

Manet, museum, modernism: Michel Foucault and modernist art history

Alexander Kauffman

Michel Foucault's writing transformed the field of museum studies.¹ As Kevin Hetherington reflected in a recent state-of-the-field volume, 'Foucault can be seen as one of the two leading theoretical inspirations for critical museum studies since the 1980s [along with Pierre Bourdieu].'² Foucault himself wrote little about the subject, but devoted substantial attention to the concurrent institutional formations of the prison, the clinic, and the asylum. Adaptations of those writings by Tony Bennett, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, and other museum studies scholars triggered a reconfiguration of the field, sometimes known as 'the new museology' or 'critical museum studies.'³ Instead of fading over time, Foucault's presence has only grown as scholarship and public discourse around museums has increasingly focused on issues of power, authority, and subjectivity.

Modernist art history enacted a parallel reception of Foucault, one that was transformative for that field as well, but is less well recognised today. Central to that reception was the art historian, critic, and curator Douglas Crimp, who died in 2019 at the age of seventy-four. Nearly a decade before Bennett and Hooper-Greenhill introduced Foucault to museum studies, Crimp wrote in an essay he boldly titled 'On the Museum's Ruins': 'Foucault has concentrated on modern institutions of confinement: the asylum, the clinic and the prison; for him, it is these institutions that produce the respective discourses of madness, illness, and criminality. There is another institution of confinement ripe for analysis in Foucault's terms: the

¹ This article originated in a paper for the 2019 College Art Association Annual Conference panel 'Foucault and Art History', convened by Catherine M. Soussloff, and co-chaired by Soussloff and Dana Arnold, with presentations by Niharika Dinkar, André Dombrowski, Peter R. Kalb and Carolyn White, and myself. My thanks to the panel organizers, co-panelists, and audience members there. A version was also presented at a session of the Philadelphia Museum of Art Fellows Group, organized by Nicole Cook, where it benefitted from the feedback of that collegial group. Catherine M. Soussloff subsequently served as a reviewer for the revised and expanded version, for which I am supremely grateful.

² Kevin Hetherington, 'Foucault and the Museum', in *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*, vol. 1, ed. Andrew Witcomb and Kylie Message, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015, 21.

³ Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations*, no. 4, Spring 1988, 73-102; Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, London: Routledge, 1992.

Foucault's minimal comments on museums include a brief mention in his lecture on 'heterotopia', which is not specific to the art museum and has its own reception in museum studies and art history. See Hetherington, 'Foucault and the Museum', 35-36.

museum; and another discipline: art history.⁴ As the scholarly community mourns Crimp's passing and begins to grapple with his enormous legacy on modernist and contemporary art history, it is time to revisit his writing on Foucault and its outsized impact on the field.

Museum studies evidently followed Crimp's directive to focus on Foucault's analyses of 'the asylum, the clinic, and the prison,' but art historians followed him in another direction: the coupling of the museum and art history. For that Crimp relied on a brief, and then obscure, commentary by Foucault from the essay 'Fantasia of the Library,' originally published in 1964 as the afterword for a new translation of the novel *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* by Gustave Flaubert.⁵ There Foucault briefly sketched an argument about the interrelationship of Manet's painting style and the display of paintings within museum galleries that became, in Crimp's essay and a series of subsequent commentaries in modernist art historiography, a robust thesis: modernist painting emerged in mid-nineteenth-century France as a response to the institutionalization of the public art museum. In a moment of substantial reckoning with the protagonists and geographies of modernism's origins, Foucault's theory continues to inform, and in significant ways, constrain the field's self-conception.

The geography of this historiographic survey too is constrained. The 'Foucault effect' described here is that enacted by modernist art history in the United States, and more locally, by Crimp and others associated with *October*, the New York-based journal of art history and criticism co-founded by Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson in 1976.⁶ It is largely in *October*'s pages that Foucault's 'Fantasia of the Library' was debated and integrated into modernist art history. The sustained attention to 'Fantasia of the Library' by this cohort is distinctive from the responses to Foucault's writings by other art historians, particularly in France, that have been chronicled elsewhere.⁷

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⁴ Douglas Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', *October*, no. 13, Summer 1980, 45.

