those who are on the modern art and music kick are 95 percent against us anyway. I refer to the recent addicts of Leonard Bernstein and the whole New York crowd.”⁹¹ Another term for Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s was the “New York School” and it made New York City an art capital of the world. President Nixon had been involved in the national scene long enough to know this. He also added a post script to his memo which stated: “I also want a check made with regard to the incredibly atrocious modern art that has been scattered around the embassies around the world,” and concludes:

We, of course, cannot tell the Ambassadors what kind of art they personally have, but I found in travelling around the world that many of our Ambassadors were displaying the modern art due to the fact that they were compelled to because of some committee which once was headed up by Mrs. Kefauver [a Democrat] and where they were loaned some of these little uglies from the Museum of Modern Art in New York. At least, I want a quiet check made—not one that is going to hit the newspapers and stir up all the troops—but I simply want it understood that this Administration is going to turn away from the policy of forcing our embassies abroad or those who receive assistance from the United States at home to move in the direction of off-beat art, music and literature.⁹²

If the AIEP was a direct extension of the efforts to push Abstract Expressionism and American art abroad, President Nixon represented an extension of the efforts to counter it, perhaps having more to do with his perceived political enemies than the art itself. More in depth research needs to be done to determine how effective the President’s request was at removing modern art from embassy walls, but one can surmise that the continuous efforts of the AIEP throughout his Administration are evidence he was not very successful. This was also likely true because not all the efforts to put art in

⁹⁰ Greenwood, *Art in Embassies Program*, 29.

⁹¹ Richard Nixon, Personal communication to Bob Haldeman, January 26, 1970.

⁹² Richard Nixon, Personal communication to Bob Haldeman, January 26, 1970.

embassies were immediately transferred to the auspices of the State Department as MoMA and the Woodward Foundation continued their efforts.

While its exhibits enjoyed success from the beginning of its efforts, the AIEP was underfunded and understaffed necessitating the continued assistance of private efforts. An April 1966 press release from MoMA provides an update of its own Art in Embassies Project and also states: “Last year the State Department also began a program under the aegis of Mrs. Nancy Kefauver and has supplied art for 25 embassies. As there are 115 embassies, and as the collections change as ambassadors change, all three agencies are fully occupied.”⁹³ The third agency referenced here is the Woodward Foundation, a private initiative created to carry out similar activities as the International Council’s Project. The Foundation was much smaller than the Project but made generous loans from its own private collection of modern and contemporary art.

The activities of the AIEP were suddenly altered in November, 1967 with the unexpected death of Nancy Kefauver. Kefauver was attending a banquet at the White House on November 22 when she collapsed and later died at the age of 55 as the result of a stroke. In just over four years Kefauver brought the AIEP to life and curated exhibitions at politically strategic locations such as the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, Moscow, Kuala Lumpur, and New Delhi. The loss of Kefauver’s vigor essentially ceased AIEP exhibitions until her successor was named more than a year later. She had been thrust into a volatile contemporary art market and a contentious period of U.S. history, a situation

⁹³ The Museum of Modern Art, Press Release, 4/1/1966.

she had not been prepared for. Despite this Kefauver entered and maneuvered within the mid-century American avant-garde scene with confidence. Kefauver's brief career as the Director of the AIEP was marked by her unique curatorial decisions which will be the focus of section 6.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART: COLD WAR CONDUIT

A discussion of the ascension of Abstract Expressionism must be about the Museum of Modern Art as much as the artwork itself. The story of Abstract Expressionism is intertwined with MoMA at a fundamental level. Abstract Expressionism had the precedents for its reception as well as its position in American society deeply influenced through MoMA officials. They were able to do this through the network of prominent characters involved with the institution, their affiliations, and the exhibition schedule they planned for Abstract Expressionist artwork. The most prominent of these figures was Nelson Rockefeller. His ties to MoMA can be traced back to the institution's inception as his mother Abby Aldrich Rockefeller was one of the co-founders. That Rockefeller served as the museum's president throughout most of the 1940s and 50s clearly shows the access he had to the institution. Abstract Expressionism was one of his keenest artistic interests within his personal collection, exceeding 2,500 works in this style which he considered examples of "free enterprise painting."⁹⁴ The wartime exhibitions he planned as the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and while serving as President Dwight D. Eisenhower's special advisor on Cold War strategy in 1954, and the briefings he received from CIA officials about covert cultural operations nearly certify that Rockefeller was

⁹⁴ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 258.

aware of government aims and activities.⁹⁵ Considering his position as the president of MoMA, his influence on the International Council, and as a trustee of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller “presided over some of the most influential minds of the period as they thrashed out definitions of American foreign policy.”⁹⁶

One of these individuals was Tom Braden who was MoMA’s managing director⁹⁷ between 1947 and 1949. After Braden no longer worked at MoMA he became a CIA official closely linked to covert non-military aspects of the Cold War. Art was, for him, mainly a tool that could be controlled; in his view “progressive artists need an elite to subsidize them, the public is incapable of recognizing good art.”⁹⁸ Patronage involved much more than supporting an artist or their art: Braden’s conception was that it “carried with it a duty to instruct, to educate people to accept not what they want, or think they want, but what they ought to have.”⁹⁹ This desire to construct and maintain an elite establishment was evident in the agenda of another MoMA official.

William Burden’s involvement at MoMA spanned multiple decades. He joined the Advisory Committee in 1940, was appointed chairman of the Committee on Museum Collections in 1947, and in 1956 he became MoMA’s president. In his private life he was a highly successful venture capitalist and a descendent of “commodore” Vanderbilt. Burden “epitomized the Cold War establishment.”¹⁰⁰ Men like Rockefeller, Braden, and Burden represented a presence of not only the establishment within MoMA, but a link to official government Cold War policy for culture.

⁹⁵ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 261.

⁹⁶ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 260.

⁹⁷ This title is presumably parallel to “acting director” as MoMA lacked a director from the end of Alfred Barr’s tenure in 1943 until the appointment of Rene d’Harnoncourt in 1949.

⁹⁸ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 259.

⁹⁹ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 259.

¹⁰⁰ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 261.

This link is pivotal for understanding how MoMA and the U.S. government sought to utilize modern art. MoMA and its International Council sought to publically appear to be functioning independently, but were actually operating as a nexus for Cold War cultural initiatives. The listed men and their colleagues created an ambiguous network of links to the private sector and federal agencies, namely the CIA and the State Department. Individuals operating at the top of MoMA's hierarchy funneled and processed agendas meant to promulgate, through international exhibitions, the government's idealistic vision of American culture. Rockefeller and his elitist colleagues influenced MoMA's "big picture" agenda, but they also had to make that agenda manifest in the day-to-day operations.

These agendas were transformed into institutional initiatives and exhibitions by the leading members of MoMA's staff who were cognizant of diplomatic ramifications. MoMA's second director Rene d'Harnoncourt served as a liaison for Rockefeller and his committee members to implement their cultural diplomacy agenda. When d'Harnoncourt assumed the directorship in 1949 under Braden's presidency, he became the custodian for access to MoMA's influence and abilities as an institution. He not only controlled access to the physical and intellectual resources MoMA constituted, but openly sought support for initiatives in Congress. Believing that "modern art in its infinite variety and ceaseless exploration" was the "foremost symbol" of democracy, he lobbied Congress to support anti-Communist cultural campaigns.¹⁰¹ During those years he also reported to the State Department. Before d'Harnoncourt became director, his predecessor, Barr, had labored in a concerted campaign within the arts community to promote Abstract Expressionism as a unique and original American style.

¹⁰¹ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 262.

Alfred Barr served as the first director of MoMA from 1929 to 1943. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller invited Barr to the directorship where he would cultivate Abstract Expressionism from an institutional position. Barr utilized tactical precision and cunning to achieve his goals for promoting modern art. The significance of Abstract Expressionism was evident to him early on in his directorship but he was not blind to the opposition toward it. In a tactful, if not outright deceptive, manner he relied on a “two-pronged” approach whereby he scheduled exhibitions of romantic or representational artwork to appease prevailing tastes.¹⁰² This allowed him to simultaneously acquire Abstract Expressionist paintings and subtly garner support for such works.¹⁰³

Out of this web of individuals and institutional affiliations, MoMA played a prominent role in establishing Abstract Expressionism as the dominant and original American style. The extent and impact of that influence, however, is a point of contention among art historians including Eva Cockcroft, Michael Kimmelman, Frances Stonor Saunders, and David Craven. One contested issue in this vast scholarship is the analysis of Abstract Expressionism’s relationship with the federal government as an instrument of diplomacy. Among these scholars a main point of debate is the extent and thoroughness to which MoMA acted as an agent for the federal government in utilizing Abstract Expressionism as a diplomatic “weapon.”

¹⁰² In 1940 MoMA simultaneously showed an “Exhibition of Italian Masters” including such artwork as Boticelli’s *Birth of Venus*, 1486, Raphael’s *Madonna of the Chair*, 1514, and Titian’s *Paul III*, 1546, alongside an “Exhibition of Modern Masters,” which had a wide scope including Van Gogh, Rousseau, Brancusi, Matisse, Braque, and Picasso. Alfred Barr wrote the catalogue which accompanied the “Exhibition of Italian Masters.” While the “Exhibition of Modern Masters” did not include Abstract Expressionists, MoMA and Barr utilized the simultaneous showing of these exhibitions to draw parallels between modern and classical art. The Museum of Modern Art, “Museum of Modern Art Opens Exhibition of Italian Masters and Exhibition of Modern Masters,” Press Release, January 23, 1940.

¹⁰³ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 266.

Eva Cockcroft wrote one of the earliest and most effective essays analyzing MoMA's involvement. In "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War," Cockcroft argues that MoMA promulgated Abstract Expressionism for political ends:

Links between cultural cold war politics and the success of Abstract Expressionism are by no means coincidental, or unnoticeable. They were consciously forged at the time by some of the most influential figures controlling museum policies and advocating enlightened cold war tactics designed to woo European intellectuals.¹⁰⁴

Cockcroft highlights the International Program and International Council as "major supporters" of Abstract Expressionism through their use of it as an implement of Cold War diplomacy. MoMA did not push Abstract Expressionism abroad as part of international diplomacy for purely patriotic reasons: the Museum tried to establish its own dominance within the international and domestic art community. Figures such as Rockefeller, Braden, d'Harnoncourt, and Barr are dissected to show how they functioned as agents of cultural diplomacy for the CIA. Modern art exhibitions produced by the International Program consisting primarily of Abstract Expressionist artworks were sent to international exhibitions in London, São Paulo, Paris, and Tokyo. Cockcroft highlights how most other nations' artworks at such exhibitions were government-sponsored, lending the International Program a "quasi-official character" by association.¹⁰⁵ MoMA had to sponsor these exhibitions due to limitations placed on the CIA and State Department by Congress. As a private non-profit organization, the Museum was free to put on such exhibitions extolling life and benefits under capitalism. Because the Museum was "freed from the kinds of pressure of unsubtle red-baiting and super-jingoism applied to official governmental agencies" it could push federal cultural agendas in a subtler,

¹⁰⁴ Eva Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War," in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, ed. By Francis Frascina (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 126.

