Philip Johnson:
The Whence and Whither of Art in Architecture

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Poised with wings spread, Lee Bontecou's *Untitled* of 1964 looks as if it is about to fly off the wall and swoop around the lobby of the New York State Theater (renamed the David H. Koch Theater in 2008), part of Lincoln Center in Manhattan (Figure 1). Two recessed holes, possibly taking the place of propellers, flank a central protruding black oval, conceivably once a gunner's turret but now an empty pit. Pieces of fabric in somber colors cover the truncated and gutted flying machine, attached to one another by wires, the ends of which, twisted together, poke straight out, lining the sharp edges where fabric meets armature. Is this a sad ghost of a bomber from World War II, or perhaps a prehistoric premonition of some futuristic flying contraption?

Bontecou's sculpture perches on a travertine wall near a winding staircase leading to the grand reception hall of the New York State Theater designed by Philip Johnson, completed in 1964 (Figure 2). For the building, Johnson invited two young contemporary artists, Bontecou and Jasper Johns, to make objects specifically for the walls of the foyer, near the interior staircases. He also placed already existing sculptures by established modernists—Edward Higgins, Jacques Lipchitz, Reuben Nakian, and Francesco Somaini—throughout the reception spaces of the building.[1] Finally, at either end of the immense five-story lobby, ringed by a three-tiered balcony edged with bronze railings and covered with a gold leaf ceiling, Johnson placed monumental sculptures by Elie Nadelman: *Two Female Nudes* and *Circus Women* (Figure 3). These were scaled-up copies of extant works, one featured in Johnson's own home and the other owned by Nelson Rockefeller.[2]

The second building to be completed at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Johnson's theater was dedicated with much fanfare on 23 April 1964 (Figure 4). It opened in time to host productions organized in conjunction with the New York World's Fair in Flushing Meadows in Queens, for which the architect had planned the New York State Pavilion (Figure 5). For the Theaterama, a circular building that was part of the New York State Pavilion, Johnson asked ten artists—Peter Agostini, John Chamberlain, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Alexander Liberman, Robert Mallary, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, and Andy Warhol—to fabricate large-scale panels to hang on the outside wall. About the works exposed on the exterior of the Theaterama, Johnson enthused, "I frankly love my choices."[3] Of the artworks installed in the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center, Johnson singled out Bontecou's *Untitled* for particular praise, while expressing regret regarding where he had chosen to place Johns's *Numbers*:

> Lee Bontecou seems to have had an empathy . . . for the space and the coloring. Her piece fits as well as a baroque statue in the niche of a baroque hall. The stair hall is a better stair hall for her efforts. If she wanted she could become the "decorator" for all of us poverty-stricken architects.
>
> Jasper Johns, certainly one of the geniuses of American painting, took the opposite path. His Numbers is one of his most sensitive pieces. It is nicely placed—on the wrong place. It cannot "carry" the stair hall.[4]

By saying that *Numbers* could not " 'carry' the stair hall," Johnson meant that the artwork was not successful at integrating itself into the architectural setting while remaining distinct from the wall.

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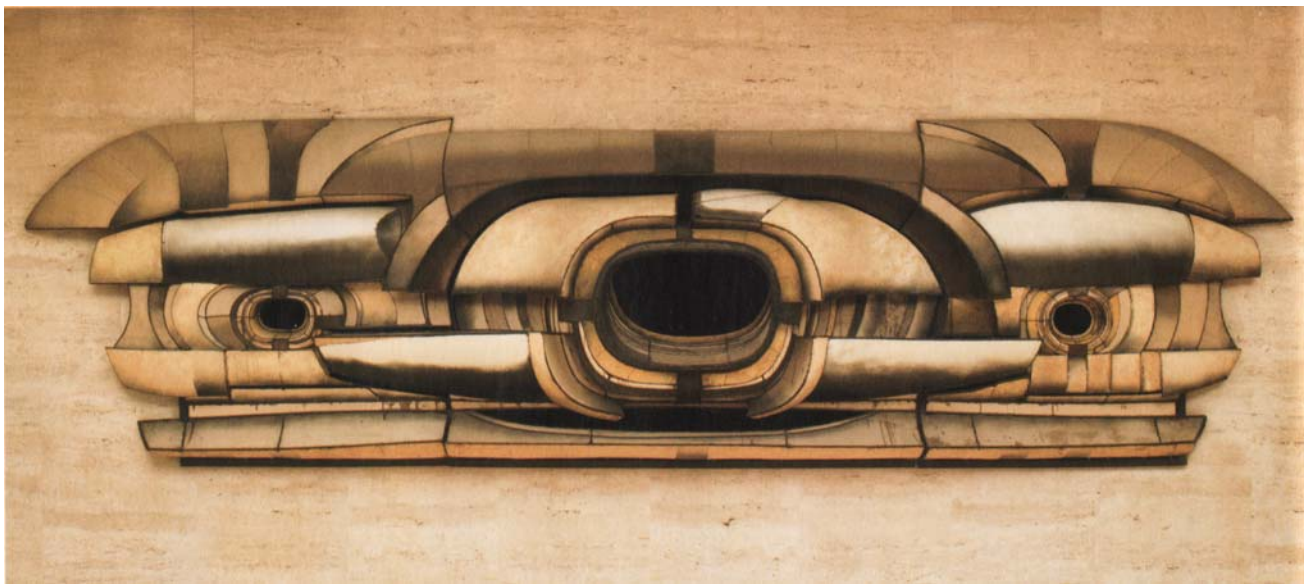

Figure 1 Lee Bontecou, *Untitled*, 1964, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York (© Jerry L. Thompson).

Figure 2 Lee Bontecou, *Untitled*, 1964, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York (© Ezra Stoller/Etso).

Figure 3 Philip Johnson, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York, 1964, Grand Hall with two sculptures by Elie Nadelman (© Jerry L. Thompson).

Figure 4 Philip Johnson, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York, 1964 (© Ezra Stoller/Etso).

When selecting works of art to place in and around his buildings, Johnson looked for contrast as well as compatibility; he did not want the artworks to be subservient to his architecture. While he considered the inclusion of art to be a crucial part of architecture, he did not seek its integration, in the sense of reducing it to a mere decorative supplement to the building's overbearing style. Nor did he want it to be entirely separate. In an interview with Selden Rodman in 1957, Johnson asserted, "I believe in juxtaposition of the arts, not integration. This room [referring to the interior of the Glass House] helps the Poussin and vice versa."[5] As Rodman observed, the Poussin landscape owned by Johnson stood upright in the middle of the room on two bracketed legs, rather than decorating a wall. At the same time, the paintings and sculptures Johnson chose for his buildings were not meant to perform critiques of the sites or institutions.[6] At the New York State Theater some of the works Johnson commissioned were criticized, in particular those by Bontecou and

Figure 5 Philip Johnson, New York State Pavilion, New York World's Fair, Queens, 1964, with artwork by Roy Lichtenstein installed on the exterior of the Theaterama (© Ezra Stoller/Etso).

Nadelman.[7] Yet only Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*, hanging on the exterior of the Theaterama, provoked a disturbance strong enough to result in real condemnation (Figure 6). Before the official opening of the New York World's Fair, the work was removed at the request of Governor Nelson Rockefeller, ostensibly out of fear that members of the Italian Mafia might sue.[8] In his selection of artworks Johnson occasionally tested standards of acceptable aesthetic taste while attempting to develop a productive partnership between architecture and art.

A year after the New York State Theater opened, Johnson emphasized the importance of procession. In his article "Whence and Whither: The Processional Element in Architecture," he explained, "The New York State Theater, whatever stand one takes on its artworks or decorative features, whatever one's views of Neo-classicism vs. concrete, is designed as a procession."[9] The multitiered balcony around the central lobby in the theater was the most obvious example of Johnson's interest in procession (Figure 7). During intermission the audience was meant to promenade on the tiers, looking at one another, while pedestrians strolling across the plaza could look past travertine columns, through the glass curtain façade, and glimpse people clad in fancy clothes mingling in a glamorous interior reception hall illuminated by sparkling chandeliers. The art also subtly prompted movement through the interior space. Johnson had already experimented with using sculpture to orchestrate space and movement at his home, where he positioned a bronze sculpture by Lipchitz between the Glass House and the Guest House, "at a place [he] claimed worked as a pivot around which the two structures revolved."[10] In the New York State Theater, art punctuated key points inside the building, prodding people to move from the entrance to the staircases, where they could stop for a moment to look at either the Bontecou or the Johns before going up the stairs and into the grand lobby to ogle the Nadelmans (see Figures 2 and 7).

Johnson's approach to conjoining art and architecture was notable at a moment when private corporations and public institutions were just beginning to embrace modern art as part of their construction programs. In the early 1960s Johnson took the lead, actively incorporating contemporary and modern art in and around two very important public spaces in New York City. Earlier, in the 1950s, he had already experimented with placing art in his own home and in the Four Seasons restaurant he designed inside the Seagram Building. Johnson selected modern and contemporary art with the knowledge and taste of a patron and collector who had been actively involved in museums. He founded the Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where he worked from 1930 to 1936 and again from 1946 to 1954. In 1953, Johnson designed MoMA's Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, which he modified in 1960–64. Outside New York, Johnson was the principal architect for several art museums, including the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute in Utica, New York (1960); the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, Texas (1961); the Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln, Nebraska (1963); and the Museum for Pre-Columbian Art, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. (1963). In 1965, when Henry-Russell Hitchcock, who had collaborated with Johnson in mounting the exhibition that introduced the International Style of architecture at MoMA in 1932, published

Figure 6 Andy Warhol, *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* installation at New York State Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1964, silk screen ink on Masonite, each panel 48 by 48 inches (twenty-five panels) (photo by Eric Pollitzer © 2016 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York).