⁵ Michel Foucault, 'Fantasia of the Library', in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977, 87-109. Originally published as Michel Foucault, untitled afterword, in Gustave Flaubert, *Die Versuchung des Heiligen Antonius*, trans. Annaliese Botond, Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1964, 215-251.

⁶ The 'Foucault Effect' was the title chosen for a posthumous volume assembling Foucault's commentary on governmentality. Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991. On the 'Foucault effect' in museum studies, see also Rhiannon Mason, 'Cultural Theory and Museum Studies', in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 23-24.

⁷ On the broader reception of Foucault by Anglo-American and French art history, see Catherine M. Soussloff, *Foucault on Painting*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Considering its subsequent reception by Crimp and others, the most remarkable thing about Foucault's commentary on the art museum in 'Fantasia of the Library' is how undeveloped it is. By the most generous accounting, it spans just a single paragraph, a digression in an essay devoted to another subject. Foucault dedicates most of the essay to Flaubert's novel, originally published in 1874, which he posits as a definitive work of literary modernism. The explicitness and pervasiveness of its pastiche-character made it, for Foucault, the progenitor of all modernist literature. It did not aspire to be an 'artistically coherent whole' in the traditional sense, instead, Foucault argued, 'Flaubert produced the first literary work whose exclusive domain is that of books: following Flaubert, ... modern literature is activated — Joyce, Roussel, Kafka, Pound, Borges. The Library is on fire.'⁸

Foucault's commentary on Manet and the museum followed as an abrupt interjection. Seeking an analogy for the novel's intertextual references to historical literature, Foucault opened the following paragraph by naming two paintings by Flaubert's contemporary Édouard Manet:

Déjeuner sur l'Herbe and *Olympia* were perhaps the first "museum" paintings, the first paintings in European art that were less a response to the achievement of Giorgione, Raphael, and Velázquez than an acknowledgment...of the new and substantial relationship of painting to itself, as a manifestation of the existence of museums and the particular reality and interdependence that paintings acquire in museums.⁹

So the library is on fire, and the museum is on fire too. Foucault continued, making his comparison explicit: 'In the same period, *The Temptation* was the first literary work to comprehend the greenish institutions where books are accumulated and where the slow and incontrovertible vegetation of learning quietly proliferates. Flaubert is to the library what Manet is to the museum.'¹⁰ For Foucault, Flaubert's novel and Manet's paintings were unified under a common banner of modernist self-referentiality: '[Flaubert and Manet] both produced works in a self-conscious relationship to earlier paintings or texts—or rather to the aspect in painting or writing that remains indefinitely open. They erect their art within the archive.'

Foucault's commentary on Manet ended just as abruptly as it had started. He concluded the paragraph with an unearned finality, writing, 'Flaubert and Manet are responsible for the existence of books and paintings within works of art.' The essay goes on to analyze the ways that literary history is manifested and concealed within Flaubert's novel, leaving it to others to do the same for Manet and art history. Foucault never specified which museums he was referencing, or how *Déjeuner sur*

⁸ Foucault, 'Fantasia of the Library', 91-92. Variant spellings of Velázquez have been standardized throughout.

⁹ Foucault, 'Fantasia of the Library', 92.

¹⁰ Foucault, 'Fantasia of the Library', 92.

l'Herbe and *Olympia* acknowledged the status painting acquired within them. When he wrote that they are 'less a response to the achievement of Giorgione, Raphael, and Velázquez than an acknowledgement...of the new and substantial relationship of painting to itself,' he implied a shift from responding to the achievement of Giorgione, Raphael, and Velázquez to acknowledging the effects of museums' commingling of Giorgione, Raphael, and Velázquez's paintings, but again, how the specific paintings he cited registered this commingling he never made clear. He never explicitly mentioned *Olympia's* mining of European art history or its specific references to Titan's *Venus of Urbino* (1538), his evident point of reference.