¹⁰⁵ Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War," 128.

more productive fashion.¹⁰⁶ Cockcroft clearly establishes the intricate web of relationships and interests existing between MoMA and the CIA during the McCarthy years.

Following Cockcroft's condemning essay a number of art historians reasserted her argument from the later 1970s through the early 1990s. Eventually, however, MoMA mounted a counterattack to her accusations. Art critic Kimmelman, writing for MoMA in its publication *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: At Home and Abroad*, attempted to use statistical data to debunk Cockcroft and her affiliates. He also attempted to demonstrate that MoMA's critics were a product of their historical context.

Kimmelman writes with feigned authority to undermine Cockcroft and her fellow critics. He attempts to debunk them based on their own context: "Context is essential to revisionist historians and critics. And their critique of the Modern has a context as well. Namely the late 1960s and early 1970s, the era of the Vietnam War and domestic social upheaval."¹⁰⁷ He references such happenings as the covert bombing of Laos and the Watergate scandal, which spurred widespread distrust of government and those affiliated with it. Kimmelman attempts to equate Cockcroft's critical art history with the anti-establishment sentiments of the era, as opposed to the very established nature of MoMA by this time.

Beyond their historical context Kimmelman anatomizes Cockcroft's statistical data and reading of that data. Kimmelman writes:

The Modern did not, as Cockcroft [sic]¹⁰⁸ contended, take sole responsibility for the U.S. representation at the Biennales from 1954 through 1962: It ceded that task twice—to The Art Institute of Chicago (in 1956) and to The Baltimore Museum of Art (1960). As for the Sao Paulo Bienal, the Modern put together only three of the U.S. exhibitions between

¹⁰⁶ Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War," 129.

¹⁰⁷ Kimmelman, "Revisiting the revisionists," 42.

¹⁰⁸ Throughout his entire essay, Kimmelman misspells Cockcroft's name as "Cockroft."

1953 and 1965 (in 1953, 1957, and 1961); others were organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1955), the Walker Art Center (1963), the Minneapolis Institute (1959), and the Pasadena Art Museum (1965).¹⁰⁹

According to Kimmelman, not only are portions of Cockcroft's data incorrect, but also her interpretation of correct data are flawed. Writing about Cockcroft's analysis of MoMA's exhibition of 1955-56 "Modern Art in the United States," Kimmelman asserts:

Cockcroft claimed ["Modern Art in the United States"] included a dozen Abstract Expressionists, had works by 112 artists in all.

How is one to judge the meaning of such statistics, in any case? Is the number of participants or pictures a reliable guide to the character of an exhibition? What about the placement and size of the pictures? What about the language of the exhibition's promotional and educational materials? What about the extent to which the art may, or may not, have been selected and analyzed in ways indebted to Abstract Expressionist values?

One needs to know more about the big survey of 112 artists organized by Dorothy Miller, for example, which Cockcroft cited. Did the Abstract Expressionists culminate a chronological progression, or did they constitute a critical mass that outnumbered any other cluster of artists? The evidence is ambiguous.¹¹⁰

Kimmelman takes a strategically astute approach by calling attention to such curatorial aspects as gallery layout and educational material. An exhibition cannot be judged solely by the artwork included, but the curators have a significant impact through their myriad choices in how to exhibit those works, an aspect Cockcroft neglects.

Kimmelman does not deny a link between MoMA and Abstract Expressionism existed but he argues that relationship had been sensationalized. MoMA sent numerous exhibitions containing Abstract Expressionist works abroad, but Kimmelman argues MoMA was not always the initiator of the efforts. Referencing a 1956 exhibition held in Europe, Kimmelman writes: "D'Harnoncourt's foreword to the American catalogue reiterates ... '*The New American Painting* was organized at the request of European institutions...'"¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Kimmelman, "Revisiting the revisionists," 45.

¹¹⁰ Kimmelman, "Revisiting the revisionists," 45.

¹¹¹ Kimmelman, "Revisiting the revisionists," 49.

The evidence all points, for Kimmelman, away from MoMA. Acquisitions and exhibition rosters demonstrate how critics of MoMA over-assert superficial links between anti-Communist cultural programs and the Museum's embrace of Abstract Expressionism. Kimmelman, however, overstates his own argument when he declares: "In fact, the Modern would seem to have been slow to take up Abstract Expressionism's cause. Its circulating shows stressed European masters, as did shows at the Museum."¹¹² Kimmelman ultimately concedes that Cockcroft and her affiliates were not fundamentally wrong in arguing MoMA embraced Abstract Expressionism, but he claims their argument was sensationalized and ascribed non-existent intent. The proliferation of Abstract Expressionism was certainly encouraged by MoMA, but Kimmelman argues that relationship was not as concrete or purposeful as Cockcroft and her affiliates profess. The "statistical and historical assumptions" they make, according to Kimmelman, do not align with the evidence.¹¹³ Kimmelman's assessment of Cockcroft's argument would seem to undermine her analysis, his own analysis, however, also has significant flaws.

Five years after Kimmelman's essay appeared in a MoMA publication, Frances Stonor Saunders published a book focusing on the use of culture as a diplomatic tool in the United States during the Cold War. In her chapter titled "Yanqui Doodles" Saunders analyzes the triangular relationship between MoMA, the CIA, and Abstract Expressionism. Acknowledging the manifold ties and cultural influence between MoMA officials and the CIA, Saunders does not find their relationship startling, but rather self-evident of mid-century Cold War America. The social and sometimes official links of this relationship are not enough to definitively prove a conspiracy between MoMA and the

¹¹² Kimmelman, "Revisiting the revisionists," 50.

¹¹³ Kimmelman, "Revisiting the revisionists," 52.

CIA to advance Abstract Expressionism. Those links, however, are numerous and intertwined forming a comfortable network that demonstrates some level of official connection between MoMA and the federal government.¹¹⁴ While the relationships and ties Cockcroft and fellow revisionist art historians cite form a supposition, the amount of evidence makes it difficult, if not impossible, to undermine their argument.

Saunders shifts her focus to Kimmelman and MoMA's defenders. In a single paragraph, Saunders is able to undermine his argument:

MoMA's defenders have consistently attacked the claim that the museum's support of Abstract Expressionism was in any way linked to the covert advancement of America's international image. Curiously, one argument they use is that MoMA actually neglected the movement when it first emerged. 'The Modern's exhibitions of Abstract Expressionism, more so at home, but also abroad, came on the whole only during the later fifties, by which time the movement's first generation had already been followed by a second,' wrote Michael Kimmelman, in a rebuttal commissioned by MoMA. To argue that MoMA simply missed what was right under its nose is disingenuous, and ignores the fact that the museum had steadily and consistently collected works by the Abstract Expressionists from the time of their earliest appearance. From 1941, MoMA acquired works by Arshile Gorky, Alexander Calder, Frank Stella, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Stuart Davis and Adolph Gottlieb. In May 1944, the museum sold at auction 'certain of its nineteenth century works of art to provide funds for the purchase of twentieth century works.' Although receipts from the sale were disappointing, enough cash was made available to purchase 'important paintings by Pollock, Motherwell, and Matta.' Thus, as might be expected of a museum of *modern* art, and particularly one which acknowledged that it held 'a tremendous moral responsibility toward living artists whose careers and fortunes can be drastically affected by the Museum's support or lack of it,' was the new generation of American painters brought into its fold.¹¹⁵

Saunders continues, demonstrating Kimmelman is not only mistaken about the relationship of MoMA and Abstract Expressionism, but also uses other examples to show intent:

The Museum of Modern Art was neither free from propaganda, nor from government figures. When, for example, it accepted the contract to supply the art exhibit for the Congress for Cultural Freedom's 1952 Masterpieces festival in Paris, it did so under the auspices of trustees who were fully cognizant of the CIA's role in that organization. Moreover, the exhibit's curator, James Johnson Sweeney (a member of MoMA's advisory committee, and of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom), publicly endorsed the propaganda value of the show when he announced: 'On display will be masterpieces that could not have been created nor whose exhibition would be allowed by

¹¹⁴ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 263.

¹¹⁵ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 264.

such totalitarian regimes as Nazi Germany or present-day Soviet Russia and her satellites.¹¹⁶

A litany of other examples is provided to further demonstrate the point that MoMA was acting at the very least in line with, if not at the behest of, government officials and agendas. Previous art historians focused on the actions (or proposed inactions) of MoMA and the level of involvement and influence of the federal government.

In 1999, the same year Saunders published her book, Craven also published a study of Abstract Expressionism and its role as a weapon of the Cold War. Craven utilizes unpublished correspondence and documents, recently declassified FBI files, and personal interviews to formulate a fresh perspective of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s and 1960s. In his book *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique: Dissent During the McCarthy Period*, Craven reestablishes the position and relationship of Abstract Expressionist art and artists to the culture, society, and government of the United States. “The anti-movement known as Abstract Expressionism,” Craven asserts, “should be defined more in terms of what it opposed than in light of any one opposition that it proposed.”¹¹⁷

Craven does not argue that past art historians are wrong, but rather they did not see the entire picture and exaggerated their claims. “There has been considerable exaggeration by art historians on both the Right and the Left,” Craven writes:

about the degree of success enjoyed by the CIA and cold-war liberals in remaking Abstract Expressionism into a mere celebratory signified of late capitalism along with U.S. hegemony. This situation remains the case in spite of the way many mainstream art historians, along with their adversaries among the social historians of art, unhesitatingly speak for entire countries and even continents when they write of the New York School’s global ‘triumph.’¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 268.

¹¹⁷ David Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique: Dissent During the McCarthy Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

¹¹⁸ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 20.

Past art historical studies are not, however, rendered useless in Craven's view: "The point here is not so much that they [Cockcroft and affiliates] are wrong, but that their positions are now too reductive (and dated) to permit further insights into the ongoing struggle over the art's signification and thus also into the unstable nature of Abstract Expressionism."¹¹⁹

Past art historical essays, such as Cockcroft's, embody a pivotal step for Craven to arrive at his analysis. Craven argues that revisionist art historians, however, have also exhausted their influence. Craven describes Cockcroft's and similar art historian's contributions:

In her well-known 1974 study...Eva Cockcroft outlined in groundbreaking fashion the nexus of relationships involving former CIA operatives and some MOMA officials whereby Abstract Expressionism, along with other U.S. artworks in many different styles, was exhibited abroad as 'representative' of U.S. culture. Hence, it is in this qualified sense that Serge Guilbaut [arguing in line with Cockcroft] was justified in his claim that North American 'Avant-garde radicalism did not really 'sell out,' it was borrowed for the anti-Communist cause.¹²⁰

Craven's analysis is built on the foundation established by Cockcroft and revisionist art historians. Their influence has been exhausted, along with other historians such as Kimmelman, however, because of their focus on the affiliations between MoMA, critics, and government agencies. They assume reactions and signification of Abstract Expressionism for entire nations. Craven asserts his analysis is more accurate because he goes outside this scope to explore local reactions to Abstract Expressionism beyond Europe and the United States as well as his in-depth research into the affiliations and sentiments among the artists.¹²¹ By including more perspectives Craven argues the artists acted with more independence than previously perceived. The core of his argument,

¹¹⁹ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 9.