Figure 7 Philip Johnson, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York, 1964, Grand Hall with two sculptures by Elie Nadelman (© Ezra Stoller/Etso).

Figure 8 Philip Johnson, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York, during construction, 1961 (photographer unknown; courtesy of the New York City Ballet).

one of the first monographs on the architect, he commented, "He buys like an avant-garde curator; he installs like a specialist in the preparation of exhibitions."[11]

Yet neither the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center nor the Theaterama at the New York World's Fair was a museum, where architecture was meant to serve as a backdrop for art. When Johnson placed the art in these two public buildings, he followed his principle of juxtaposition, according to which the particulars of the structure and the artwork were meant to play off and enhance one another. The commissioned art took on a number of roles, contrasting with the structures, orchestrating the movement of visitors, and revealing a secret or two for those in the know. In the end, Johnson's use of painting and sculpture in and on these two buildings blurred lines—not only the line between art and architecture but also that between high art and popular commerce.

Designing Lincoln Center

In 1958, when John D. Rockefeller III unveiled plans to develop Lincoln Center, he voiced hope that it would become "a new American landmark."[12] As the first president of Lincoln Center (1955–61) and then as chairman of the Lincoln Center Board of Trustees (1961–70), Rockefeller consistently promoted the new center not only for New York City but also for the country as a whole. To that end he emphasized the importance of designing and building edifices for the performing arts that would be distinctive and lasting monuments: "It is proper that Lincoln Center should represent the best of American architecture, for we are building not for today or tomorrow, but for 100 years."[13] The following year President Dwight Eisenhower, wielding a shovel, presided over the groundbreaking ceremonies for Lincoln Center, where Robert Moses, mastermind of urban renewal and development in Manhattan, proclaimed, "Here we stake our claim that New York will become the world center of the performing arts."[14] Assigned local, national, and global significance, Lincoln Center distinguished itself as the largest architectural project in Manhattan during a period characterized by many grand undertakings in urban renewal, the most recent of which had been the United Nations Headquarters completed in 1952. Through the sheer size of its footprint, its controversial consolidation of the performing arts into one site, and the architectural ambition of its design, Lincoln Center set out to capture the cultural limelight and to announce America's artistic coming of age in the Cold War era.

Moses, taking advantage of Title I of the U.S. Housing Act of 1949, which provided federal subsidies for the removal of slums, razed eleven acres on the west side of Manhattan for Lincoln Center (Figure 8).[15] The construction of the cultural complex entailed clearing away decaying low-rise tenements, the majority of which were built before 1900. The project displaced low-income residents, a quarter of which were members of minority groups, primarily Puerto Ricans and African Americans.[16] Moses's initiative was intended to modernize and revitalize the Lincoln Square neighborhood, to draw back into the city middle-class audiences who had migrated to the suburbs, and to attract tourists from around the world. Lincoln Center was to house multiple cultural buildings in large new halls—the Metropolitan Opera House, the Philharmonic Hall

Figure 9 Lincoln Center, New York, ca. 1969, aerial view (© Ezra Stoller/Etso).

(now Avery Fisher Hall), the New York State Theater, the Vivian Beaumont Repertory Theater, the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts, the Juilliard School, and a new graduate campus for Fordham University—as well as four thousand middle-income apartments (Figure 9).

The new complex exemplified a trend in the 1960s for cities to build museums, theaters, and symphony halls with the belief that distinctive cultural landmarks could reinvigorate a city and advance national claims to cultural excellence. During this decade, several major U.S. cities erected large-scale cultural complexes, such as the Music Center in Los Angeles and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Smaller cities followed suit. As historian Howard Brick notes:

> A boom in building municipal art centers began in 1962 . . . and by 1969, when more than 170 such centers had been completed, a like number were still in the making. . . .
>
> . . . In the late 1950s and early 1960s, those who called for new federal expenditures on the arts rested the case for culture partly on a Cold War–inspired wish to boost the grandeur and dignity of the nation and partly on old-fashioned pious notions that art was needed to refine the sensibility in the face of harsh modern life. The building of Lincoln Center was promoted by a mixture of philanthropic narcissism, urban planners' distaste for the poor Latino district occupying those West Side streets, and business interests in real estate and tourism.[17]

Lincoln Center set a precedent for many of the subsequent cultural buildings erected in the United States. Embedded in the city and yet set apart by its placement on a podium—much like a sculpture set on a pedestal—Lincoln Center deliberately lifted cultural institutions above the surrounding commercial establishments and residential buildings, emphasizing the center's prominence and the special status assigned to the arts within the city.

The architectural style adopted at Lincoln Center demarcated culture separate from its urban setting. A number of prominent architects received invitations to participate in the design. Wallace K. Harrison, who had worked on Rockefeller Center and the United Nations, was asked to plan the Metropolitan Opera House, and he was also invited by the Exploratory Committee to act as coordinating architect for the entire complex. The Philharmonic Society requested that Harrison's partner Max Abramovitz design the New York Philharmonic Hall, and other well-known architects soon joined the team: Pietro Belluschi, Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, and Eero Saarinen.[18] Although the architects for the key buildings at Lincoln Center had made names for themselves by designing soaring International Style towers—Abramovitz and Harrison would continue to be responsible for many of the International Style skyscrapers in Manhattan—at Lincoln Center they espoused what one

European observer dubbed "American neo-classicism" (see Figure 9).[19]

Johnson came on board in 1958, at a pivotal moment in his career when he shifted from experimenting in International Style modernism to toying with classical precedent. In the late 1950s he did not enjoy the renown of the other architects hired at Lincoln Center, but he did command esteem for his years as director of the Department of Architecture at MoMA. Johnson, who had come to architectural practice later in his professional career, practiced a Miesian style in the early 1950s, culminating in a collaboration with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe on the Seagram Building, completed in 1958. However, even as Johnson contributed to the design of the Seagram Building, he had already vocally turned against the International Style. In a presentation he gave in 1960 at the School of Architecture in London, for instance, he identified his philosophy as "functional eclecticism," which he characterized as "being able to choose from history whatever forms, shapes, or directions you want to, and using them as you please."[20]

By the time the New York State Theater opened at Lincoln Center, Johnson had already designed several buildings with historical references, including the Amon Carter Museum and the Sheldon Museum of Art. In an interview with John W. Cook and Heinrich Klotz published in 1973, Johnson grouped his buildings from the late 1950s and early 1960s under the rubric of his "arch period," taking a certain delight in being a "bad boy" by looking to history for inspiration.[21] Cook and Klotz questioned Johnson's interest during this period in monumentality and his use of travertine, which for them had strong associations with fascist architecture. As Johnson took pains to explain to Cook and Klotz, however, he was seeking a type of monumentality defined around aesthetic ideals of beauty and dignity independent of function.[22] Cook and Klotz were not appeased by Johnson's arguments, voicing thinly veiled disdain for concepts that they associated with his architecture: history, play, aesthetic sensation, elegance, beauty. They echoed earlier critics, notably William Jordy, who during Johnson's "arch period" aimed sharp, moralizing criticism at the architect's buildings, dismissing them as "decorative" or as examples of "balletic modernism."[23]

The shift in Johnson's practice from the International Style to his arch period coincided with a broader reaction against functionalism, which took multiple directions in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As architectural critic Thomas H. Creighton remarked, "There are many important architectural works today which are not the rectilinear, modular, flat-surfaced expressions which have long been associated with contemporary design."[24] Jordy, like other critics, wrote extensively about the new classicizing trend in American architecture, adopting various rubrics to describe it, including the "new formalism," "classicist formalism," and "new Mannerism." Jordy voiced his fear that with too much historicism architecture might cease to be modern, but his deeper concern was that "making modern architecture beautiful will predominate over making beautiful modern architecture."[25] Here Jordy echoed a worry articulated by Robin Boyd: that architects worshipping the god of beauty were more interested in pleasing the hedonistic eye than in attending to ethical principles.[26]

Rather than defer to his contemporaries' reservations about historicism and the cult of beauty, Johnson embraced classical models for the slender travertine columns on the façade of the New York State Theater. The building was still indebted to the International Style, with its flat roof and glass curtain wall, but the tall open portico, with its four-fluted columns, relied on a classical vocabulary. In part Johnson's neoclassical colonnade and use of travertine were the result of compromise among the six strong-minded architects who made up the design team at Lincoln Center. The architects had agreed to several key principles, especially about the external appearance of the three central buildings around the main plaza. Johnson apparently won out in his preference for glass and travertine for the main halls, and he insisted on a uniform bay size and balcony height.[27] In fact the rectilinear form of the New York State Theater, with its portico set in front of the glass façade, mirrored the first Lincoln Center building to be finished in 1962, the New York Philharmonic Hall designed by Abramovitz. Harrison similarly relied on historical precedents for the Metropolitan Opera House, and from the earliest planning stages he categorized the barrel-vaulted cantilevers on its façade as "modern baroque."[28] Flanked by the other two buildings, Harrison's Opera House ultimately dominated a plaza whose size was often compared to that of the Piazza San Marco in Venice.[29] The promotional brochure published during one of the fundraising campaigns encouraged this sort of comparison: "Future generations of visitors from America and abroad will come to Lincoln Center as they now visit great landmarks in Venice, Athens, and Rome."[30]