The brevity and ambiguity of Foucault's commentary did not hinder its impact on art history. In fact, it may have spurred it along. The German translation of Flaubert's novel, and Foucault's then-untitled afterword, was published in the summer of 1964. Foucault's text then appeared as an article in a French journal the next year bearing the title 'Un "fantastique" de bibliothèque' and became known to Anglo-American art history through its translation as 'Fantasia of the Library' in the popular anthology of Foucault's writing *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, published in 1977.¹¹ In the summer of 1980, Douglas Crimp quoted the entire Manet-museum paragraph in 'On the Museum's Ruins,' which he published in *October*, where he was an editor. Crimp's insertion of the Foucault passage into *October* facilitated its broad circulation. The journal was already a critical vehicle for US art history's reception of other writings by Foucault, and had included a translation of Foucault's essay on René Magritte in its inaugural issue.¹² With Crimp's quoting Foucault on Manet and museums, commentaries by Craig Owens, Krauss, Hal Foster, and others soon followed.¹³

Modernist art history's excitement for Foucault's foray into its subject area is understandable. As Catherine Soussloff has noted, the English translation of his essay on Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656) had been a major event for Anglo-American art history in 1970.¹⁴ Now seven years later, Foucault had turned his attention to Manet. Today, we know that this attention also produced a long slide lecture exploring other aspects of Manet's oeuvre, delivered on several occasions between 1967 and 1971, but art historians in the U.S. had no access to that text.¹⁵ Until the publication of the lecture in French in 2004 and translation into English in

¹¹ Michel Foucault, 'Un "fantastique" de bibliothèque', *Cahiers de la compagnie Madeleine Renaud-Jean Louis Barrault*, no. 59, 7-30.

¹² Michel Foucault, 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe', trans. Richard Howard, *October*, no. 1, Spring 1976, 6-21.

¹³ Foucault's writing on Manet and museums appeared with some regularity in *October's* pages. Long quotes and excerpts appeared in the *October* articles discussed in this survey, as well as in a footnote in John Rajchman, 'Foucault, or the Ends of Modernism', *October*, no. 24, Spring 1983, 42-43n17.

¹⁴ Soussloff, *Foucault on Painting*, 25-29.

¹⁵ Foucault proposed a book on Manet in November 1967 and delivered lectures in Japan, Italy, Tunisia, and Canada. See Soussloff, *Foucault on Painting*, 29-30.

2012, they had only the single paragraph in a single essay, one that was primarily dedicated to modernist literature.¹⁶

Crimp's essay, like Foucault's 'Fantasia of the Library,' was primarily dedicated to a subject other than Manet and modernism. Foucault's argument about Manet's relationship to the nineteenth-century museum served for Crimp as support for a new definition of postmodernism in the visual arts. Just as Foucault had used Manet as an analogue to explain Flaubert, Crimp used Manet as a means to explain something else, the silkscreen paintings of Robert Rauschenberg, which he similarly presented as emblematic of a shift in art, in this case from modernism to postmodernism.

Crimp began by quoting and paraphrasing Foucault's argument. In the process, he performed some subtle interpretation and elaboration that filled in details about Manet's painting absent from the original: 'The beginning of modernism in painting is usually located in Manet's work of the early sixties, in which painting's relationship to its art-historical precedents was made shamelessly obvious. Titian's *Venus of Urbino* is meant to be as recognisable a vehicle for the picture of a modern courtesan in Manet's *Olympia* as is the unmodeled pink paint that composes her body.'¹⁷ Foucault had name-checked *Olympia* and *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* but never mentioned Titian's picture or the formal character of Manet's paintings. For Crimp, these details helped set up the distinction he saw in Rauschenberg's silkscreens. 'Just one hundred years after Manet...Rauschenberg made a series of pictures using the images of Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* and Ruben's *Venus at Her Toilet*.'¹⁸ But the resemblance ended there. 'While Manet duplicates the pose, composition, and certain details of the original in a painted transformation, Rauschenberg simply silkscreens a photographic reproduction of the original onto a surface that might also contain such images as trucks and helicopters.'¹⁹ This contrast defined Crimp's argument: 'the structural coherence that made an image-bearing surface legible as a picture at the threshold of modernism, as opposed to the radically different pictorial logic that obtains at the beginning of postmodernism.'