¹²⁰ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 18.

¹²¹ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 18.

however, is focused on detailing how Abstract Expressionism was utilized as a commodity:

Indeed, it was the paradoxical and quite unsettled context of the 1950s that, in addition to cold-war hysteria, allowed people allied with the U.S. government and corporate capital to *attempt* to use—often rather unsuccessfully—both modernist art and social realism as signifiers of an existing state of ‘total freedom’ in the United States. This occurred when people formerly of the CIA, in collusion with certain cold-war liberals of corporate capital, mounted clandestine support for circulating exhibitions of artworks by dissident figurative artists, such as Ben Shahn, on the one hand, and the Abstract Expressionists, on the other. Revealingly, *covert* involvement by people associated with the CIA in funding these exhibitions was necessary because of the *overt* government censorship of the arts then rampant in the United States during the McCarthy years.¹²²

MoMA was a necessary surrogate for government utilization of Abstract Expressionism in diplomacy. Only by commodifying the artwork could it be made to “represent” mid-century capitalist American culture. A more detailed analysis of Craven’s argument and its implications for MoMA will take place in section 4.

¹²² Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 18.

SEEKING AN INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE

In spite of assertions regarding MoMA's utilization of Abstract Expressionism, the artists never fully embraced the role placed on them. Critical success, riches, and fame quickly came to original members of the New York School; especially its leading members such as Pollock and Rothko. Despite their success, Pollock died in an automobile accident due to alcohol, and Rothko committed suicide in his studio because, according to his close friends, he could not "cope with the contradiction of being showered with material rewards for works which 'howled their opposition to burgeoi [sic] materialism.'" ¹²³ Saunders asserts that no matter the extent to which Abstract Expressionist art was utilized as a political tool it cannot be reduced to that. She argues that "Abstract Expressionism, like jazz, was—is—a creative phenomenon existing independently and even, yes, triumphantly, apart from the political use which was made of it." ¹²⁴ Saunders is one of the few art historians to consider the relationship of MoMA, the federal government, and Abstract Expressionism from the perspective of the artists and their artwork.

In contrast to past, or even current, understandings of Abstract Expressionism, it was never completely successfully utilized as a diplomatic tool for the U.S. government. Craven argues this from a previously neglected point of view. It was not due to the

¹²³ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 278.

¹²⁴ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 277.

failings of MoMA or government officials, but the ability of Abstract Expressionist art and artists to elude their agenda, labels, and dialectic. This dialectic is concisely captured by Gibson when she characterizes the artists given choices as being between “Communism and McCarthyism,”¹²⁵ of which there was realistically only one choice. Craven writes, “The New York School preferred the term ‘anti-Stalinist’ to define their political beliefs. It allowed them, in essence, to be communist but not ‘Red’ communism, this defied the accepted polarity of the period.”¹²⁶ Abstract expressionism never signified or embodied what diplomatically minded individuals assumed and presented it to be. It was the equivalent of using a jackhammer to force a round peg into a square opening. When Abstract Expressionism was presented as “American” art abroad, it was not universally accepted as such. While it was made in the U.S., it cannot be accurately equated with mid-century “Americanness.” Craven describes this situation: “This artwork is a ‘national’ signifier abroad for a nation that has not generally embraced it and the ‘international’ signifier elsewhere for a principled opposition to the nation that originally produced it.”¹²⁷ One could argue then, that because anti-American art was produced in the U.S., it does serve its purpose as a signifier of freedom. The Abstract Expressionists, however, sought to protest the most basic assumptions of American society, including the confines of the “freedom” it was being utilized to signify.

The Abstract Expressionists contested the utopian consumerist U.S. society. Craven argues Abstract Expressionism was beyond the kind of protest ascribed to it by agents of diplomacy. He writes: “the emphatic nature of this undertaking [Abstract Expressionism] was not defined either as ‘escapism,’ ‘disengagement,’ ‘resignation,’ or

¹²⁵ Gibson, “Introduction,” xxiii.

¹²⁶ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 4.

¹²⁷ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 18.

‘evasion,’ but rather as an ethically unrepentant and even desublimated contestation of the existing order.”¹²⁸ The very nature of the “freedom” advertised by diplomatic officials was criticized by the Abstract Expressionists. That “freedom” was predicated on the individual’s right to choose, but those choices were only valid, according to American consumer culture, when they are made within the American market. It is evident that among the Abstract Expressionists there was a keen awareness of the failure of McCarthy era politics in the U.S. Their sense of alienation was manifested in the 1960s when members of the New York School “chose to support the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement, and the call for dramatic structural change in the 1960s.”¹²⁹

Those individuals characterized as Abstract Expressionists wanted to operate independent of and criticize the consumerist structure imposed on American society. Gibson argues in her book *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* that the Abstract Expressionists were foremost dedicated to their artwork and repressing “anything that threatened the autonomy of art.”¹³⁰ Proponents of mid-century commodified society attempted to soak up anything “produced” in the U.S. as a signifier of America’s superiority. A fundamental tactic the Abstract Expressionists utilized to repress this was the aesthetic emptiness of their paintings which eliminated any links with the interpretation or distribution of the artwork.¹³¹ Willem de Kooning affirms this when he argued that Abstract Expressionism “implies that every artist can do what he thinks he ought to—a movement for each person and open for everybody...It is exactly in its

¹²⁸ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 7.

¹²⁹ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 31.

¹³⁰ Gibson, “Introduction,” xxiii.

¹³¹ Gibson, “Introduction,” xxvi.

uselessness that it is free.”¹³² This was not, however, a passive desire on the part of the Abstract Expressionists to be independent of consumerist culture. Gibson writes: “What they [Abstract Expressionists] consciously feared were those aspects of culture that marked their work as things for sale and those that regarded art as a vehicle for politics.”¹³³ The artists characterized as being part of the Abstract Expressionist movement not only feared how their art would be manipulated by the society they lived, but specifically the assertive commodification MoMA applied to their artwork.

¹³² As quoted in Gibson, “Introduction,” xxiii.

¹³³ Gibson, “Introduction,” xxiv.

COMMODYING ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

The theory of Abstract Expressionism utilized for diplomacy was invented by critics and individuals in the private sector. These actors not only framed Abstract Expressionism as a product of American capitalism, but also promoted its proliferation. Towards this end individuals in the media were pressured to promote Abstract Expressionist artists.

Barr convinced *Life* magazine to feature Pollock, thereby introducing Abstract Expressionism to the audiences outside New York. When Pollock was featured in the August 1949 issue of *Life* it marked his, and Abstract Expressionism's, definitive establishment on the national scene. *Life* magazine's publisher and editor, Henry Luce, however, did not publish the story based solely on Pollock's artistic merits. As the Director of Museum Collections at MoMA in 1949, Barr wrote to Luce convincing him not to criticize modern art as was being done in the Soviet Union. "Thus was Luce," writes Saunders, "who held the phrase 'America's intellectual health' permanently on the end of his tongue...won over to Barr's and MoMA's interests."¹³⁴ The August, 1949 issue of *Life* allowed Abstract Expressionism to enter homes across the country. It was not, however, about artwork but rather a personal profile of Pollock. Such exposes helped build the artist's celebrity status, aiding in commodifying his artwork as manifestations of

¹³⁴ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 267.

his fame. This not only played into MoMA's agenda but also formed the basis for how Kefauver would make critical selections from the art market for the AIEP.

Abstract Expressionism was exposed to new audiences through the media as well as critical literature, but that exposure strategically neglected the artist's critical beliefs. Critics attempted to isolate Abstract Expressionism from the artist's politics by focusing on the artwork's formal aspects. One of the most significant figures to mold a framework for Abstract Expressionism was Clement Greenberg who stated: "These American painters did not set out to be advanced. They set out to paint good pictures."¹³⁵ Greenberg was the central figure among art critics who emphasized a purely formalist reading of Abstract Expressionism. Formalism is defined by the Encyclopedia of Aesthetics as "the aesthetic doctrine in which...related (formal) elements are said to be the primary locus of aesthetic value, a value that is independent of such other characteristics of an artwork as meaning, reference, or utility."¹³⁶ Craven states in his analysis that Abstract Expressionism "was unjustifiably bowdlerized in ideological terms by one of its 'defenders' (i.e. Greenberg), who thereby cleared the way for a formalist dogma of modernism that was narrow-mindedly presumed to follow."¹³⁷

Greenberg's analysis reduced Abstract Expressionist paintings to "art for art's sake." This theory ignored the diverse political agendas of Abstract Expressionist artists. Greenberg, along with MoMA, propagated this conception of Abstract Expressionism through:

¹³⁵ Clement Greenberg, "American-Type Painting," in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 209. cited in Craven 155.

¹³⁶ Lucian Krukowski, "Formalism: Conceptual and Historical Overview," *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, http://www.oxfordartonline.com.cho.louisville.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0215?q=formalism&search=quick&pos=3&_start=1#firsthit(accessed March 23, 2013).

¹³⁷ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 42.

the institutionally mediated reception of these paintings, which increasingly encourages the fetishistic view of them as the most costly human-made objects in the world, could lead to the appropriation or evisceration of both the critical edge and aesthetic import of this artwork by the very existing order these painters intended to criticize.¹³⁸

Through the exhibition then buying and selling of Abstract Expressionists' artwork, their paintings were relegated to commodities isolated from the artists' politics rendering them unopposed to 1950s capitalist America. Saunders asserts MoMA "held tenaciously to its executive role in manufacturing a history for Abstract Expressionism":

Ordered and systematic, this history reduced what had once been provocative and strange to an academic formula, a received mannerism, an *art official*. Thus installed within the canon, the freest form of art now lacked freedom. More and more painters produced more and more paintings which got bigger and bigger and emptier and emptier. It was this very stylistic conformity, prescribed by MoMA and the broader social contract of which it was a part, that brought Abstract Expressionism to the verge of kitsch. 'It was like the emperor's clothes,' said Jason Epstein. 'You parade it down the street and you say, "This is great art," and the people along the parade route will agree with you. Who's going to stand up to Clem[ent] Greenberg and later to the Rockefellers who were buying it for their bank lobbies and say, "This stuff is terrible?"'¹³⁹

By featuring Abstract Expressionism as the greatest artistic creations of American democracy based on capitalism, MoMA ensured it would also be the most valuable. The commodification of Abstract Expressionism was paralleled by rising financial incentives to paint and competition in the market. By the end of the 1950s Pop art emerged, critically engaging the art market commodifying Abstract Expressionism as well as commodified society.