Critical response to the New York State Theater was decidedly mixed, with no agreement over whether it exemplified either glamour appropriate to its role as a cultural center or excessively bad taste. In a "critical trialogue" on the theater published in *Progressive Architecture*, three architectural critics took potshots at Johnson's building, attacking the abundance of gilding, the pretentious monumentality, the "Pop Art" chandeliers hung in the colonnade, and the "candy-box, frou-frou" interior.[31] The implicit equivalence between ornament and femininity found in many critics' reactions reached its apogee in the parodic critique penned by architect Charles Moore in *Architectural Forum*, in which he anthropomorphized the buildings at Lincoln Center—he dubbed Johnson's New York State Theater the "Baroness von

Neustate"—and denigrated them as ingenues toying with their jewelry and tiaras.[32]

Ada Louise Huxtable, appointed in 1963 as the first full-time architectural critic at the *New York Times*, came to the defense of her former colleague at MoMA with a lengthy feature article published one month after the New York State Theater opened. Heaping praise on all three of Johnson's most recent projects, including the New York State Pavilion at the 1964–65 World's Fair and MoMA's east wing and sculpture garden, she embraced the opulent materials and historicist elements of the New York State Theater, situating its style in an august tradition of architecture from the past while also pronouncing it absolutely modern:

> What Johnson is bringing to New York, and to a good many cities across the country, is a kind of architectural elegance that has not been seen since the turn-of-the-century days of McKim, Mead and White and the splendid "Renaissance" palaces built for the business aristocracy. But his is a new kind of elegance in completely contemporary terms—a modern architecture with the timeless values of beauty and luxury that have a universal appeal, whereas the more startling contemporary styles do not.[33]

Huxtable, who was no fan of the modernist urban redevelopment that replaced older structures with superblocks, nevertheless applauded Johnson's combination of classical details, luxurious materials, and modernist style as a means of suggesting enduring values of the sort that John D. Rockefeller, as chairman of the Lincoln Center Board of Trustees, had in fact hoped the buildings at the complex would embody. Johnson's efforts at reinventing and updating classicism appeared to Huxtable and to others to transform the New York State Theater into a modern-day palazzo for the performing arts.

Johnson's Art Program at the New York State Theater

Moses had initially considered incorporating an actual museum into Lincoln Center; early on, he suggested to Harry Guggenheim, nephew of Solomon, that Guggenheim house his uncle's collection in a museum at Lincoln Center.[34] The center's board eventually decided to incorporate art into the complex instead by forming the Art and Acquisitions Committee to place works throughout the center. The committee, which included two museum directors—René d'Harnoncourt from MoMA and Andrew Ritchie from the Yale University Art Gallery—first met in 1960 and set the initial budget for art at 1 percent of the cost of the buildings. The committee, in consultation with the architects, selected artworks judged to be "suitable representations from their sister decorative arts of sculpture, painting, and furnishing."[35]

Figure 10 Richard Lippold, *Bronze Sculpture*, 1959, Four Seasons Restaurant, Seagram Building (© Ezra Stoller/Etso; © Estate of Richard Lippold/Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York).

The works of art chosen for display at Lincoln Center generally represented a careful selection of well-established modernists, as epitomized by the Henry Moore sculpture chosen to grace the reflecting pool.

Johnson, famously, was an architect actively involved in the choice of artworks, especially when it came to his own buildings.[36] As early as in his design for the Four Seasons restaurant inside the Seagram Building, Johnson repudiated the spare geometry of the International Style in his practice and revealed a newfound interest in adopting sumptuous materials and experimenting with theatrical light effects.[37] This was also Johnson's first attempt at including modern and contemporary art in an interior space that was neither a museum nor a private residence. For the Four Seasons Johnson commissioned a sculpture from Richard Lippold; that work's slender bronze rods hanging from the ceiling focused attention dramatically on the restaurant's bar (Figure 10). Additionally, Pablo Picasso's *Le Tricorne* hung on the wall in the passageway between the two dining rooms, and tapestries by Joan Miró were in the lobby. Johnson's combination of art, dramatic lighting, and opulent materials would find its zenith in the New York State Theater.

The sculptures Johnson selected for the theater served multiple purposes, the most obvious and least controversial of which was simply to develop a relationship between the architecture and the "sister art" of sculpture. Johnson later professed to architect Robert A. M. Stern: "My instinct of looking at art and wanting to use it as decoration for the too-blankness of modern, was a holdover from Mies. Mies always made me think that if you have blankness, only art can help."[38] This particular belief, that works of art can counter the sterility of modernist architecture, gained some traction in the late 1950s. For instance, in a lengthy article exploring the role of art in architecture, Ada Louise Huxtable argued that "the individualized, warmly human touch of the personally created work of art is a natural complement and proper completion for today's standardized, impersonal construction of mass-produced modular elements."[39] In another article she went even further in praising what contemporary art had to offer: "The large scale, the excitement, the explosive color and the intricate, often sensuous, patterns of abstract art add congenial richness to the austerity of today's building forms."[40]

Some disagreement existed about whether or not artwork should be selected to harmonize with the particulars of a given building. In 1960, art historian George Heard Hamilton addressed the trend of placing contemporary art in new structures: "For large office buildings a considerable percentage of the cost is now set aside for independent works of art, this being apparently the only way that painting and sculpture can be accommodated to an architectural aesthetic which still eschews 'decorative' embellishment."[41] In other words, contemporary art could be placed inside a building, but only if it did not ornament the actual walls or taint the modernist ideals of a pared-down structure (siting a work of art with no attention to how it fit in with its surroundings would later be dubbed "plop art"[42]). Other writers countered that architect and artist should work together to amalgamate their work. Robert Aldern, for instance, expressed enthusiasm for the idea that the artist "could become the architect's associate, like the engineer or any other specialist."[43]

Huxtable argued for the juxtaposition rather than the combination of art and architecture:

> The arts today—independent, autonomous, *un*-integrated—are prepared to serve and complement each other in a very special way.
>
> *The basis of this relationship is apposition, not integration*. Architecturally, it means enrichment by juxtaposition, completion by contrast. It is the skillful, perceptive use of the right kind of painting, the suitable piece of sculpture, the correct craft, to enhance and enlarge the sensuous appeal of a competent work of architecture in such a way that the building is greater than it would have been without it. It emphasizes strong counterpoint rather than close harmony; although it serves no structural or narrowly functional purpose, its use goes beyond mere elaboration or decoration to provide sharp, judicious and extremely meaningful accent to the strict simplicity of contemporary architectural forms.[44]

She singled out Johnson for particular praise: "He has demonstrated, quite rightly, that a classic Poussin landscape or a Baziotes abstraction can be used with equal effect to create an extraordinary range of visual and intellectual pleasures, to the infinite enrichment of modern architecture."[45] For Johnson and Huxtable, integration implied subsuming art to architecture; both instead applauded mutual enhancement.

Even before he designed the New York State Theater, Johnson had discovered that it was one thing to hang works in one's own home according to such ideals and quite another to commission artists for a commercial space. Famously, Mark Rothko reneged on his contract to provide the Four Seasons restaurant with paintings when he concluded (contrary to Johnson's intentions) that they would simply serve as a decorative backdrop to "a place where the richest bastards in New York will come to feed and show off."[46] Rothko, presuming the interior decorator's search for harmony of effect would trump the mutual enhancement of art and architecture, believed that his art would suffer by its placement at the Four Seasons. This stance was not surprising from an artist who was well known for refusing to relinquish control over the ways in which his paintings would be displayed. Unlike Rothko, Lippold, who contributed two sculptures to the Four Seasons, found that he and Johnson achieved a productive reciprocity. Writing in *Progressive Architecture* about his commission to execute a work for the Four Seasons, Lippold claimed that he enjoyed great latitude in designing his pieces, having been commissioned in advance of the restaurant's completion, when the layout, color, and texture of materials had been determined. "The only desire on the part of the architects was to create a more intimate feeling over the bar . . . without sacrificing elegance of the space and proportions of the room. . . . I was told also that the sculptures would be the focal points visually in an otherwise uncluttered interior."[47] Lippold insisted that Johnson did not interfere with his artistic choices; indeed, Johnson apparently developed his scheme for the ceiling, lighting, and furnishings after seeing the first drawings of the sculpture. This site-specific sculpture effectively highlighted the bar while also enjoying placement in the center of the space.

Following his experience at the Four Seasons, Johnson filled the lobby spaces and stairways of the New York State Theater with modern and contemporary art. Displaying the works in the manner of the museum curator he had been, he placed them on pedestals or mounted them on walls, identifying them with appropriate labels. Yet the art was not meant to

stand alone, disengaged from the architecture. Johns, urged by Johnson, enlarged the size of his work from about 4 by 6 feet (44 inches by 58 inches) to more than 9 feet by 7 feet (110 inches by 85 inches), the better to match the setting, while Bontecou studied the space and fabricated her 22-foot-long relief specifically for it.[48] Moreover, Johnson had the two sculptures by Nadelman greatly enlarged for the space of the grand lobby.