¹⁶ Foucault's final lecture on Manet, delivered in Tunis on May 27, 1971, was audio recorded and later transcribed, published, and translated. See Michel Foucault, *La Peinture de Manet*, ed. Maryvonne Saison, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2004; Michel Foucault, *Manet and the Object of Painting*, trans. Matthew Barr, London: Tate, 2009. On Foucault's lecture on Manet, see also Joseph J. Tanke, 'The Specter of Manet: A Contribution to the Archaeology of Painting', in *Understanding Foucault, Understanding Modernism*, ed. David Scott, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, 195-212.

¹⁷ Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 45.

¹⁸ Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 45.

¹⁹ Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 45. Crimp's reading of Rauschenberg's surface is a paraphrase of Leo Steinberg's analysis from his essay 'Other Criteria,' originally published in 1972, which he cites. See Leo Steinberg, 'Other Criteria', in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, 82-91.

To explain the shift from Manet to Rauschenberg, Crimp extended Foucault's implication that Manet's pictorial logic had responded to the emergence of the public art museum. Foucault had argued that the 'new and substantial relationship of painting to itself' in paintings like Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* and *Olympia* is 'a manifestation of the existence of museums and the particular reality and interdependence that paintings acquire in museums.'²⁰ According to Crimp, Rauschenberg's silkscreening of Manet and Rubens' paintings represented yet another shift manifest by a change in the museum, which he identified as the admittance of photography. 'Once photography itself enters, an art object among others, heterogeneity is reestablished at the heart of the museum; its pretensions to knowledge are doomed.'²¹ If Manet represented the flowering of the museum, Rauschenberg represented its withering away, the ruination referenced in Crimp's title. 'Through reproductive technology postmodernist art dispenses with the aura. The fantasy of a creating subject gives way to the frank confiscation, quotation, excerptation, accumulation, and repetition of already existing images. Notions of originality, authenticity, and presence, essential to the ordered discourse of the museum, are undermined.'²²

Crimp's interpretation of Foucault's modernism-museum thesis almost immediately became a central reference point in the then feverish conversation about postmodernism in the visual arts. Its impact was felt already in 1980, in fact already in the same issue of *October* where it appeared. Crimp's friend and colleague Craig Owens, evidently granted prepublication access to the essay, endorsed Crimp's reading in his own essay in the issue. Owens, making a related argument about the allegorical character of postmodernist art, wrote, 'In his essay "On the Museum's Ruins," Douglas Crimp proposes another locale suggested by Rauschenberg's art: the museum, the dumping grounds of culture.'²³ Owens proceeded to paraphrase Crimp's argument, but in doing so condensed and effectively elided the distinctions drawn by Crimp:

If we accept for the moment—and I believe we must—this identification of Rauschenberg's works as "museum paintings," in the sense that Michel Foucault attributes to Manet—painting as "a manifestation of the existence of museums and the particular reality and interdependence that paintings acquire in museums"—then it follows that they will acquire their fullest measure of significance only when seen *in situ*.

²⁰ Foucault, 'Fantasia of the Library', 92.

²¹ Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 53.

²² Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 56.

²³ Craig Owens, 'The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism, Part Two', *October*, no. 13, Summer 1980, 70. Italics in original, unless otherwise noted.

Owens was primarily interested in the idea that Rauschenberg's paintings referenced their own conditions within the art museum. 'Rauschenberg's art remains *in potentia* until it is seen in the museum, where it opens a dazzling *mise en abyme*.'²⁴ His attribution of this characteristic to postmodernism at the same time he acknowledged this feature in Foucault's assessment of Manet's modernism is a contradiction left unaddressed.