Throughout the 1950s, however, Abstract Expressionist artwork and artists resisted commodification. Greenberg and MoMA failed to fully encapsulate Abstract Expressionist painting as a commodity. "The paintings of Abstract Expressionism," writes Craven:

which arose partly as an assimilation of non-Western cultural traditions and as a repudiation of commodity production in the United States—would indeed *sometimes* become quite precious commodities exalting the American Way; yet they would also

¹³⁸ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 140.

¹³⁹ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 274.

remain many other, often contradictory, things as well, at least some of which rendered this process of commodification fundamentally unstable and never entirely uncontested. (It is of note here that formalist critics such as Clement Greenberg, ever concerned with bowdlerizing this art and blunting its critical edge, would celebrate in 1960 how “The Jackson Pollock Market Soars.”)¹⁴⁰

Attempts to commoditize Abstract Expressionist art succeeded to an extent, but the artwork was never fully isolated from its critical nature. The attempts to relegate Abstract Expressionism to “art for art’s sake” failed because a purely formalist analysis of the artwork ignores the nature of its creation. Robert Motherwell retorted to such efforts: “I believe that the New York School, like Surrealism, is less an aesthetic style... than a state of mind... And a mode of life.”¹⁴¹ This “mode of life”, however, was incompatible with the utopian capitalist America represented in international diplomacy.

MoMA’s curatorial decisions during the 1950s reflect the agenda to repress non-formalist aspects of Abstract Expressionism. In 1953 MoMA organized an exhibition of what it designated as the best American avant-garde art titled *12 Modern American Painters and Sculptors*.¹⁴² The exhibition was held at the Musée National d'Art Moderne and had tumultuous beginnings. MoMA claimed the request for the exhibition came from the host institution to pre-emptively counter claims it was pushing American art on France. This was, however, not true. A dispatch from the American Embassy in Paris recounts how

In early February 1953, the Museum requested the Cultural Relations Section of the Embassy to discuss with Jean Cassou, Director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne at Paris, the possibility of putting on the present show. M. Cassou had already scheduled all of his exhibition space until the spring of 1954. On learning, however, that this exhibition would be available, he reorganized his plans and put off an exhibition of the Belgian painter, Ensor, which had been planned.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 140-1.

¹⁴¹ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 154.

¹⁴² See Appendix 1 for complete list of artists.

¹⁴³ American Embassy, Paris, to State Department, June 11, 1953, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. As cited in Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 269.

The Embassy was unable “to take any action on this request because of the absence of any art program under the auspices of the United States Government,” but that “in the case of the exhibition of American art under consideration, however, the Nelson Rockefeller Fund broke this deadlock, which allotted funds to the Museum of Modern Art in New York to be used for international exhibitions.”¹⁴⁴ Since the Embassy was unable to officially support an exhibition of critical avant-garde art, it coordinated with the Association Française d’Action Artistique to garner support. A donation from the Association provided funds for a catalog, posters, and “all publicity for the show.”¹⁴⁵

With official links to MoMA and the CIA it is evident the Association was not simply acting in the name of art. The director of the Association, Phillippe Erlanger, had organized support for the U.S. based Congress for Cultural Freedom and he was also a designated CIA contact in the French Foreign Office. According to Saunders, “Through him, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (and on this occasion, MoMA), acquired a credible conduit for official French funds to cultural propaganda initiatives.”¹⁴⁶ It was through such covert dealings that MoMA and the Rockefellers devised exhibition schedules of Abstract Expressionism.

The curatorial decisions of the exhibitions reveal a specific diplomatic agenda. The diversity of artwork included in the exhibition is telling of what MoMA wanted the artwork to signify. As Craven describes, there was an “*attempt* [emphasis added] to use—often rather unsuccessfully—both modernist and social realism as signifiers of an

¹⁴⁴ American Embassy, Paris, to State Department, June 11, 1953 National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. As cited in Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 269.

¹⁴⁵ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 269.

¹⁴⁶ Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 270.

existing state of ‘total freedom’ in the United States.”¹⁴⁷ As Figure 1¹⁴⁸ depicts, the exhibition ranged in scope from John Kane to Pollock. As the title to the exhibition demonstrates, the most fundamental theme is simply that the artwork was American. MoMA disregards Abstract Expressionism’s desire to isolate itself from mid-century capitalist America as well as social realism’s critique of that culture.

Analyzing Figure 1 also reveals further curatorial initiatives. At the far end of the gallery is Pollock’s characteristic drip painting. While it is partially blocked by an Alexander Calder mobile and sculpture, it is the climax at the end of the gallery and would draw visitors to the final gallery as they ventured through. From Figure 1 and Figure 2,¹⁴⁹ one can ascertain the final gallery is also the largest. The Pollock, although the largest, is given preferential wall space independent of any other works. There is clear favoritism toward Abstract Expressionist works in this exhibition even though all the artwork is presented as “American.”

In 1958 the International Council sponsored another exhibition of avant-garde American art. *The New American Painting*¹⁵⁰ was intended to be a “who’s who” among Modern American artists with the press release declaring it is the “first comprehensive exhibition to be sent to Europe of advanced tendencies in American painting.”¹⁵¹ MoMA attempted to keep its diplomatic agenda covert by stating:

Although these artists have been associated with the movement generally called Abstract

¹⁴⁷ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 18.

¹⁴⁸ “Installation view of *12 Modern American Painters and Sculptors*,” Musée National d’Art Moderne, Paris, 1953, in Kimmelman, “Revisiting the Revisionists,” 38.

¹⁴⁹ “Rene d’Harnoncourt (right) at the press opening of ‘12 Modern American Painters and Sculptors,’” Musée National d’Art Moderne, Paris, 1953, in Franc, “The Early Years of the International Program and Council,” 119.

¹⁵⁰ See Appendix 3 for a complete list of artists

¹⁵¹ The International Council, “The New American Painting, Large Exhibition, Leaves for Year-Long European Tour Under Auspices of International Council at Museum of Modern Art,” Press Release, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 11, 1958.



Figure 2. “Installation view of *12 Modern American Painters and Sculptors*,” Musee National d’Art Modern, Paris, 1953.



Figure 3. “Rene d’Harnoncourt (right) at the press opening of ‘12 Modern American Painters and Sculptors,’” Musee National d’Art Modern, Paris, 1953.

Expressionism, according to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Museum Collections, who has written the introduction for the exhibition catalog, they dislike labels and shun the words “movement” and “school.” “None speaks for the others any more than he paints for the others. Their individualism is uncompromising and as a matter of principle they do nothing deliberately in their work to make ‘communication’ easy.”¹⁵²

Claiming Abstract Expressionism is not a “movement” caters to MoMA’s commodification of it. Barr argues the artists paint independently, negating suspicion of a “movement” with an agenda. He also focuses on the formalist aspects of the paintings, which do not “make ‘communication’ easy,” further isolating them from politics. Claiming there was no collaboration between artists was also inaccurate. The term “School of New York” was coined by Motherwell in 1949¹⁵³ to describe the growing movement and the publication *Dissent* demonstrates just one example of collaborative efforts.

When Barr apathetically argues how grouping these artists as “Abstract Expressionists” is inappropriate, he furtively directs attention to Abstract Expressionism. This falsely apathetic approach to Abstract Expressionism is further asserted in the press release which states the exhibition was organized “in response to numerous requests by the Museum’s International Program” motivated to “organize [the exhibition] in response to repeated requests from institutions in Europe.”¹⁵⁴ Barr also maintains a formalist analysis by stating: “The paintings themselves have a sensuous, emotional, esthetic and at times mystical power which works and can be overwhelming.”¹⁵⁵ The combination of diffusing Abstract Expressionism and employing formalist analysis to remove the paintings’ critical edge rendered the artwork as an inimitable diplomatic tool.

¹⁵² The International Council, Press Release, March 11, 1958.

¹⁵³ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 7.

¹⁵⁴ The International Council, Press Release, March 11, 1958.

¹⁵⁵ The International Council, Press Release, March 11, 1958.

THE AIEP: CURATING COMMODITIES

While the roots of the AIEP are in MoMA's International Council and International Program, the election of President Kennedy in 1960 was necessary to make it a federal program. During his campaign Kennedy outlined his ideas for the relationship between the government and the arts. In a campaign speech delivered in 1960, Kennedy said, "There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts":

The age of Pericles was also the age of Phidias. The age of Lorenzo de Medici was also the age of Leonardo da Vinci. The age of Elizabeth also the age of Shakespeare. And the New Frontier for which I campaign in public life, can also be a New Frontier for American Art.

For what I descry is a lift for our country; a surge of economic growth; a burst of activity in rebuilding and cleansing our cities; a breakthrough of the barriers of racial and religious discrimination; an Age of Discovery in science and space; and an openness toward what is new that will banish the suspicion and misgiving that have tarnished our prestige abroad. I forsee[sic], in short, an America that is moving once again.

And in harmony with that creative bust, there is bound to come the New Frontier in the Arts. For we stand, I believe, on the verge of a period of sustained cultural brilliance.¹⁵⁶

Kennedy equates economic growth with artistic creativity and asserts a paternalistic relationship of the former over the latter. According to Kennedy, Pericles and Lorenzo de Medici, for example, created societies which allowed and fostered the flourishing of the arts. Kennedy recognized and accepted the theory put forth by Barr that American art was

¹⁵⁶ Gary O. Larson, *The Reluctant Patron: The United States Government and the Arts, 1943-1965* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 149-50.

a product of American capitalism. Diplomatic activities involving the arts, therefore, were attractive to his administration.

In 1963 President Kennedy appointed August Heckscher to conduct a study on the federal government and the arts. The report submitted to President Kennedy on May 28, 1963 discusses a vast range of arts activities with one section devoted to placing American artwork in embassies abroad. Heckscher details the necessity of an art in embassies program and says of the artwork: “these works should not be considered ‘interior decoration,’ but as art representing the finest of American creative expression.”¹⁵⁷ Heckscher reaffirms the notion of linking patriotism and artistic achievement. While subtle, this notion is representative of official opinion and pervaded the AIEP.

The AIEP’s stated purpose and criteria for artwork reflect an assumed “Americanness” for artwork produced in the United States. The AIEP outlines its activities and states: “The Art in the Embassies Program is a service of the Department of State, the purpose being to provide art appropriate for the representational rooms of Ambassador’s Residences and Chanceries.”¹⁵⁸ This is the closest definition of a mission statement to be found for the AIEP and does not demonstrate a commitment to the artwork.