At the New York State Theater Johnson incorporated sculpture into an interior that was anything but austere. After all, he had given free rein to his own decorative flair inside the building with his selection of lavish surface materials meant to dazzle the visitor with their extravagance. In choosing works of art to include in the interior, Johnson could not have been following Mies's injunction to use art to compensate for the too-blankness of modern architecture. In fact, many of the sculptures made of bronze, steel, and marble materially complemented the interior decor. At the same time, some of the titles of these works, such as Francesco Somaini's *Large Bleeding Martyr* of 1960, conjured imagery at odds with classical ballet (Figure 11).[49] Further, a number of the works, including those by Somaini, Higgins, and even Lipchitz and Johns, had rough-hewn if not gouged surfaces. The treatment of the material surfaces of the sculptures set them apart from the travertine walls, which appeared relatively homogeneous, polished, and smooth.

Figure 11 Francesco Somaini, *Large Bleeding Martyr*, 1960, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York (© Jerry L. Thompson; courtesy Archivio Francesco Somaini).

Bontecou's *Untitled*

The materials of Bontecou's wall relief would seem to have taken the principle of contrast to an extreme. Bulging out from the flat wall, *Untitled* is covered with scruffy, frayed cloth and canvas, some of which is darkened with soot (see Figure 1). Stitched together with copper wires that poke out along the edges of the armature, the huge protuberance is punctured by three dark recesses (Figures 12 and 13). The raw components of *Untitled* make a stark contrast with the opulence and sheen of the stair hall's travertine.

Given the appearance of the wall relief, Johnson's assertion about *Untitled* may come as a surprise: "Her piece fits as well as a baroque statue in the niche of a baroque hall."[50] Johnson's words carry some truth in that Bontecou's relief, with its wide wingspan, fits the wall while also curving and twisting like the adjacent staircase (see Figure 2). Moreover, its chamois color complements the travertine. Yet one need only look at the sculpture, with its coarse materials, to realize that it does not fit nicely into a niche at all, even a metaphorical one. *Untitled* maintains dramatic tension between its materiality and the luxury of the theater's interior.

Was there a touch of irony in Johnson's praise? When he commissioned the sculpture from Bontecou and gave her carte blanche to make a piece for a particular place on the wall

Figure 12 Detail of Lee Bontecou, *Untitled*, 1964, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York (author's photo).

within the New York State Theater, Johnson might have anticipated the end result. By the time he contracted her, Bontecou was already enjoying fame for her mysterious reliefs. In New York she had been exhibited at Leo Castelli Gallery in 1960 and 1962, and her work was also included in

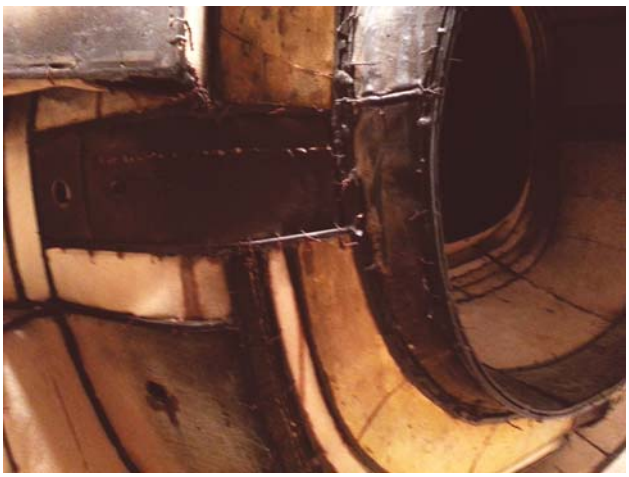

Figure 13 Detail of Lee Bontecou, *Untitled,* 1964, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York (author's photo).

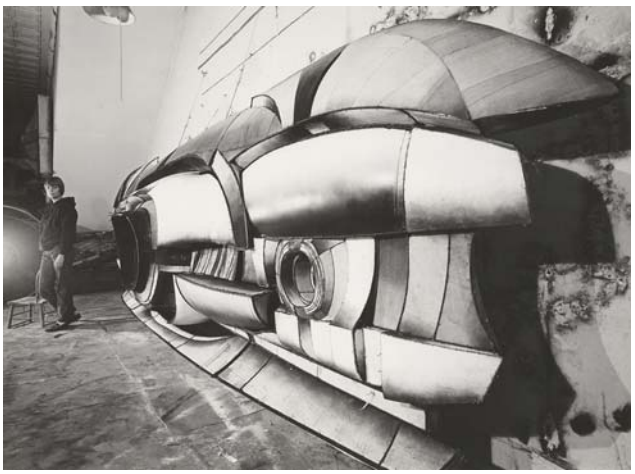

Figure 14 Lee Bontecou next to *Untitled,* 1964 (photo by Hans Namuth; courtesy Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona © 1991 Hans Namuth Estate).

several major group shows, including *The Art of Assemblage* in 1961 and *Americans 1963*, both at MoMA. Writers typically compared her reliefs to elements in nature (craters and volcanoes) and to the machine world (robots, World War II planes, helmets, and gun barrels). Occasionally, in the early 1960s, some discerned allusions to the female body. For instance, the women's magazine *Cosmopolitan* suggested, "Perhaps the black holes and the boxlike forms, and the mysterious textures in her work are visual metaphors for the secrets and complications of the eternal Eve."[51] With their multiple associations with nature, machine, and body, Bontecou's reliefs frequently unsettled critics. Most confessed to feeling disturbed both by the protrusions twisting forward, like scopes on a submarine, and by the fathomless depths of the gaping orifices. Sculptor Donald Judd commented on the "craters as voids but exceedingly aggressive ones, thrust starkly at the onlooker."[52] Others described Bontecou's reliefs as sinister, even threatening. Stuart Preston had perhaps the most extreme reaction, claiming that the "saw teeth, sawed-off gun barrels and sinister apertures that look like flame throwers, make an alarming impression on the visitor. . . . He instinctively reaches for his Beretta."[53] Given the reputation of Bontecou's artworks, Johnson probably knew that she would provide a sculpture that would contrast with his taste for luxury.

In fact, some critics chalked the presence of Bontecou's sculpture up to Johnson's taste for contrast. As *Architectural Record* reported, "Johnson seems fond of this kind of juxtaposition. . . . It can be found also in certain works, notably a sculpture by Bontecou, which he selected to offset the luxurious elegance of the New York State Theater."[54] Others felt the contrast went too far. About the sculptures selected for the New York State Theater, Ilse M. Reese, the critic at *Progressive Architecture*, conceded, "Johnson's choice of art works is, as usual, impeccable and their scale and placement in perfect union with the architecture." She went on, however, "But Lee Bontecou's powerful sculpture of welded steel, epoxy, and stretched canvas must compete with gold bead curtains."[55]

The sculpture did more than temper the opulence of the interior; it also introduced the recent past of World War II into the hall. *Untitled* received an extensive review in *Life*, the most widely read magazine of the day. The article's headline proclaimed, "Young Sculptor Brings Jet Age to Lincoln Center," and the text described the sculpture as an

> assemblage of welded metal rods, pieces of canvas, epoxy resin and the plexiglass turret of an old World War II bomber. It suggests a complex flying machine that might actually be able to get up off the ground and soar. . . . [Bontecou] works hard at her art and, when she isn't stitching or welding away at one of her huge jet-age assemblages, she makes tiny model airplanes in her studio.[56]

Untitled accordingly doubled as a World War II bomber and a modern-day jet, inviting viewers to consider the way in which the two smaller holes protruding at either end of Bontecou's huge wall sculpture recalled the turbine engines hanging from the curved wings of a jet as much as the propellers of a bomber or even the headlights of a car (Figure 14). The relief did not actually contain a bomber turret. Even so, Bontecou never discouraged the notion that she had incorporated actual parts of a plane from World War II into *Untitled*.[57]

Given the work's crude appearance, viewers were much more likely to associate Bontecou's structure with a damaged bomber from World War II than with the sleek new jets of the 1960s. The protruding black hole at its center seems to mark the spot where a gun turret might have been located on the nose or on the belly of a plane, containing a gunner ready

to fire at the enemy. Viewers peer at a dark, empty hole, as if the plane itself has been attacked, its nose turned into a crater. Ruined, the plane hovers threateningly in midflight, a target of destruction and a harbinger of death.

Art historian Mona Hadler, who has analyzed the relation of Bontecou's reliefs to international politics and social concerns, has pointed out that the artist placed Nazi helmets and gas masks (or allusions to them) into other reliefs and included war imagery in her drawings.[58] Moreover, as Hadler notes, the artist often spoke about her mother working in a factory wiring submarine transmitters during World War II. In photographs of the artist with *Untitled* published for Lincoln Center, her dress and pose evoke Rosie the Riveter, the icon of women who worked in munitions factories during the war.