Rosalind Krauss, Crimp's doctoral advisor and fellow editor at *October*, soon wrote on Foucault's Manet-museum-modernism passage as well. Her commentary appeared in 'Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View,' published in *Art Journal* in early 1982, once again an excursus on a subject primarily about something other than Manet and museums. Krauss addressed the contemporary reception of nineteenth-century photography. Arguing against the way the photography department of New York's Museum of Modern Art aestheticized early photography, Krauss began, 'Everywhere at present there is an attempt to dismantle the photographic archive—the set of practices, institutions, and relationships to which nineteenth-century photography originally belonged—and to reassemble it within the categories previously constituted by art and its history.'²⁵ To distinguish the space of the 'photographic archive' from that of art history, Krauss turned to the museum, and to Foucault. Citing Foucault's 'Fantasia of the Library' and Crimp's 'On the Museum's Ruins' in a footnote, she announced, '[The] constitution of the work of art as a representation of its own space of exhibition is in fact what we know as the history of modernism.'²⁶ Photography was excluded from the 'space of exhibition' in the nineteenth century, Krauss asserted, 'Thus, it is now fascinating to watch historians of photography assimilating their medium to the logic of that [modernist] history.'²⁷

Krauss's contribution to the elaboration of Foucault's brief argument in this and subsequent essays was substantial. More so than Crimp or Owens, she remade Foucault's assertion of a vague relationship between the emergence of modernist painting and the emergence of the museum into a true art-historical argument. Where Foucault had avoided elaborating on the mechanisms by which the art museum informed modernist painting, Krauss confidently identified three: flatness, seriality, size. 'Given its function as the physical vehicle of exhibition, the gallery wall became a signifier of inclusion....And in the last half of the century painting—particularly landscape painting—responded with its own corresponding set of depictions. It began to internalize the space of exhibition—the wall—and to represent it.' As evidence she cited landscape paintings' 'insistent voiding of perspective' which she interpreted as mimicking the wall's flatness; the emergence

²⁴ Owens, 'The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism, Part Two', 70.

²⁵ Krauss, 'Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View', *Art Journal*, vol. 42, no. 4, Winter 1982, 317-318.

²⁶ Krauss, 'Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View', 313.

²⁷ Krauss, 'Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View', 313.

of 'serial landscapes' like Monet's Rouen Cathedral paintings as mimicking its horizontal extension; and the enlarged scale of paintings like Monet's late waterlilies as 'expanded to become the absolute size of the wall.'²⁸ Foucault had implicitly attributed the museum's effects to its geographic and medium-based displays. His reference to Giorgione, Raphael, and Velázquez alluded to their being shown together in halls of European painting. Krauss explicitly attributed them to its physical architecture.

Krauss extended this interpretation of Foucault and Crimp's argument four years later in another essay, 'Postmodernism's Museum Without Walls,' published in the bulletin of the French national museum of modern art. There she refined her analysis of museum architecture further into three successive regimes: the type based on the Renaissance palace, either descending from an actual palace as in the Louvre or Uffizi, or replicating it as in the Metropolitan Museum of Art or National Gallery; the cubic and ramp-based designs of mid-century as in Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Berlin Nationalgalerie or Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum; and finally the partitioned vista-based designs of the late twentieth century as represented by Hans Hollein's Museum Abteiberg and Richard Meier's Museum Angewandte Kunst.²⁹ Never mentioning Foucault by name, Krauss continued to build the modernism-museum thesis. According to her, each phase of museum design promoted a different type of experience and artistic production, in this case: emerging modernism, high modernism, and postmodernism.

Krauss returned to the subject once again in 1990 with 'The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum' in *October*. Continuing the extension of Foucault's modernism-museum thesis and riffing on Frederic Jameson's essay on postmodernism from 1984, she offered an extended meditation on her experience at a recent exhibition of the Panza Collection of minimalist sculpture at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.³⁰ Like the Museum Abteiberg and Museum Angewandte Kunst, the newly renovated Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and its installation of minimalist sculpture corresponded to the postmodernism she associated with the economic transformations of late capitalism, and specifically to what she called the 'casino capitalism' of the 1980s.³¹ Observing aspects of the Panza exhibition and of recent changes at the Guggenheim Museum, she identified an overall 'industrialization' of the museum and three specific moves: the expansion of the collection or 'inventory'; increase in sites of display, or 'outlets'; and increase in

²⁸ Krauss, 'Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View', 312.

²⁹ Krauss, 'Postmodernism's Museum Without Walls', in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne, New York: Routledge, 1996, 241, 242, 245. Originally published as 'Le Musée sans murs du postmodernisme,' in *Cahiers du Musée nationale d'art moderne*, no. 17/18, 1986, 152-8.