“Appropriate” art that is “representational” of the United States defines the filter through which artwork will be presented to foreign audiences.¹⁵⁹ The criteria laid out by the AIEP reaffirm this agenda:

We believe that:

¹⁵⁷ “The Arts and The National Government,” Report to the President submitted by August Heckscher, Special Consultant on the Arts, submitted to the 88th Congress, 1st session, Senate Document #28, 28 May 1963.

¹⁵⁸ The Art in Embassies Program, “The Art in the Embassies Program,” Program Brochure, 1966, Nancy Kefauver Collection.

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix 4 for a complete list of initial Accessions and Executive Committee members.

1. Works of art must be original.
2. All must be of recognized quality to best represent American culture.
3. Important factors in planning a collection are the cultural concepts and art trends of the country in which the works are to be placed.
4. For Embassy Residence, preference of the Ambassador and his wife should be considered and related to established criteria.
5. To insure conservation of the art, climatic conditions must be taken into account.¹⁶⁰

Abstract Expressionism and Pop art did not “best represent American culture.” Rather, mid-century American avant-garde artwork was made appropriate through commodification.

The AIEP misrepresented Abstract Expressionist and Pop art work by showcasing them as commodities in its exhibitions. Catalogs produced in conjunction with AIEP exhibition reveal how the artwork was misrepresented. The majority of catalogs produced for AIEP exhibitions in the 1960s had universal introductory essays. On occasion, a brief section or additional paragraph would explain something of the artwork or artists, but rarely, if ever, place them in a critical theory. The catalog produced for the exhibition *Art in Embassies on Display at the American Embassy Club* states: “The program is designed to further the appreciation of American creative ability abroad by providing U.S. embassies throughout the world with good original art reflecting current and traditional North American culture in an effective manner.”¹⁶¹ The catalog also states that “All artworks displayed are originals and all are of recognized quality to best represent American culture.”¹⁶²

Artwork was selected and filtered to best represent an idealized American culture, not to demonstrate the best representations of American culture. The focus of AIEP exhibitions was not to highlight significant examples of United States culture, but to

¹⁶⁰ The Art in Embassies Program, “The Art in the Embassies Program,” Program Brochure, 1966.

¹⁶¹ The Art in Embassies Program, “Art in Embassies on Display at the American Embassy Club March 17 through March 28, 1967,” Nancy Kefauver Collection.

¹⁶² The Art in Embassies Program, “Art in Embassies on Display at the American Embassy Club March 17 through March 28, 1967.”

display the vitality of a utopian capitalist vision of America. In this particular catalog there are seven paragraphs explaining the AIEP and its significance for the federal government, and one paragraph pertaining to the artwork itself. It states: “from the collection which the American Embassy in Bonn has received in the framework of this program 22 works are being shown here. They include original prints of living American artists, representing all trends. Modern realism and abstract expressionism are included as are OP and POP art.”¹⁶³ This is reminiscent of MoMA’s 1953 exhibition *12 American Painters and Sculptors* where social realism and Abstract Expressionism were unsuccessfully exhibited together simply as American works of art.¹⁶⁴ The AIEP makes no effort to differentiate Abstract Expressionism and Pop art, their significance lies in their “Americanness.” This is typical for catalogs produced by the AIEP during the 1960s. A litany of the styles included or how the collection came into existence form the standard content. “In-depth” discussion of the artwork and its theoretical basis is practically non-existent. This statement, like most, is a rather feeble attempt to place the artwork in a context. Devotion is paid to the AIEP and the “Americanness” of the artwork rather than the artistic contributions of the art or artists.

The statement “to best represent American culture” was exceptionally problematic when considered in this context. Given the selection of artwork included in exhibitions, if the AIEP had made a conscious recognition of the volatility and ever present change in the U.S. during the 1960s their exhibitions could have verged on brilliant. There was no recognition of this, however, and exhibitions were only conglomerations of what the AIEP perceived as popular in the art market. This is

¹⁶³ The Art in Embassies Program, “Art in Embassies on Display at the American Embassy Club March 17 through March 28, 1967.”

¹⁶⁴ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 18.

demonstrative of how the AIEP's curatorial decisions were a direct extension of MoMA's promulgation of Abstract Expressionism abroad. MoMA exhibited Abstract Expressionism as the best artistic commodity being produced in the U.S. The AIEP continued this practice by selecting popular artwork from the market and making no attempt to maintain its context. The only context reflected in curatorial decisions was the artworks being produced in America and sold in its leading commercial galleries and collected by its major museums.

The leadership of the AIEP demonstrated awareness of the vitality and diversity of mid-century American avant-garde art but failed to understand and incorporate its tenants into exhibitions. "To the connoisseurs, abstract represents the artists thinking" stated Kefauver, "It represents the turmoil of these times... Representational art is found in pop art...which is very documentary, and in both comic strips and advertising art...*This art typifies our way of life* [emphasis added]." ¹⁶⁵ Kefauver was aware of the art market's diversity, but she was reluctant to classify the artwork beyond being American. This statement is likely referring to three Pop artists that appeared in AIEP exhibitions: Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and Robert Rauschenberg. Kefauver was likely referencing Warhol and Rauschenberg when she spoke of "advertising art," further evidenced by their inclusion in a number of AIEP exhibitions in the mid-1960s. It is a near certainty she was referencing Lichtenstein when she spoke of "comic strip" art. While their artwork utilized representational signifiers of American culture, it was certainly not in a manner that "typifies" the culture.

¹⁶⁵ *The State*, Columbia, South Carolina, 5 July 1965, from clippings file of Carol Harford, quoted in Carla M. Hanzal, "The Fusion of Art and Politics: Events Shaping the Public-Private Venture to take American Art Abroad" (master's thesis, American University, 1990), 135.

Warhol's artwork was proclaimed to represent America around the world. A *Newsweek* expose states: "Andy Warhol's 'Flowers' bloom on walls in American chanceries in Nepal, Bern, and the American Embassy in Madrid."¹⁶⁶ The *New York Times* also heralded that "When Ambassador and Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke took up their new post recently in Madrid, they adorned the walls of their embassy residence with a painting by Andy Warhol, the pop artist."¹⁶⁷ In both instances the AIEP provided the artwork. These statements did not come from the AIEP but they were no doubt endorsed. Once again, the AIEP had arbitrarily drawn a parallel between an American artist and "Americanness." Warhol, however, was not celebrating signifiers of American life in his work. Thomas Crow states that "To understand Pop in the early 1960s as a new realism or a return to figuration meant accepting a devalued status for the human body":

which had traditionally been the central concern and focus of figurative art. The restoration of reference to the world, offered in a defiance of the long march of advanced art toward abstraction, entailed granting manufactured products equal or superior status to the human beings who purchased and used them; Andy Warhol offered, albeit with a certain poignancy, the human figure already transformed into inert products.¹⁶⁸

Warhol, and Pop art, did not "typify" American life in the celebratory fashion Kefauver asserted. He lamented the effects of commodification on society. "Warhol came to produce his most powerful paintings," writes Crow, "by dramatizing the hollowness of the consumer icon."¹⁶⁹ Warhol's *Flowers* series did not embody his typically searing criticism of consumer culture¹⁷⁰ and represents a tactful curatorial selection made by Kefauver, remaining dedicated to choosing artwork "to best represent American culture." Warhol was "attracted to the open sores in American political life. The issues that were

¹⁶⁶ Jack Kroll, "Art in Striped Pants," *Newsweek*, October 9, 1967, 107.

¹⁶⁷ Grace Glueck, "Home Grown Art Blooms in U.S. Missions," *New York Times* July 6, 1965.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, 1996), 105.

¹⁶⁹ Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties*, 86.

¹⁷⁰ Tacoma Art Museum, "Andy Warhol's Flowers for Tacoma," <http://www.tacomaartmuseum.org/Page.aspx?nid=447> (accessed April 11, 2013).

most problematic for liberal Democratic politicians such as John and Robert Kennedy.”¹⁷¹ Kefauver was astute enough to recognize Warhol as a pivotal Pop artist and utilized his fame and artwork to “typify” American culture, but did not select artwork that captured the essence of his style and aims.

Following his capture of the grand prize at the Venice Biennale in 1964, Rauschenberg provided Kefauver appropriate fame to capitalize on. As the first American to win the grand prize since Whistler, Rauschenberg instantly assumed celebrity status. An AIEP catalog proclaims of Rauschenberg’s accomplishments: “Today one of the most famous of American artists; winner of the Venice Biennale (1964). Several qualities which distinguish his work—use of rags, rope, fans, and other items casually attached to his canvasses—have made him a leader in this avant-garde style.”¹⁷² His status as an icon in the art world made his art desirable to the AIEP, but they could not see past his artwork as more than “American.” Throughout his oeuvre Rauschenberg grapples with a host of issues, but one that would be particularly problematic for the AIEP were his inclusion of homosexual signifiers in his artwork. In his mixed media assemblage *Canyon*, 1959, Rauschenberg “melded patriotic and homoerotic emblems, exploiting the possibilities of immediate visual transcription offered by photographic silkscreen printing.”¹⁷³ Rauschenberg challenged one of the foundational values of the U.S. Cold War utopian culture, the roles of breadwinner and homemaker, through homoerotic implications in his art and the relationship with his lover and artistic collaborator Jasper Johns. In an era when a monolithic, countrywide effort was needed to push the Civil

¹⁷¹ Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties*, 87.

¹⁷² The Art in Embassies Program, *Art in the Residence of the American Ambassador: Athens*, 1966, Nancy Kefauver Collection, 5.

¹⁷³ Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties*, 16.

Rights Act of 1964 through to legislation to give rights to minorities and women, gay rights and advocacy were certainly not part of the national identity and are still excluded to this day. Asserting such alternative lifestyles should have disqualified Rauschenberg's artwork from "typifying" U.S. culture, but the "Americanness" of his artwork remained, for Kefauver, its most pertinent aspect.

Like Rauschenberg and Warhol, Lichtenstein used representative signifiers of American culture in his artwork, but not in a celebratory manner as asserted by Kefauver. The curatorial decision to include his artwork is yet another example of art chosen for popularity, but removed from context. Lichtenstein did not target volatile political issues, but established himself in the realm of fine arts. Within this context Lichtenstein utilized his artwork to explore and dissect the content and medium of popular culture. What he discovered was that organic encounters with the world were readily being reshaped and defined by the imagery of mass culture.¹⁷⁴ Like Warhol, Lichtenstein sought to demonstrate the hollow and disingenuous nature of the consumer icon. His trademark style of meticulously recreating comic book imagery can make it appear deceptively celebratory of American culture. It is not, however, a celebration or an attempt to connote American life in the sense Kefauver stated, but to critically evaluate it, even undermine its power.