To the extent that the dark central hole and the winged elements of Bontecou's relief called to mind the destructive effects of aerial warfare during World War II, the sculpture dwelled on a past that Lincoln Center was surely meant to forget. In the words of William Schuman, then president of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: "Lincoln Center is an idea . . . giving bold and concrete expression to confidence in man's survival, to the enduring value of art as a true measure of civilization. It is an idea rooted in the belief that the role of the arts is to give more than pleasure . . . create more civilized communities—not only locally, but nationally and internationally as well."[59] Schuman gave voice to the presumption that the fine and performing arts embody transcendent aesthetic ideals, and he championed the promotion and access to culture concentrated in one center as a means for people to rise above the threatening tensions of the Cold War. Bontecou's sculpture, however, did not allow viewers to forget that civilization is measured as much by wars as by cultural achievement; *Untitled* remained as a constant yet subtle reminder of the destructiveness of humankind. In this sense it highlighted what Lincoln Center, as a temple of culture, repressed: culture as a measure of civilization and as a means of ensuring civilization's longevity depends on warfare for its very protection and survival.

The New York State Pavilion at the New York World's Fair

The completion of the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center deliberately coincided with the grand opening of the New York World's Fair, where Johnson had designed the New York State Pavilion. Both Lincoln Center and the New York World's Fair were oriented toward the future of the state, the nation, and the world. The fair's enthusiastic and optimistic view of the future—epitomized by space travel, automated appliances, and abundant consumer goods—diverged, however, from the more elegant celebration of the fine and performing arts at Lincoln Center. Whereas the New York State Theater assumed a longer historical view with its references to the classical past, Johnson's New York State Pavilion, with its Skypads, Tent of Tomorrow, and Theaterama, affected a space-age look of the moment. Yet the two projects were not entirely at odds. Not only did both include contemporary art as part of their decorative schemes, but also the New York State Theater opened with performances mounted as part of the world's fair.

Figure 15 Philip Johnson, Skystreak elevators, New York State Pavilion, New York World's Fair, Queens, 1964 (© Ezra Stoller/Etso).

Situated at Flushing Meadows, the 1964–65 New York World's Fair defined a utopian urban space dominated overwhelmingly by the logos and pavilions of corporate commerce, espousing economic expansion with an eye toward the future of space exploration. In keeping with the space-age theme, Johnson's New York State Pavilion included three observation towers, or Skypads, one of which, at 226 feet in height, was the tallest structure at the fair (Figure 15). Frequently photographed from below and outlined against the sky, these towers resembled huge flying saucers, or Orbit City of *The Jetsons*, an animated television program about a family of the future that was broadcast in color during prime time in 1962–63. Visitors could imagine themselves in a futuristic world as they climbed aboard either of the two Skystreak capsule elevators, which shot them to the top of the tallest tower,

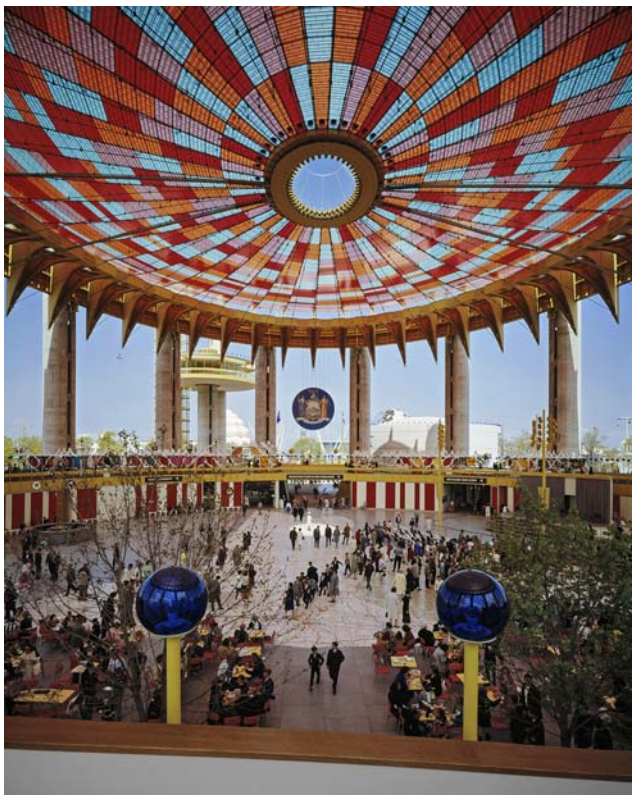

Figure 16 Philip Johnson, Tent of Tomorrow, New York State Pavilion, New York World's Fair, Queens, 1964 (© Ezra Stoller/Etso).

where they stood on the observation platform. From that perch they looked down on the Tent of Tomorrow, the world's biggest suspension roof, supported by sixteen concrete columns, each 100 feet tall (Figure 16). The roof's translucent panels flooded the interior of the tent with various tints of color while illuminating a road map of New York State in polished terrazzo on the floor. Corporate marketing left its stamp on the Tent of Tomorrow: sponsored by Texaco, the map on the floor included the location of each of the company's gas stations in the state.[60] Alongside the Skypads and the Tent of Tomorrow stood the Theaterama, a movie theater in the round, which, as noted above, originally had ten works of art attached to its cylindrical exterior (see Figures 5 and 6). Only half of the works of art displayed on the Theaterama were in a pop style, but most reviewers referred to the display as "pop." "The Busy Architect's Guide to the World's Fair," published by *Progressive Architecture*, highlighted the "pop art all around" the Theaterama, and a critic for the *New York Herald Tribune* pointed out "the big Pop Artifacts on the exterior of the theater of the New York State Pavilion."[61]

The principle of juxtaposition seems to have been at work in Johnson's selection of art for the Theaterama (see Figure 5). The ten works of art—bursting with color and bold geometric shapes, issuing verbal commands, and featuring contemporary motifs—provided a stark contrast to the severity of the exterior wall of concrete. Here juxtaposition of art to architecture served to integrate the Theaterama with the other buildings of the New York State Pavilion. The presence of "pop" art on the Theaterama, the playfulness of the Skypads, and the technical feat of the Tent of Tomorrow's cable suspension roof, complete with its circus-like, multicolored roof panels, led writers to conclude that Johnson's pavilion had "the gaiety of the circus" and was "great good fun" and "agreeably kitsch."[62] These were not negative criticisms; critics repeatedly praised Johnson's pavilion as the best example of the commercial pleasures and space-age flavor of the fair.

In his article "Young Artists at the Fair and Lincoln Center," Johnson stated, "I am more interested in space modulation than in wall decoration."[63] Art played a key role in Johnson's architectural stagecraft, in which he paid particular attention to sight lines and procession through space. At the New York World's Fair, for instance, the height of the Skypads made Johnson's pavilion visible from afar and turned it into a landmark, reproduced on maps of the fair. The photographs taken of the Skypads from below mimicked the view of pedestrians as they entered into the Skystreak capsule elevators. The colorful roof of the Tent of Tomorrow likewise drew the eye upward, but the reflections that the multicolored roof panels cast onto the floor redirected the gaze downward. Finally, the art perched on the Theaterama invited viewers to walk around the building. Together the design of the Skypads and Tent of Tomorrow and the placement of the art on the Theaterama were orchestrated to draw viewers to the New York State Pavilion and to encourage them to linger, to move in and out, up and down, and around the individual structures.

Art, Architecture, and Aesthetic Taste

Johnson's choice of artworks at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center and the New York State Pavilion at the world's fair participated in an emerging practice in which contemporary art was incorporated into newly built structures. The artworks demonstrated Johnson's commitment to adopting art as a means of juxtaposition to architecture and as an element encouraging procession. But he did more than choose paintings and sculptures with an eye to the mutual enhancement of architecture and art. Despite all of the differences between the tony New York State Theater and the playful New York State Pavilion, the art that Johnson selected paid tribute to an aesthetic taste forged within male friendships and same-sex relationships.

At the New York State Theater the decision to feature two sculptures by Elie Nadelman in the grand lobby honored Johnson's close friend Lincoln Kirstein, who ran the New York City Ballet and had selected Johnson to design the

Figure 17 Jasper Johns, *Numbers*, 1964, New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York, sculp-metal on canvas, 110 by 85 inches (© Jasper Johns/licensed by VAGA, New York, N.Y.; photographer © Jerry L. Thompson).

building. Johnson first met Kirstein at Harvard University, where Kirstein was editor of *Hound and Horn*, a publication that promoted modern art and literature, but the two men did not become friends until later, after Kirstein had cofounded the New York City Ballet with George Balanchine.[64] One of the Nadelman sculptures was based on a near life-size sculpture in Johnson's home, which Kirstein had recommended to him years earlier. Nadelman was apparently Kirstein's favorite artist; as Johnson commented later about his choice of the Nadelmans for the New York State Theater, "The sculpture is an emotional thing because Lincoln Kirstein was very fond of the sculptor, Elie Nadelman."[65] It was not a taste that everyone shared: the Nadelman sculpture owned by Johnson and reproduced at an expanded scale in the lobby of the New York State Theater featured two rotund women embracing. Johnson's biographer Franz Schulze refers to them as "mannered and slyly unchaste," while Johnson was more blunt when he parroted his critics: "Everybody just hated them: 'Big fat nude women in a perfectly decent hall'" (see Figure 3).[66]

Even as Johnson's building and selection of the Nadelman sculptures paid tribute to both Kirstein's aesthetic proclivities and his devotion to ballet, Johnson also gestured to a contemporaneous, avant-garde taste in art and dance with his selection of a work by Jasper Johns. Indeed, Johns's *Numbers* includes in the upper right corner an impression of Merce Cunningham's right foot (Figure 17). Johns, together with his lover Robert Rauschenberg, famously collaborated with Cunningham and John Cage during this period, and Johns completed his first designs for a stage work by Cunningham in 1961.[67] Although Cunningham took dance in an avant-garde direction, as manifested in his collaboration with artists and musicians, he had previously taught at the School of American Ballet and worked briefly with Balanchine, whose choreography was featured at the New York State Theater.[68] By

incorporating an artwork by Johns, with its reference to Cunningham, Johnson asserted the presence of a creative collaboration among contemporary art, music, and dance within the halls of the New York State Theater.