³⁰ Frederic Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, no. 146, July/August 1984, 53-92.

³¹ Krauss, 'The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum', *October*, no. 54, Autumn 1990, 3.

travel of collection objects, or 'leverage.'³² She correlated these changes to postmodernist subjectivity: 'The industrialized museum has a need for the technologized subject, the subject in search not of affect but of intensities, the subject who experiences its fragmentation as euphoria, the subject whose field of experience is no longer history, but space itself.'³³ The equation was the same as Foucault's modernism-museum-Manet, but Krauss had updated the terms: postmodernism-museum-Minimalism.

The final entries in this episodic history come from Hal Foster, an art historian and critic who was also one of Krauss's doctoral advisees who became an editor at *October*. Foster relied upon Foucault as he began to critically engage with the art museum in the mid-nineteen nineties. In 1996, he briefly quoted 'Fantasia of the Library' to characterize what he called the 'archival relation' between Manet and the museum in 'Archives Without Museums,' an essay on visual culture he published in *October*. There, Foster argued that the field of 'visual culture' then emergent in the academy responded to the digitization of the media landscape, but was prefigured by modernist art's own anxious relationship to the physical media of the museum. 'Might visual culture rely on techniques of *information* to transform a wide range of *mediums* into a system of *image-text*—a database of digital terms, an archive without museums?'³⁴ The archival relation of Manet and museum served as a precedent for the kind of relationship he wanted to articulate between the digital mediascape and visual culture, one that was 'neither affirmative nor revolutionary.' Before the digital turn and visual culture, there was the museum and modernist art, Foster asserted. Manet 'explored this new space' of the museum, but 'also defined it clearly enough that modernist successors...could challenge it.'³⁵ For Foster, visual culture and its proponents had not adopted a comparably critical view of the 'archive,' now digital. That digital archive belonged to the domains for 'fashion and celebrity,' spectacle. What had, under modernism, seemed 'the avant-gardist transgression of categories, becomes at the level of "consumption," a hip manipulation of signs and, on the level of "production," a corporate merger not only of mediums but of entertainment industries: so many clicks on the Web, so many moves on the Market.'³⁶

This cynicism is typical of Foster's writings on the museum and is built on his interpretation of Foucault. His reading of 'Fantasia of the Library' provided a model, whereby Manet, and the modernist artists who followed him, made visible and challenged the constraints of the museum. That formulation understands the museum as an institution operating on mystification, demanding the intervention of the modernist artist. If bleak, at least the past had the heroic modernist artist to step

³² Krauss, 'The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum', 16.

³³ Krauss, 'The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum', 17.

³⁴ Hal Foster, 'The Archive Without Museums', *October*, no. 77, Summer 1996, 97.

³⁵ Foster, 'The Archive Without Museums', 108.

³⁶ Foster, 'The Archive Without Museums', 114.

in. For Foster, the digital mediascape is just as mystifying but nothing has shown itself capable or willing to challenge it.

'Archives Without Museums' compared the present moment of the mid-nineteen nineties to that of Manet. Foster filled in the years between in a follow-up essay, 'The Archives of Modern Art,' published in *October* in 2002, that also built on his readings of Foucault, as well as of Crimp and Krauss. Foster subsequently published both essays as chapters in his book *Design and Crime*.³⁷ Foster's essay refined the typology of nineteenth- and twentieth-century museums that Krauss had developed in her writings and reopened the question of correlation that she had addressed. Foster proposed that Foucault's own writing offered the best answer, referring not to 'Fantasia of the Library,' but to Foucault's conception of the archive from his book on methodology, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.³⁸ Foster paraphrased: 'an archive structures the terms of discourse, it also limits what can and cannot be articulated at a given time and place.'³⁹ The art museum is one such archive that produces a mode of knowledge and experience. Foster then went on to 'sketch a few significant shifts in the dominant archival relations that obtained among modern art practice, art museum, and art history in the West circa 1850 to 1950.'⁴⁰