Kefauver made similar curatorial decisions in selecting early twentieth century American art. In the early twentieth century an American style of art appeared which utilized urban realism to depict the seedy aspects of American life such as prostitutes, beggars, and scenes of poverty. This style and group of artists were dubbed the "Ashcan

¹⁷⁴ Johnathan Fineberg, *Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being* 2nd ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, 2000), 247.

School.” In making its selections for artwork, the AIEP tended to “screen out the more abrasive commentaries on shabby aspects of the American scene, such as some works of the Ashcan School.”¹⁷⁵ In the early 1960s Ambassador William Benton¹⁷⁶ planned to donate paintings by artist Reginald Marsh (1898-1954). Marsh painted scenes in the tradition of the Ashcan School, depicting urban life and its more sordid aspects.¹⁷⁷ Benton was, however, aware enough to present the AIEP with street and harbor scenes rather than Marsh’s notable paintings depicting the bowery and burlesque shows¹⁷⁸ in New York City.

Four of the paintings Benton donated appeared in an AIEP exhibition at the Embassy in Copenhagen in 1967. Reginald Marsh’s paintings *Christmas Shoppers (1)*, year unknown, *Christmas Shoppers (2)*, year unknown, *New York Sky-line with Tug in Foreground*, year unknown, and *Ferry-Boat Docked in River*, year unknown, were exhibited along with a biography of the artist. The catalog states: “Fascinated by the life of New York, he has concentrated mainly on portraying character in people, places and things. His mastery of the body was based on constant observation and drawing, and on

¹⁷⁵ American Foreign Service Association, *Foreign Service Journal*, June 1967, 29. Quoted in Carla M. Hanzal, “The Fusion of Art and Politics: Events Shaping the Public-Private Venture to take American Art Abroad” (master’s thesis, American University, 1990), 127.

¹⁷⁶ Benton is quoted on page 7, footnote 55, of this thesis for his involvement in the 1947 exhibition *Advancing American Art*, which he said was important because, “Exhibitions of this kind also make an impact among Communists overseas because they illustrate the freedom with which and in which our American artists work.”

¹⁷⁷ “Marsh, Reginald,” *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*, *Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.echo.louisville.edu/subscriber/article/benezit/B00117265> (accessed March 22, 2013).

¹⁷⁸ An example is currently on display in Schneider Hall on the University of Louisville’s Belknap Campus: Reginald Marsh, *Gaiety Burlesk*, 1930, etching, The Steven Block Collection of American and European Fine Prints, Hite Art Institute, University of Louisville.

thorough study of anatomy.”¹⁷⁹ The catalog tactfully evades mentioning what Marsh is best known for while still paying tribute to his legacy.

Ad Reinhardt’s artistic achievements are equally avoided. The exhibition at the Embassy in Copenhagen was held the same year as Reinhardt’s death, 1967, by which time he had attracted substantial attention from the federal government for his political beliefs. A 123 page FBI file, of which only 100 pages is public, was compiled from 1941 to 1966 which followed Reinhardt’s “subversive” activities. He was an avowed socialist and his file was marked “SM-C” or “Security Matter-C” which means: “According to the FBI, along with other government agencies, the subject constitutes a national security threat and is a subversive because his or her sympathies for communism and/or socialism make him or her a ‘potential’ collaborator with foreign agents.”¹⁸⁰ The contributors to this file are as enlightening as its content. Reinhardt’s file contains was compiled by the FBI but incorporate substantial information from the State Department, foreign embassies of the United States, the U.S. Navy, and the Counter-Intelligence Branch of the U.S. Marine Corps.¹⁸¹ Considering that the Department Kefauver worked for contributed to the file on Reinhardt’s “subversive” activities, it is unfathomable that she was not aware of the attention being paid to him.

In spite of this Reinhardt was still included in the exhibition. The biographical catalog entry on him, however, reveals reluctance to expound his character. If the reader of the catalog entry on him knew nothing of Reinhardt, the only generalization they could draw is that he is American and deeply interwove in the art community in the U.S. The

¹⁷⁹ The Art in Embassies Program, “Marsh, Reginald,” *Embassy of the United States of America: Catalog of Art at the Residence, “Rydhave” Copenhagen 1967, 1967*, Nancy Kefauver Collection, 17.

¹⁸⁰ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 81.

¹⁸¹ Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique*, 81.

entry on him merely includes his education, select exhibition locations, and select publications and journal entries.¹⁸² Nearly all other biographical entries, including Reginald Marsh, expel personal information. The only relevant information about Reinhardt is that he is extensively shown and published establishing his significance.

His artistic aims and roots in the New York School and Abstract Expressionism are secondary to the fact he is American. Reinhardt's *Black Series No. 5*, year unknown, was his sole work in the exhibition and was part of his final development as an Abstract Expressionist. This artwork emerged from Reinhardt's arrival in 1962 at what he designated "the final, ethically and logically impeccable form of painting,":

A Square (*neutral, shapeless*) canvas, five feet wide, five feet high...(*not large, not small, sizeless*), trisected (*no composition*), one horizontal form negating one vertical form (*formless, no top, no bottom, directionless*), three (*more or less*) dark (*lightless*) no-contrasting (*colorless*) colors, brushwork brushed out to remove brushwork, a matte, flat, free-hand painted surface (*glossless, textureless, non-linear, no hard edge, no soft edge*).¹⁸³

A viewer must spend prolonged amounts of time in front of such a canvas before the surface reveals any differentiated detail. Thomas Crow writes how Reinhardt arrived at this because "he refused to subordinate his painting to any sort of instrumental commitment, least of all social commentary. Instead, only the most extreme refusal of art's normal blandishments were for him a sufficient moral response to the plight of the artist in a society ruled by capital."¹⁸⁴ Reinhardt was seeking through his artwork a complete isolation from commodification.

Black Series No. 5 is intrinsically antithetical to the American capitalist culture meant to be displayed in the exhibition. The curatorial choices for displaying the artwork

¹⁸² The Art in Embassies Program, "Reinhardt, Ad," *Embassy of the United States of America: Catalog of Art at the Residence, "Ryhdale" Copenhagen 1967*, 15.

¹⁸³ Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties*, 118.

¹⁸⁴ Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties*, 118.

reflect either a willfully negligent attitude toward Reinhardt and his artwork or a complete lack of understanding of his artistic aims. *Black Series No. 5* was exhibited in what one can only describe the “miscellaneous” gallery at the Embassy in Copenhagen. According to the catalog, it was in a nondescript gallery, perhaps a hallway or foyer, on the second floor. Within that space was a selection of paintings not related by style or time period, but simply by being American. *Black Series No. 5* was displayed alongside works by Sister Mary Corita, Reginald Marsh¹⁸⁵, Evelyn Metzger, and David W. Stearns as well as photographs by Wynn Bullock and Cole Weston. Of the individual galleries in this exhibition, this gallery exhibits the least cohesion or context amongst the artwork.¹⁸⁶ Reinhardt’s *Black Series No. 5* (Figure 3) has little in common with, for example, scenes of Christmas shoppers depicted by Marsh (Figure 4) or the vibrantly colored, childlike figures of Sister Mary Corita¹⁸⁷ (Figure 5). These artists not only differ aesthetically, but do not belong to the same style or time period.

The AIEP actively avoided making such contextual distinctions in its curatorial practice. In a memo detailing a meeting with Leonard Carmichael, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Robert H. Thayer states:

He warned of the tremendous difficulties involved in getting into the field of contemporary American art due to the great controversy in that field and the extreme views of many of the most important people knowledgeable on the subject. He pointed out that people interested in American contemporary art seemed to look down their noses at anything else and he felt that the difficulties of getting a selection committee who would be sane on the topic of both eighteenth and nineteenth early American art and contemporary art would be almost insurmountable.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ All four of Marsh’s paintings discussed previously in this section were located in this gallery.

¹⁸⁶ For example, the first gallery in the catalog, a hallway, contains only John James Audubon prints of birds. A subsequent gallery displays portraits, while another contains works with patriotic themes. The upstairs gallery containing Reinhardt’s *Black Series No. 5* is the only one with no stylistic, thematic, or art historical context.

¹⁸⁷ Images of Sister Mary Corita’s artwork in the exhibition could not be attained.

¹⁸⁸ Robert H. Thayer, “American Works of Art in Embassies Abroad- Conference with Dr. Leonard Carmichael, Secretary of Smithsonian Institute on May 31, 1961,” Memorandum, Robert Helyer Thayer Papers, 1920-1980, MSS76877, The Library of Congress, Washington D.C.



Figure 4. Ad Reinhardt, *Abstract Painting No. 5*, 1962, oil on canvas, Collection of the Tate Britain Museum. This is not the painting that was shown in Copenhagen but is characteristic of the style which *Black Series No. 5* was created in.



Figure 5. Reginald Marsh, *Christmas Shoppers #2*, undated, ink on paper, Gift of William Benton to the Art in Embassies Program.