The younger artists Johnson selected for the New York State Theater and the New York State Pavilion evinced his taste for contemporary art, especially pop art, developed through his relationship with David Whitney. Whitney and Johnson met in 1960 and soon thereafter became lifetime romantic partners. As Schulze points out, Johnson had mainly purchased abstract expressionist art until he met Whitney, but with Whitney's guidance he developed a taste for a new generation of artists, including Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, and Andy Warhol. Johnson eventually designed a gallery on his property to house Whitney's collection.[69]

Art historians Richard Meyer and Kenneth Silver have both done important work highlighting the way in which Warhol's *Ten Most Wanted Men*, which hung briefly on the Theaterama, alluded to same-sex desire (see Figure 6).[70] Before the world's fair opened to the public, Warhol covered *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* with aluminum house paint; it was then hidden with a black cloth and finally removed. At the time, there was no direct mention in the press of the removal as an act of censorship; instead, reporters suggested that Warhol himself requested that the work be removed because he was "displeased with the work's effect."[71] Subsequently, Johnson explained: "The names [of the most wanted men] got to Governor Rockefeller; [the men] were all Italian. . . . Most of these 'Thirteen Wanted' were Mafiosi."[72] Since, according to Johnson, most of the men had been tried and found not guilty, they might sue Johnson, Warhol, or the fair for identifying them publicly as wanted criminals. Meyer offers a more compelling explanation for the removal of Warhol's mural when he locates the subversiveness of the image in "the circuitry set up between the image of the outlaw and Warhol's outlawed desire for that image—and for these men. To put it another way, *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* crosswires the codes of criminality, looking, and erotic desire."[73] And, as Silver points out, "inasmuch as Warhol was asked to hide his mural from public view before the Fair opened . . . it may be that [the punning reference to Warhol's desire was], at least subliminally, too close to the surface."[74]

With the Warhol gone, the pop art selected by Johnson for the Theaterama became a touchstone for critics describing the spirit of the New York World's Fair as a whole. This world's fair gained some notoriety because for the first time in the history of such fairs corporate pavilions outnumbered state and federal pavilions. In part this development resulted from the fair's failure to obtain official accreditation as a world exposition. Thus, the organizers recruited commercial and industrial entities, mainly American, to replace governments that did not participate.[75] The zany pavilions at the fair, decorated with corporate logos promoting space, computers, nuclear energy, and consumer products, fueled critiques that the fair was nothing more than a publicity stunt. One author baptized it the "Fair of the Big Sell," but more frequently it was known as the "Pop Art Fair."[76] "The Fair is Pop Art; pure Pop," exclaimed one writer, referring as much to the fair's novelty architecture as to its brash commercialism.[77] "In the first place, the IBM pavilion itself is sure-pop entertainment," proclaimed Peter Lyon in *Holiday* magazine, referring to the large egg-shaped building designed by Saarinen Associates and Charles Eames. *Progressive Architecture* awarded the 80-foot Ferris wheel–tire of U.S. Rubber the "P/A Pop Art Award." Yale University professor Vincent J. Scully weighed in and pronounced the Chrysler exhibit, with its walk-through car engine designed by George Nelson, "pop art at its best."[78]

As a riposte to those who complained about the popism or commercialism of the fair, critic Peter Lyon countered:

> I am aware of the many complaints about the Fair. It is too commercial; too little space has been set aside for the fine arts, and almost none for the performing arts. . . . Too commercial? As I see it, commerce is the point of any fair; what is not commercial is only ballyhoo. The performing arts are handsomely housed in Manhattan at Lincoln Center; all summer long, first-rate theatrical companies, dance groups and choruses from the world around will be thronging its stages as part of the Fair's festivities.[79]

His remarks contained an implicit assumption that there was a difference between the commercial pavilions and entertainments at the fair and the serious architecture and uplifting art at Lincoln Center. Of course, given that Johnson's theater at Lincoln Center opened with performances created for the world's fair, and given efforts to bring serious art, such as Michelangelo's *Pietà*, to the fair, where it was exhibited in the Vatican's pavilion, the organizers of the fair tried to have it both ways: commercial and uplifting at the same time.

The critics recognized that the pop art on the Theaterama, enlarged to enormous size, lost its critical edge. Pronounced one critic: "Pop art . . . when slapped up, billboard-size, against a building, comes to look exactly like that which it makes fun of or castigates."[80] Max Kozloff concurred: "Deprived of their intimate gallery atmosphere, the silk-screen-transformed color photographic and billboard montages . . . are returned to their approximate point of origin, and the displacement which once gave them so much pungency is minimized. These works of art cease to be creative expressions intruding into the world of manufacture, and become instead the equivocal flora of that world."[81] Another went so far as to mourn the demise of pop art:

> On Wednesday, April 22, Pop Art died a natural and undramatic death, inadvertently eliminated by Robert Moses when he turned the New York World's Fair into a gigantic spectacle that outpops all competition. . . .
>
> . . . The pop examples, however, fall by the wayside, unable to keep up with their vibrant, razzle-dazzle surroundings. . . .
>
> . . . At the fair, the model so completely overwhelms the copy as to make the latter obsolete.[82]

The artworks on the Theaterama lost their distance from the outdoor billboard to become nothing more than pop logos for the spectacle of the New York World's Fair. Johnson's New York State Pavilion, it turned out, was perhaps the best emblem for a fair devoted to showmanship and commercial spectacle in the space age.

Art and Commerce at the New York State Theater

In contrast to the fair's New York State Pavilion, the New York State Theater, situated in the heart of Manhattan, was intended to lift culture above the streets, cladding it protectively in neoclassical garb. Yet the theater did not fully succeed in distancing itself from commerce, not only because its opening coincided with the fair but also because of the art displayed within it. True, no pop art sullied the interior of the New York State Theater with motifs of Campbell's soup cans or Coca-Cola bottles, but Bontecou's relief incorporated debris gathered from the streets. With *Untitled*, the abject remains of commerce, worthless fragments of discarded things, made their way into the theater.

The placement of the article about Bontecou's relief for Lincoln Center in the 10 April 1964 issue of *Life* magazine hinted at ways in which *Untitled* could be understood as reflecting upon the planned obsolescence of commercial products.[83] A reader flipping through the pages of the magazine or stopping to read the story about Bontecou's work might easily be distracted by full-page, color promotional advertisements. In the introduction to her edited volume *Looking at Life Magazine*, art historian Erika Doss highlights the visually dynamic layout of *Life*, with its

> compelling mix of mostly black-and-white articles and surprisingly vivid color advertisements. This juxtaposition of "instructive" articles and photo-essays in monochrome hues and "pleasurable" advertisements in color gave the magazine a certain rhythm and flow, and guided readers between what to think about (politics, Elvis, the Suez Canal) and what to buy (rings, hams, soups, cars).[84]

The cover story of the issue of *Life* that covered Bontecou's work focused on the devastating earthquake that had taken place two weeks before in Anchorage, Alaska. In this instance, color photographs illustrated the feature story, documenting shattered houses, crushed cars, mangled stores, damaged products, and ruined advertising signs. The second article in the issue was the three-page review of Bontecou's *Untitled*, illustrated with black-and-white photographs. A glossy color advertisement for the Buick LeSabre intervened between the story about the Alaska earthquake and the one about Bontecou (Figure 18). Following the story about Bontecou appeared a full-page color advertisement for a new Zenith color television set (Figure 19).

Figure 18 Advertisement for Buick LeSabre (*Life*, 10 Apr. 1964, 42).

In *Life*'s layout Bontecou's *Untitled*, with its subdued tones, served as a foil for the novelty and elegance of the sleek white Buick LeSabre and the golden-hued Zenith color television set, each of which had presumably just rolled off the assembly line. The advertisements for these goods made direct appeals to the consumer's taste for luxury. The gleaming LeSabre convertible, parked at a beach where slender palm trees swayed in the distance, appealed not just to the presumed reader of *Life* but also to an elegant young couple, dressed in full-length evening gown and dinner jacket, hovering under an umbrella in the background. In the advertisement for the Zenith television, the set's wood cabinet rested against a golden wall whose pilasters, moldings, decorative panel, and candles perched in sconces bespoke wealth. The couple

Figure 19 Advertisement for Zenith color television (*Life*, 10 Apr. 1964, 45).

dancing across the television's screen could be the same debonair pair featured in the ad for the LeSabre, and both couples could be the sort of people who attended the ballet at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center. Commerce in these advertisements emerged as a colorful and luxurious alternative to the detritus of art.