Krauss had named specific architectural elements of museums in her analysis, beginning with the gallery wall in 'Photography's Discursive Spaces' and adding the galleries *en filade*, the cube, the ramp, and the vista in 'Postmodernism's Museum Without Walls.' Foster returned to a more nebulous conception of the museum and the means by which it produces a mode of experience. 'The "archives" of my title are not the dusty rooms filled with dry documents of academic lore,' he explained. 'I mean the term as Foucault used it, to stand for "the system that governs the appearance of statements," that structures the particular expressions of a particular period.'⁴¹ As with Foucault, this abstracted character freed Foster from asserting any direct correlation or real historical relationship. Instead, he referenced something he called, in another nod to Foucault, the "'memory-structure" that these three agencies' — art museum, art history, and modern art practice — 'co-produced.'

The first of Foster's three episodes was the mid-nineteenth-century moment represented by Manet and elevated by Foucault. Foster affirmed Foucault's assessment in 'Fantasia of the Library,' reiterating: 'Modern art is already conceived by Manet...in implicitly art-historical terms, and...this conception depends on its museal setting.'⁴² Where Foucault's brief characterization had left open the possibility of a real museum context, Foster was more definitive: 'This museum is

³⁷ Hal Foster, *Design and Crime*, London: Verso Books, 2002.

³⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, New York: Harper Books, 1976.

³⁹ Foster, 'The Archives of Modern Art', *October*, no. 99, Winter 2002, 81.

⁴⁰ Foster, 'The Archives of Modern Art', 81.

⁴¹ Foster, 'The Archives of Modern Art', 81. A footnote cites Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 129.

⁴² Foster, 'The Archives of Modern Art', 84.

mostly imaginary, an extended Louvre based on mnemonic traces, workshop imitations, graphic reproductions, and so on.⁴³ But its imaginary-character did not make it a universal museum. Like a real museum, Manet's had constraints. Foster identified Manet's 'imaginary' museum as 'centered almost entirely on painting and run on a narrow geographic track (mostly Paris to Rome, with a few detours to Holland and Spain—hardly trans-European). Moreover it is fiercely Oedipal, built on a network of patriarchal workshops and rivalrous groups from "David to Delacroix" and beyond.'⁴⁴

Foster then built on Foucault's thesis, much like Krauss had, elaborating two subsequent moments in the triad of modern art practice, art museum, and art history. The next was around the turn of the century, where he observed the desire to assert art-historical structure under threat. Referring to Heinrich Wöfflin and Aby Warburg, he described the development of art history's 'synthetic model-terms,' its attempts to identify unifying structures across disparate times and cultures, as a 'way to defend against the museum as a chaos of fragments...to defend against it in service of a formal unity and historical continuity that are presented as always threatened but never lost.'⁴⁵ The third moment came with World War II, when technological advancement and the rise of fascism heightened this threat. Foster also acknowledged, but left unexplored, a fourth moment in the consumer society that emerges after World War II, and finally observed himself in the midst of a fifth moment, the one of shifting 'archival relation[s]' brought on by 'electronic information' that he had previously described in 'Archives Without Museums.' Now, he concluded, 'More and more, the mnemonic function of the museum is given over to the electronic archive, which might be accessed anywhere, while the visual function is given over not only to the exhibition-form of art but to the museum-building as spectacle—that is, as an image to be circulated in the media in the service of brand equity and cultural capital.'⁴⁶

Foster's outlook on the museum of art in the age of the electronic archive was grim then and continues to be so in his more recent writings on the museum, collected in the book *The Art-Architecture Complex* in 2011, and published in an ongoing manner in *The London Review of Books*.⁴⁷ Commenting in 2015 on the Tate Modern's plans to expand to present performance and moving image art, and similar expansion plans by the Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum of Art, he was unequivocal about the limitations of the museum of art in the present moment. There, he described these museums as having a 'mega-programme so

⁴³ Foster, 'The Archives of Modern Art', 84.

⁴⁴ Foster, 'The Archives of Modern Art', 84.

⁴⁵ Foster, 'The Archives of Modern Art', 86.

⁴⁶ Foster, 'The Archives of Modern Art', 95.