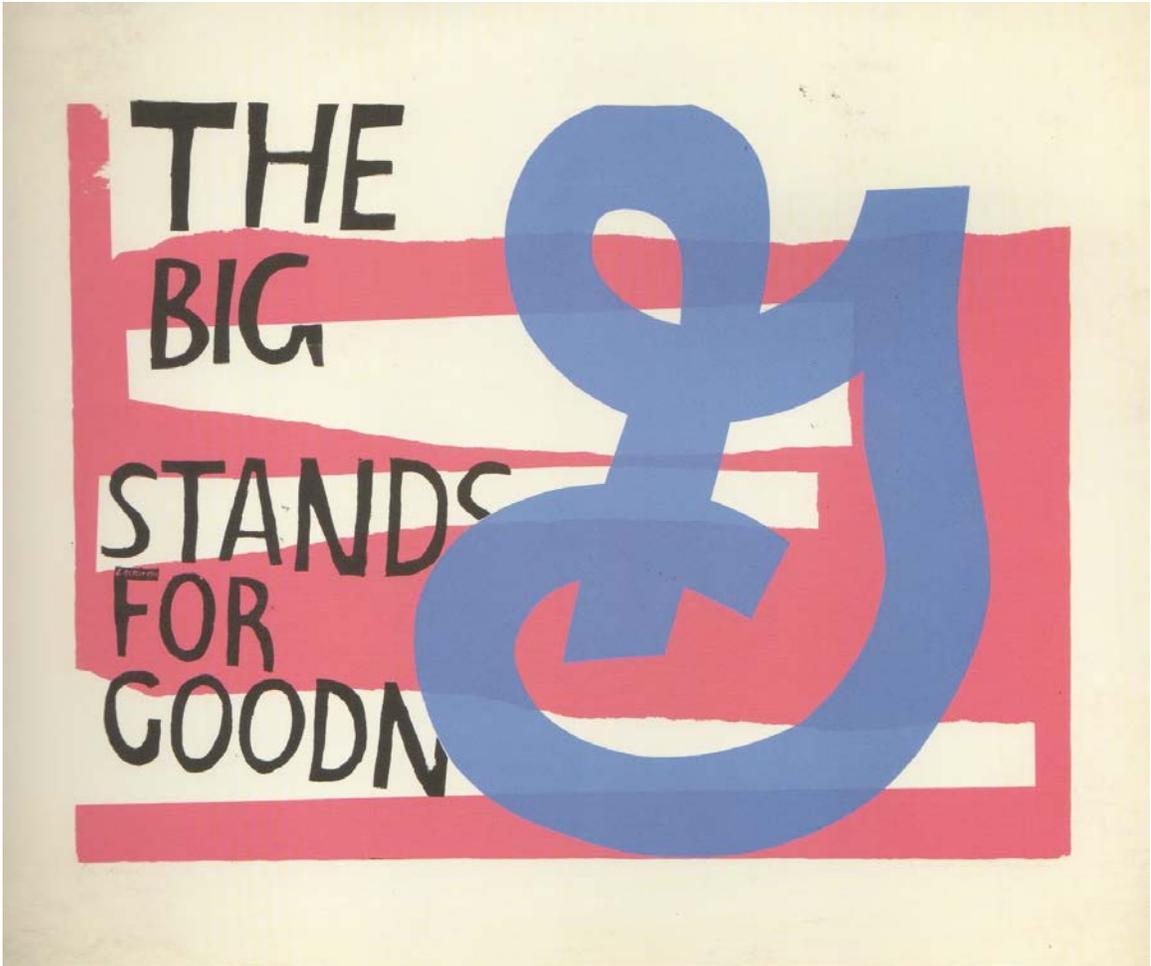


Figure 6. Sister Mary Corita Kent, *For Eleanor*, 1964, screen print, 29 5/8" x 39", Harvard Art Museum. This is not the painting that was exhibited in Copenhagen. It is characteristic of the artist's playful style and inclusion of text in the imagery.

This was a common sentiment Thayer found during his preliminary study for the AIEP, that a curator or curatorial committee was likely to be unable to appropriately select traditional and contemporary works of art. The twenty person selection committee formed to find appropriate artwork incorporated a diverse number of individuals with vast expertise to inform the selection process.¹⁸⁹ Ultimately, however, “The program attempted to reflect American democracy, steering clear of the art world’s internal politics and snobberies,”¹⁹⁰ states Andrew Solomon writing on behalf of the AIEP. To “reflect democracy” and avoid “snobberies” is to exhibit American art simply for being made in the U.S., not for what it truly aims to signify (or not signify). This is a nearly official affirmation of the AIEP depoliticizing mid-century American avant-garde to render it appropriate for diplomacy.

Regardless of how it would be utilized, there was initiative to utilize avant-garde art from the earliest planning phase of the AIEP. In a correspondence from Thayer to Philip H. Coombs, Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Culture, he highlights the importance as well as the inherent risk of utilizing avant-garde art:

It is of course true that any contemporary art is bound to arouse controversy and there will be individuals who feel that they can make political capital by starting and dramatizing such a controversy. However, it seems to me that the Department could fortify itself against such events by choosing an outstanding group of individuals to pass upon these paintings before they are accepted.

There is plenty of good contemporary American art which would be difficult for anyone to attack. The United States today is unquestionably the center of contemporary art in the world and all young artists are looking to us for leadership in this field. I believe very strongly that this fact should be capitalized upon and that we should give the people of other lands an opportunity to see this example of American culture in our Embassies abroad.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ See Appendix 4.

¹⁹⁰ Solomon, “The Art in Embassies Program,” 9.

¹⁹¹ Robert H. Thayer to Philip H. Coombs, “Contemporary American Paintings for American Embassies,” April 20, 1961, Robert Helyer Thayer Papers, 1920-1980, MSS76877, The Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Thayer demonstrates an awareness of the contemporary art market in the early 1960s and one of the few references to artists' stake in the matter, although it is of an exploitive nature. Statements made in other correspondence demonstrate Thayer was not interested in the artwork itself but only its "Americanness" when he decried "our embassies are woefully lacking in Americana" and:

The President and Mrs. Kennedy have taken steps to bring the finest examples of American art into the White House. Since a Chief of Mission is the personal representative of the President abroad, it would seem most fitting that the same philosophy be applied to our embassies and that a concentrated attempt be made to have them truly represent the best in American culture.¹⁹²

These words were included in several correspondences to professionals in the art world asking for their opinion on an art in embassies program. The earliest initiatives of the AIEP were not focused on an appropriate exploration of avant-garde art, only an analysis of how best to utilize the newest American art. This sentiment pervaded into the AIEP when in a letter dated June 14, 1964 from Kefauver to Thayer she wrote "it is important that U.S. Embassies reflect various facets of current and traditional *representative* [emphasis added] North American art."¹⁹³

There was little or no curatorial considerations for context because there was a predetermined focus for every exhibition—American art. This focus was not just art made in the U.S. or reflective of American culture, but art of American culture. It is clear not all the contemporary artwork selected represented this agenda. The artwork instead was forced into a new and different context from its original artistic intent. Conversely, the AIEP would have failed to serve its purpose had it not included Warhol, Reinhardt, Rauschenberg, and others as they were part of the vast art scene in the U.S. in the 1960s.

¹⁹² Robert Thayer to Dr. Richard Fuller, Director Seattle Art Museum, June 28, 1961, Robert Helyer Thayer Papers, 1920-1980, MSS76877, The Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

¹⁹³ Nancy Kefauver to Robert H. Thayer, September 14, 1964, Robert Helyer Thayer Papers, 1920-1980, MSS76877, The Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Such artists, however, were not utilized simply as another piece of the puzzle of representative American art. They were paraded in articles and interviews as the best of American art. The *London Evening Star* proclaimed “there is now a painting by ‘pop’ artist Andy Warhol on the walls of the United States Embassy in Madrid, and a black-on-black ‘op’ canvas by Ad Reinhardt in the residence of Ambassador Chester Bowles in New Delhi.”¹⁹⁴ The article continues:

Now, under the direction of Nancy Kefauver, appointed to advise the State Department (and they needed some advice) on the fine arts, hundreds of modern American paintings are being sent out to United States embassies abroad to replace the familiar colour reproductions of George Washington and General Eisenhower.¹⁹⁵

A front page *New York Times* article proclaimed “When Ambassador and Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke took up their new post recently in Madrid, they adorned the walls of their embassy residence with a painting by Andy Warhol, the pop artist, plus works by other American contemporaries, including Josef Albers, Karl Zerbe, Larry Rivers and Alexander Calder.”¹⁹⁶ The article also states:

Thousands of Soviet citizens calling at Spaso House, the Moscow residence of Ambassador Foy D. Kohler, to see works by such artists George Bellows, Jasper Johns, and Willem de Kooning. An Ad Reinhardt black-on-black ‘op’ painting, in company with canvases by Stuart Davis, Ralston Crawford and Edward Hopper, jangles visitors to the residence of American Ambassador Chester Bowles in New Delhi.¹⁹⁷

Of these efforts Kefauver said “by giving concrete evidence of what’s doing in U.S. art, the program is strengthening our cultural image.”¹⁹⁸ There is a lack of individual artworks by these prominent artists cited in the article. This is reflective of the AIEP which utilized the artists fame in the same manner, equatable to “name dropping.” While

¹⁹⁴ *London Evening Star* July 7, 1965. Quoted in Carla M. Hanzal, “The Fusion of Art and Politics: Events Shaping the Public-Private Venture to take American Art Abroad” (master’s thesis, American University, 1990), 134.

¹⁹⁵ *London Evening Star* July 7, 1965.

¹⁹⁶ Grace Glueck, “Home Grown Art blooms in U.S. Missions,” *New York Times* July 6, 1965, Robert Helyer Thayer Papers, 1920-1980, MSS76877, The Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

¹⁹⁷ Grace Glueck, “Home Grown Art blooms in U.S. Missions,” *New York Times* July 6, 1965.

¹⁹⁸ Grace Glueck, “Home Grown Art blooms in U.S. Missions,” *New York Times* July 6, 1965.

these are not official State Department statements, they were no doubt endorsed and the information had to have been released.

The *New York Times* article allows insight into curatorial choices pertaining to exhibition techniques. Images accompanying the article provide rare glimpses of artwork on display in embassies. Figure 6¹⁹⁹ depicts the Ambassador's wife at Spaso House showing guests a Rauschenberg lithograph. One would not expect a "white cube" environment in a diplomatic residence but this lithograph is thoughtlessly positioned. It hangs far too high above eye level and over a radiator. This is not only a poor physical environment for a work on paper but does not provide an appropriate visual field for the viewer. There is also an end table with a portrait and other objects under the lithograph rendering it as an object amongst a group. This ignores the artwork's independent characteristics and does not offer the viewer an appropriate opportunity to engage with the artwork. The same phenomenon takes place with another artwork pictured in the article. Figure 7²⁰⁰ shows Robert Goodnough's *2R '64*, year unknown, on exhibition in the Embassy office in London. Like Rauschenberg's lithograph at Spaso, Goodnough's painting is placed among other objects rendering it as part of a group. A bust of Abraham Lincoln by August Saint-Gaudens is on display in front of the painting, actually inhibiting a viewer from seeing all of it. This is not only disruptive, but a manifestation of the AIEP's exhibiting American artwork for its "Americanness." The American roots of the artwork are highlighted by placing them in such close proximity. This is exacerbated with the inclusion of the likeness of a prominent American such as President Lincoln. It is also a further instance of the AIEP presenting a conglomeration of American art with

¹⁹⁹ Featured in Grace Glueck, "Home Grown Art blooms in U.S. Missions," *New York Times* July 6, 1965.

²⁰⁰ Featured in Grace Glueck, "Home Grown Art blooms in U.S. Missions," *New York Times* July 6, 1965.

no deeper context. Figure 8²⁰¹ demonstrates a similar effect on Grace Hartigan's *Essex Market*, 1956. While not as blatant as the effect on *2R '64*, *Essex Market* is shown in the New Delhi embassy hanging over furniture of a previous era and an elegant coffee or tea service on the table. This setting does not emphasize links between the objects as strongly as the London Embassy office, but there remains a connotation that the painting is part of a group, one consisting of American objects. The perspective of the images in Figures 7 and 8 pervades the sense that the paintings and other objects in the room share an inherent American context. It is as if the photographer was aware (a distinct possibility) of the mission of the AIEP to exhibit art for its "Americanness."

²⁰¹ Featured in Grace Glueck, "Home Grown Art blooms in U.S. Missions," *New York Times* July 6, 1965.