The contrast between Bontecou's sculpture and the adjacent advertisements, while certainly highlighting the luxury of the consumer goods, also put into question their durability. The materials recycled by Bontecou were once new. Now they were the stuff of planned obsolescence, discarded things, cast aside, disassembled by the artist and put to new purpose. The *Life* article about *Untitled* stressed the age and dubious origins of the materials that had been reconfigured by Bontecou's hand:

> The bulges in the sculpture are molded fiber glass forms, covered with stretched canvas or with white pigment. Some of the canvas she found in the street. Some is from an old fire hose she cut open and spread out. She gave tone to parts of the finished structure by blowing soot on it. The only color in the work comes from pieces of yellow chamois she stitched around the holes.[85]

Seen as part of a set of images in *Life*, the Zenith and the Buick, too, might someday become ruined bits awaiting the scavenging and repurposing activities of Bontecou or her artistic descendants.

Drawing further attention to a future of ruined goods—although this was surely an unintentional result of the layout—the headlights of the Buick LeSabre faced off with Bontecou's relief, turning the two visible holes protruding from *Untitled* into headlights and the smooth horizontal elements into bumpers (see Figures 14 and 18). With headlights that no longer beamed light, Bontecou's relief presented the LeSabre with gutted, black holes, pointing to a future when the car would be but a discarded thing of the past. A subsequent page contained two photographs of the wall sculpture under construction. In one Bontecou stood to the side of the central hole of *Untitled*, her face showing intense concentration as she tied pieces of canvas to the frame with wire. The hole itself, bisected in front by a metal bar, framed a blur with only a collection of metal bars visible in the background at the far right edge. Because this photograph appeared opposite the advertisement for the Zenith television, the layout paired the empty oval of Bontecou's sculpture with the television screen. Blur in contrast to entertainment, assembled scraps facing off against sleek manufactured product, black and white versus color—the differentiations between Bontecou's relief and the Zenith television set could not help but hint at the empty hole at the center of the vivid promises made by consumer culture.

Even seen only within the context of the New York State Theater, the decrepit materials of *Untitled* contrasted with the shiny luxury of the newly opened theater, foreshadowing perhaps some future state of the building's decay. In fact, *Untitled* hinted at the idea that commercial obsolescence might include the ruin not just of products but also of buildings. Some of Bontecou's materials were collected from the streets and shops near her studio in Lower Manhattan, from sites undergoing urban renewal. Materially, Bontecou's relief called to mind the discarded things of the past, including the ruined tenement buildings recently razed to the ground to be replaced by travertine temples of culture.

Conclusion

Before it became a norm to situate contemporary art in public spaces, Johnson put forth a model for thinking about the relationship between contemporary architecture and art, proposing mutual enhancement based on juxtaposition and contrast over independence or integration. Johnson did not mean for the art to stand alone, nor, as Rothko feared, did he mean to reduce art to mere decor, to be ignored by visitors. Rather, he sought works of art that would both complement and contrast with his buildings and that would encourage the visitor's procession through space. Beyond the architectural

rationalizations for Johnson's choices in art lay more personal interests, both conscious and unconscious.

Whatever complex motives may have contributed to Johnson's selection of certain works of art, he could not control their reception. At the New York World's Fair, his choice of Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* ran up against official censure from Governor Rockefeller, and the artwork was removed from the Theaterama. At the New York State Theater, Bontecou's *Untitled* and Nadelman's *Two Female Nudes* and *Circus Women* seem to have raised some eyebrows but not caused such controversy. Many years later, when members of the Lincoln Center Board of Trustees decided for the first time to sell a public artwork from the complex, they did not do so for moral reasons. Motivated by financial need to renovate the aging buildings, they announced their decision to sell Johns's *Numbers*. The public outrage that followed caused them to back down, however. As Carol Vogel reported in the *New York Times*, "The dominant sentiment among the critics was that the Johns work . . . was an integral part of the Lincoln Center complex, having been created specifically for the east end of the theater's lobby."[86] Although Johnson may have originally voiced reservations about the placement of Johns's *Numbers*, suggesting that it could not "carry the stair hall," now he and others considered it "integral" to the lobby.

Over the years since Johnson designed the New York State Theater, commissioning site-specific art for buildings has become so much the norm that it is difficult, retrospectively, to revisit the objects Johnson chose for the theater and recognize what was unusual about them. Placed in the lobby on the ground level of the New York State Theater, Johns's *Numbers* joined Bontecou's *Untitled* in welcoming visitors, exemplifying contemporary artistic practice prospering outside the walls of this neoclassical temple for ballet. Bontecou's wall relief brought the debris of the streets into the luxurious hall. Having viewed *Numbers* and *Untitled*, visitors mounted staircases to be confronted by Nadelman's enormous marble divas perched in the Grand Hall, embracing one another. Surely this succession of artworks was meant to provide notes of humor, perhaps even tongue-in-cheek defiance, to the taste for opulence and self-display otherwise promoted by the interior of the building. Modern art and architecture could engage in a rapprochement while also teasing and testing each other's aesthetic and social ideals. As Johnson quipped provocatively in the late 1950s about the creative tension between art and architecture: "Collaboration is one of my favorite hate words."[87]

Cécile Whiting is the author of *Antifascism in American Art* (Yale University Press, 1989), *A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender, and Consumer Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), and *Pop L.A.: Art and the City in the 1960s* (University of California Press, 2006). *Pop L.A.* was awarded the 2009 Charles C. Eldredge Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in American Art. cwhiting@uci.edu

Notes

1. My thanks to James Herbert, Patricia Morton, Sarah Whiting, and the anonymous reviewers for their excellent suggestions.

The Higgins sculpture may have also been specifically commissioned for the theater. While Philip Johnson claimed that he commissioned only the Bontecou and the Johns, according to Charles A. Riley the work by Higgins was commissioned with the stipulation that it could not exceed 7 feet in height. Philip Johnson, "Young Artists at the Fair and at Lincoln Center," *Art in America*, Aug. 1964, 123; Charles A. Riley II, *Art at Lincoln Center: The Public Art and List Print and Poster Collections* (New York: John Wiley, 2009), 26.

2. The copies were 20 feet in height rather than the 4 feet of the originals, and they were executed in marble rather than in bronze (as was Rockefeller's version) or papier-mâché (as was Johnson's).

3. Johnson, "Young Artists at the Fair," 112.

4. Ibid., 123.

5. Philip Johnson, interview by Selden Rodman in *Conversations with Artists* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1957), 64.

6. In the years to come, passionate debates would erupt about the proper role of site-specific art, best exemplified by the famous controversy surrounding Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* in Foley Federal Plaza in Manhattan. See Gregg M. Horowitz, "Public Art/Public Space: The Spectacle of the *Tilted Arc* Controversy," *Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism* 54 (Winter 1996), 8–14.

7. Ilse M. Reese, John M. Dixon, and James T. Burns, "Critical Trialogue on Johnson's Lincoln Center Theater," *Progressive Architecture*, May 1964, 58–59; "Johnson in New York," *Architectural Review* 136 (Oct. 1964), 235; Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Philip Johnson: Architecture 1949–1965* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 24.

8. Rainer Crone discusses the reason for the removal in *Andy Warhol*, trans. John William Gabriel (New York: Praeger, 1970), 30.

9. Philip Johnson, "Whence and Whither: The Processional Element in Architecture," in *Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 153; the essay was originally published in *Perspecta* 9/10 (1965), 167–78.

10. Franz Schulze, *Philip Johnson: Life and Work* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 236.

11. Hitchcock, *Philip Johnson*, 24.

12. "Architecture for the Arts," *Time*, 2 June 1958, 62.

13. Ibid.

14. "Addresses by Eisenhower and Moses," *New York Times*, 15 May 1955, quoted in Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds., *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 288. See also Alan Rich, *The Lincoln Center Story* (New York: American Heritage, 1984); Riley, *Art at Lincoln Center*; Edgar B. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution* (New York: New York University Press, 1980).

15. Hilary Ballon, "Robert Moses and Urban Renewal: The Title I Program," in Ballon and Jackson, *Robert Moses and the Modern City*, 94–115.

16. Frederick Gutheim, "Athens on the Subway," *Harper's*, Oct. 1958, 67.

17. Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (New York: Twayne, 1998), 11–12.

18. The best sources on the details of the architectural commissions at Lincoln Center are Ballon and Jackson, *Robert Moses and the Modern City*, 282–88; Young, *Lincoln Center*.

19. "Theatre de l'etat de New York, Lincoln Center, New York," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 34 (Nov. 1964), 74.

20. Johnson, *Writings*, 108–9.

21. John W. Cook and Heinrich Klotz, *Conversations with Architects* (New York: Praeger, 1973), 29.

22. Ibid., 44.

23. Jordy described the porticos on the Amon Carter Museum as "recall[ing] the stage backdrops for some ballet dream sequence." This comment inspired references to Johnson's "balletic period" or "balletic modernism." William Jordy, "Mies-less Johnson," *Architectural Forum* 111 (Sept. 1959), 117.