Figure 7. “Mrs. Foy D. Kohler, right, shows guests a lithograph, ‘Urban,’ by Robert Rauschenberg at Spaso House, the Ambassador’s Moscow residence.”



Figure 8. “‘2R ’64’, an abstract by Robert Goodnough, and a bust of Lincoln by Saint-Gaudens in office of embassy in London.”



Figure 9. “‘Essex Market,’ by Grace Hartigan, is one of the paintings in dining room of the Chester Bowles home in New Delhi.”

CONCLUSION

The AIEP embraced the curatorial practices established by MoMA for mid-century American avant-garde artwork. MoMA's curatorial practice focused on commodifying Abstract Expressionism in order to make it a powerful international diplomatic tool. Perceived as a commodity, Abstract Expressionist paintings were forced into the canon of American products made to represent the historical triumph of American capitalist society in the 1950s and 1960s. The AIEP naively continued this practice and applied it to Pop art, ignoring both styles' anti-capitalist goals as well as their intellectually varied artistic aims in opposing capitalist society.

The AIEP maintained MoMA's pro-capitalist theories through its selection process, exhibition of artwork, and interpretive practices for the artwork. Exhibitions produced by the AIEP implied that Abstract Expressionism and Pop art were logical outcomes of a capitalist society, but did little to clarify the controversies raging within American culture that these styles addressed. Nancy Kefauver selected artwork by the leading American avant-garde artists, but failed to maintain the artist's and artwork's context beyond being made in the U.S. By purposefully selecting popular artwork, then neglecting its roots through manifold curatorial decisions, the AIEP presented incompatible and at times opposing artwork within the same exhibitions to an international audience as representative of American culture. Under Nancy Kefauver the

AIEP abdicated its responsibilities to clearly and thoroughly depict American culture through its exhibitions, alternatively, depicting the U.S. and avant-garde art created within its borders as a congruous consumerist paradise.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Artists included in MoMA's 1953 exhibition *12 Modern American Painters and Sculptors* shown in Oslo, Helsinki, Stockholm, Dusseldorf, Paris, and Zurich (April, 1953-March, 1954):

1. Ivan Albright
2. Alexander Calder
3. Stuart Davis
4. Arshile Gorky
5. Morris Graves
6. Edward Hopper
7. John Kane
8. John Marin
9. Jackson Pollock
10. Theodore Roszak
11. Ben Shahn
12. David Smith

APPENDIX 2

Initial members of the MoMA's International Council and their city of residence and known affiliations.

International Council Members

1. Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman, New York, donated artwork to MoMA's collection and established the Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman for purchasing artwork.
2. Mr. Ralph F. Colin, New York, prominent art collector with large collection of prints, paintings, and sculpture.
3. Mr. John de Menil, Houston, philanthropist, collector, and modern art advocate.
4. Mr. Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Cleveland: Oil, iron, shipping magnate and philanthropist. Served on advisory council of Cleveland Museum of Art 1914-1920, board of trustees 1920-1957 (year of death), and left a bequest of over \$33 million to the Museum.

5. Mrs. Walter Hochschild, New York, along with her husband, donated artwork and financial support to MoMA.
6. Mrs. Gertrud A. Mellon, Greenwich, collector and philanthropist, donated artwork to MoMA and established the Mrs. Gertrud A. Mellon fund at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
7. Mrs. Richard Rodgers, New York, wife of composer Richard Rodgers.
8. Mrs. John Rood, Minneapolis
9. Mrs. Henry Potter Russell, San Francisco, member of U.S. National Committee for UNESCO.
10. Mrs. Victor Zurcher, Chicago, active in modern arts advocacy in Chicago and supported artists such as Robert Motherwell.

Vice-Chairmen also members of the Museum Board

11. Mr. Wallace K. Harrison, architect and held close personal relationship with Nelson Rockefeller, which likely lead to many of his commissions.
12. Mr. James Thrall Soby, critic, author, collector, and patron of the arts, he had been involved with MoMA selection committees since 1940.
13. Mrs. Samuel A. Marx.
14. Mrs. Bliss Parkinson.
15. Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd – Chairman, wife of John D. Rockefeller 3rd, son of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller.

APPENDIX 3

Artists included in MoMA's 1958 exhibition *The New American Painting* shown in Basel, Milan, Madrid, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, London, and New York (April, 1958-March, 1959):

1. William Baziotes
2. James Brooks
3. Sam Francis
4. Arshile Gorky
5. Adolph Gottlieb
6. Philip Guston
7. Grace Hartigan
8. Franz Kline
9. Willem de Kooning
10. Robert Motherwell
11. Barnett Newman
12. Jackson Pollock
13. Mark Rothko
14. Theodoros Stamos
15. Clyfford Still
16. Bradley Walker Tomlin
17. Jack Tworikov

APPENDIX 4

Initial Executive Committee and Accessions Committee members for the AIEP at their establishment in 1965.

Executive Committee

1. Nancy Kefauver
2. David Scott, Director, National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington D.C.
3. Lloyd Goodrich, Director, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Accessions Committee

1. Perry Rathbone, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
2. Sue S. Thurman, Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston
3. Bartlett H. Hayes, Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA
4. Richard Collins, director of arts and sciences, IBM
5. Robert H. Thayer, former assistant to Secretary of State Dulles
6. Janet Ruben, Obelisk Gallery, Washington, D.C.
7. Roy Moyer, American Federation of Arts, New York
8. Katherine Kuh, art editor of Saturday Review, New York
9. Edward Rust, Academy of Art, Tennessee
10. Gudmund Vigtel, High Museum of Art, Atlant
11. Rexford Stead, Museum of Fine arts, St. Petersburg, Florida
12. Otto Wittman, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio
13. Norman de Haan, architect, Chicago
14. Laurence Sickman, Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
15. Eugene Kingman, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska
16. Donald Goodall, University of Texas art Department, Austin
17. Dorothy Dunn, honorary associate in Indian arts, Los Altos, California
18. Richard Brown, Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles
19. Paul Mills, Oakland Art Museum, Oakland
20. Thomas Leavitt, Santa Barbara Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Barbara

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education

M. A. (2013)	Critical and Curatorial Studies, University of Louisville Thesis: "The Founding of the Art in Embassies Program and the Misrepresentation of American Art"
M.P.A. (2013)	Non-Profit, University of Louisville
Graduate Certificate (2013)	Public History, University of Louisville
B.A., <i>cum laude</i> , 2010	History, Walsh University
B.A., <i>cum laude</i> , 2010	Museum Studies, Walsh University
Certificate, 2009	Historic Preservation Studies Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies
Study Abroad	Summer 2012, Berlin, Germany (Kentucky Institute for International Study) studied museology and public art Summer 2009, Rome, Italy and Paris, France (Walsh University) studied museology Fall 2007, Rome, Italy (Walsh University) studied history and art

Professional Experience

The Frazier History Museum, Louisville, Kentucky May 2012-Present

Curatorial Assistant

Assist Curator of Collections and Exhibitions Team in researching, producing, and performing registrar duties for *Samurai* (May-September 2012) and *Evasion and Escape Aids of WWII* (May-September 2013). Assisted in production of *Samurai: The Flowering of Japan* exhibition catalog. Activities also include short and long term collections

management, conducting research to update the acquisition policy, and independently carrying out courier trips.

Corn Island Archaeology LLC, Louisville, Kentucky, May 2012-December 2012.

Historian Intern

Assisted the Principal Architectural Historian / Preservation Planner to complete historic surveys of more than 200 properties and digitize the information for the city government of Louisville, Kentucky.

Frazier History Museum, Louisville, Kentucky January 2011-May 2012

Curatorial Intern

Assisted Curator of Collections in researching, producing, and performing registrar duties for *Civil War: My Brother, My Enemy* (September 2011-April 2012). Carried out independent research and preservation activities with various collections.

The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, May 2011-August 2011.

Hirsch Intern

Worked with Curator of Decorative Arts Dr. Jutta Page to research for the exhibition *Color Ignited* (June-September 2012). Researched incoming acquisitions, and assisted with planning and execution of gallery reinstallation.

Cressman Center Gallery, University of Louisville, August 2010-May 2011.

Graduate Gallery Assistant

Installed and deinstalled exhibitions as well as performed administrative and front desk duties.

The Pro Football Hall of Fame, Canton, Ohio, August, 2008-April, 2009.

Curatorial Intern

Accessioned and housed 167 artifacts, prepared artifacts for shipment, created specialized storage for multiple collections, and researched potential institutions for traveling exhibition.

The Hoover Historical Center, North Canton, Ohio, January 2008-November 2008

Curatorial Intern

Prepared sections of multiple exhibitions, catalogued acquisitions, and conducted research on the Hoover Company's history.

Teaching Experience

Graduate Teaching Assistant, The Hite Art Institute, University of Louisville, 2011-13.

Graded essays, maintained attendance, provided writing workshops, delivered guest lectures, and digitized readings for the following 8 courses that Professor Jongwoo Jeremy Kim offered for undergraduate and graduate students: Modern Art 1900-1945, 20th-Century Photography, Matisse and Picasso, 19th Century Art, Dada and Surrealism, The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Modern Perspectives in the Visual Arts, and Realism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism.

Awards and Grants

Outstanding Graduate Student, University of Louisville Hite Art Institute, 2013
Best Graduate Student Research Paper, Phi Alpha Theta Ohio Regional Conference, March 23, 2013
University of Louisville Hite Art Institute Graduate Teaching Fellowship, 2012
University of Louisville Hite Art Institute Graduate Student Travel Grant (Germany), 2012
University of Louisville Graduate Student Union Travel Grant (Germany), 2012
University of Louisville Art and Culture Partnership Initiative Scholarship, 2012
University of Louisville Hite Art Institute Cressman Scholarship, 2012
University of Louisville Art and Culture Partnership Initiative Scholarship, 2011
University of Louisville Hite Art Institute Cressman Scholarship, 2011
University of Louisville Hite Art Institute Hite Assistantship, 2010
Walsh University President's Scholarship, 2009

Professional Affiliations

Phi Alpha Theta
Association of Academic Museums & Galleries
American Alliance of Museums

Conferences

Phi Alpha Theta Ohio Regional Conference, Walsh University, North Canton, Ohio, March 23, 2013.

Presenter, "From MoMA to the State Department: The Founding of the Art in Embassies Program."

Publications

“Hometown History,” The Frazier History Museum Blog, entry posted October 18, 2012, <http://fraziermuseum.org/2012/10/?cat=5>.

“Speediest Olympic Sports: Target Shooting & Fencing,” The Frazier History Museum Blog, entry posted August 13, 2012, <http://fraziermuseum.org/2012/08/?cat=5>.

“Samurai Artifact with a Message,” The Frazier History Museum Blog, entry posted June 7, 2012, <http://www.fraziermuseum.org/tag/craftsmanship/>.

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