24. Thomas H. Creighton, "The New Sensualism," *Progressive Architecture*, Sept. 1959, 141.

25. William Jordy, "The Formal Image: USA," *Architectural Review* 127 (Mar. 1960), 168.

26. Robin Boyd, "Has Success Spoiled Modern Architecture?," *Architectural Forum* 111 (July 1959), 99–103.

27. Hilary Lewis and John O'Connor, *Philip Johnson: The Architect in His Own Words* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), 74.

28. Harrison quoted in "Architecture for the Arts," 62.

29. "Changing New York," *Newsweek*, 14 July 1958, 76. Others compared the site to the Acropolis; see, for instance, Gutheim, "Athens on the Subway," 66–71. Johnson himself attributed his inspiration for the plaza to the Campidoglio. Lewis and O'Connor, *Philip Johnson*, 74.

30. Quoted in Herbert Kupferberg, "The Culture Monopoly at Lincoln Center," *Harper's*, Oct. 1961, 82.

31. Reese et al., "Critical Trialogue," 58–59.

32. The one building Moore deemed male was "Sir Phil Hall." Charles Moore, "Lincoln Center," *Architectural Forum* 125 (Sept. 1966), 71–79.

33. Ada Louise Huxtable, "He Adds Elegance to Modern Architecture," *New York Times Magazine*, 24 May 1964, 18.

34. Ballon and Jackson, *Robert Moses and the Modern City*, 280.

35. Riley, *Art at Lincoln Center*, 72.

36. Ibid., 73.

37. Phyllis Lambert, "Stimmung at Seagram: Philip Johnson Counters Mies van der Rohe," *Grey Room* 20 (Summer 2005), 38–59.

38. Philip Johnson, *The Philip Johnson Tapes: Interviews by Robert A. M. Stern*, ed. Kazys Varnelis (New York: Monacelli Press, 2008), 163.

39. Ada Louise Huxtable, "Art in Architecture," *Craft Horizons* 19, no. 1 (Jan./Feb. 1959), 13.

40. Ada Louise Huxtable, "Art with Architecture: New Terms of an Old Alliance," *AIA Journal* 32 (Nov. 1959), 108.

41. George Heard Hamilton, "Painting in Contemporary America," *Burlington Magazine* 102 (May 1960), 193.

42. Cher Krause Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice, Populism* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008), 8.

43. Robert J. Aldern, "Architecture and the Arts," *AIA Journal* 35 (Jan. 1961), 33.

44. Huxtable, "Art in Architecture," 11.

45. Ibid., 15.

46. Quoted in Joan Ockman, "The Figurehead: On Monumentality and Nihilism in Philip Johnson's Life and Work," in *Philip Johnson: The Constancy of Change*, ed. Emmanuel Petit (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 92. The source for Rothko's statement is John Fischer, "Mark Rothko: Portrait of the Artist as an Angry Man," *Harper's*, July 1970, 16–23. Phyllis Lambert offers a gentler version of the failed Rothko commission as well as a detailed discussion of the art program at the Seagram Building. Phyllis Lambert, *Building Seagram* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013), 150–93.

47. Richard Lippold, "Sculpture," *Progressive Architecture*, Dec. 1959, 144.

48. Riley, *Art at Lincoln Center*, 21.

49. Riley explains that the Somaini was in the Rockefeller collection before it was donated to Lincoln Center. Ibid., 28. Beatrice Borromeo of the Archivo Francesco Somaini has explained that Johnson himself owned a version of the *Large Bleeding Martyr* in iron that he bought for his Glass House Art Gallery and later donated to MoMA. Beatrice Borromeo, email correspondence with author, 7 Apr. 2016.

50. Johnson, "Young Artists at the Fair," 123.

51. Jean Lipman and Cleve Gray, "The Amazing Inventiveness of Women Painters," *Cosmopolitan*, Oct. 1961, 62.

52. Donald Judd, "Lee Bontecou," *Arts* 35 (Dec. 1960), 56.

53. Stuart Preston, "What's New at the Modern," *New York Times*, 25 Nov. 1962, sec. 2, 25.

54. "Architecture at the New York World's Fair," *Architectural Record* 136 (July 1964), 145.

55. Ilse M. Reese in Reese et al., "Critical Trialogue," 58–59.

56. "Young Sculptor Brings Jet Age to Lincoln Center: It's Art—but Will It Fly?," *Life*, 10 Apr. 1964, 43.

57. Many scholars have stated that Bontecou's *Untitled* contains the turret of a World War II bomber. My close analysis of the piece suggests otherwise. The absence of a turret (or any other part of a plane) has been confirmed by Marc-Christian Roussel of Roussel Conservation, who in 2009 restored *Untitled* for Lincoln Center. He saw no evidence of cockpit parts, turret, or propellers. The sculpture is built up on steel frameworks in three conjoined sections. Roussel speculated that Bontecou could have incorporated surplus canvas from World War II, perhaps from an aircraft. Because he did not expose the entire back of the structure, where black felt is stretched across the steel framework, he could not see all elements within the construction. Marc-Christian Roussel, email correspondence with author, 29 May 2013. My thanks to Anna Katz, who put me in touch with Marc Roussel.

58. Mona Hadler, "Lee Bontecou's 'Warnings,' " *Art Journal* 53, no. 4 (Winter 1994), 58. See also Mona Hadler, "Lee Bontecou's Worldscapes," in *Lee Bontecou: A Retrospective* (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 203), 202–11; Mona Hadler, "Lee Bontecou—Heart of a Conquering Darkness," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 12, no. 1 (Fall 1992), 38–44.

59. William Schuman, "The Idea: 'A Creative, Dynamic Force,' " *New York Times Magazine*, 23 Sept. 1963, 11.

60. Forgotten New York, http://forgotten-ny.com/2009/09/new-york-state-pavilion (accessed 14 May 2014). As stated on this website, the roof of multi-colored panels was removed in the 1970s.

61. "The Busy Architect's Guide to the World's Fair," *Progressive Architecture*, Oct. 1964, 233; Eric Salzman, "Come to the Fair Anyway," *New York Herald Tribune Sunday Magazine*, 19 July 1964, 5.

62. "Architecture at the New York World's Fair," 144; "The Busy Architect's Guide to the World's Fair," 233.

63. Johnson, "Young Artists at the Fair," 123.

64. Martin Duberman, *The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 236–38.

65. Lewis and O'Connor, *Philip Johnson*, 78.

66. Schulze, *Philip Johnson*, 235; Lewis and O'Connor, *Philip Johnson*, 78.

67. Riley, *Art at Lincoln Center*, 21.

68. Ibid., 21–22.

69. Schulze, *Philip Johnson*, 288.

70. Richard Meyer, "Warhol's Clones," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 7 (Spring 1994), 79–109; Kenneth E. Silver, "Modes of Disclosure: The Construction of Gay Identity and the Rise of Pop Art," in *Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition, 1955–62*, ed. Russell Ferguson (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art/New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 179–203.

71. "Pavilions at Fair Increase Guards," *New York Times*, 18 Apr. 1964, 16.

72. Johnson's explanation appears in Crone, *Andy Warhol*, 30.

73. Meyer, "Warhol's Clones," 83.

74. Silver, "Modes of Disclosure," 194.

75. Ada Louise Huxtable, "World's Fair: International Scope," *New York Times*, 10 May 1964, 19; John Brooks, "Onward and Upward with the Arts," *New Yorker*, 1 June 1963, 41–59. Three good sources on the 1964–65 New York World's Fair are Robert Rosenblum et al., *Remembering the Future: The New York World's Fair from 1939 to 1964* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989); Lawrence R. Samuel, *The End of Innocence: The 1964–65 New York World's Fair* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2007); Michael L. Smith, "Making Time: Representations of Technology at the 1964 World's Fair," in *The Power of Culture: Critical Essays in American History*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 223–44.

76. Huxtable, "World's Fair."

77. Salzman, "Come to the Fair Anyway," 5–6.

78. Peter Lyon, "A Glorious Nightmare," *Holiday*, July 1964, 57; "The Busy Architect's Guide to the World's Fair," 130; Vincent Scully, "If This Is Architecture, God Help Us," *Life*, 31 July 1964, 9.
79. Lyon, "A Glorious Nightmare," 50.
80. Stuart Preston, "The 'Czar's' Veto," *Apollo* 79 (May 1964), 434.
81. Max Kozloff, "Pop on the Meadow," *The Nation*, 13 July 1964, 17.
82. Katherine Kuh, "The Day Pop Art Died," *Saturday Review*, 23 May 1964, 24.
83. "Young Sculptor Brings Jet Age to Lincoln Center," 43–44, 46.
84. Erika Doss, "Looking at *Life*: Rethinking America's Favorite Magazine, 1936–1972," in *Looking at Life Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 8. Art historian John J. Curley points out how an advertisement for Campbell's soup situated on the right side of a three-page layout about the dangers of nuclear fallout provoked precisely this sort of diversion. John J. Curley, *A Conspiracy of Images: Andy Warhol, Gerhard Richter, and the Art of the Cold War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013), 127–29.
85. "Young Sculptor Brings Jet Age to Lincoln Center," 45.
86. Carol Vogel, "Lincoln Center Drops Plan to Sell Its Jasper Johns Painting," *New York Times*, 26 Jan. 1999.
87. Johnson, in Rodman, *Conversations with Artists*, 64.