⁴⁷ Hal Foster, *The Art-Architecture Complex*, London: Verso Books, 2011.

obvious that it goes unstated: entertainment.⁴⁸ 'This is evident from all the institutional space given over to event rooms, big stores, and nice restaurants,' he wrote, 'but it is also suggested by trends in programming,' pointing to the desire to enliven the space with performance and dance.⁴⁹ Such is the perpetuation of museums in the digital world. 'We still live in a spectacle society—our reliance on information hasn't altered our investment in images—or to use the anodyne phrase, we live in an "experience economy."' As artists have shifted their production to accommodate these new museum spaces, they have also created work that drives the most recent wave of museum renovations, the performance 'bays' and projector-based 'grey rooms' that Foster aligned with contemporary spectacle culture. He called this feedback loop 'a circularity,' and although in the essay he identified its beginnings in the Minimalist and post-Minimalist moments that transformed former industrial structures into art spaces, the argument shares much with Foucault's in 'Fantasia of the Library.' What was the vague relationship Foucault described between the art museum and Manet's painting if not 'a circularity'?

Foucault's digression from 1964 has developed into an elaborate thesis on the relationship between the art museum, artistic production, and subjectivity, one that threads through a major strain of modernist art history over the last forty years. Of course, Foucault was not the exclusive source for this line of thinking. Foucault's commentary corresponded to a broader shift around mid-century that conceived of modernism, in both literature and the visual arts, in the terms of its insularity and self-reflexivity. In U.S. art history, this shift is often broadly associated with Clement Greenberg. As Foster noted in 'Archives without Museums,' Greenberg connected modernism's medium-based formalism with a conception of the medium having its own history. 'Modernism has never meant anything like a break with the past,' Greenberg wrote in one of the most quoted passages from his essay 'Modernist Painting' of 1961.⁵⁰

Foucault himself attributed his reading of Flaubert to another commentator, the French mythographer Jean Seznec, who had asserted that Flaubert was mining Western literature in a series of essays in the 1940s and 50s.⁵¹ Foucault's similar analysis of Manet was unsourced, but also reflected new art historical attention to the citations in Manet's painting, established in France by mid-century, and expanded and circulated most widely in the US by the art historian and critic Michael Fried. Fried's long *Artforum* essay of 1969 responded to a variety of French writing on Manet's sources, including Foucault's essay, but preceded its translation

⁴⁸ Hal Foster, 'After the White Cube', *London Review of Books*, vol. 37, no. 6, 19 March 2015, 25-26, accessed electronically, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v37/n06/hal-foster/after-the-white-cube>.

⁴⁹ Foster, 'After the White Cube.'

⁵⁰ Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', *Art and Literature*, no. 4, Spring 1965, 199, cited in Foster, 'The Archive without Museums', 99.

⁵¹ Foucault, 'Fantasia of the Library', 89. See Jean Seznec, 'Saint Antoine et les monstres: essai sur les sources et la signification du fantastique chez Flaubert', *PMLA*, no. 58, 1943, 195-222.

and broader reception.⁵² For Fried, Manet's modernism was characterized by a self-conscious relationship to painting's past. Like Foucault, Fried argued that Manet's imagery mined the canon of European painting. Fried positioned this effort in relation to French nationalism, but not explicitly in relation to the creation of the public art museum:

[Manet] made explicit, or took as sanction, the "natural," widely recognized affinities between what he regarded as the authentically French painting of the past and the painting of other national schools....And his genius, about which not enough has been said, enabled him to make Frenchness itself the medium through which Frenchness was transcended and access to the great painting of other nations secured.⁵³

This is what characterizes Manet as a modernist for Fried. As he explained in a follow-up essay, 'Manet's commitment to an exalted conception of the enterprise of painting, understood as distinct from the production of images—of *mere* images, I am inclined to say....that is what it means to characterize Manet as a *modernist* painter.'⁵⁴ The art historian Theodore Reff, who rebutted Fried with an essay in *Artforum* months later, affirmed him on this point, writing, 'Manet's deliberate allusions to older art, in the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and other works of the early 1860s as well as in *Olympia*, is one of the reasons that his art of that period seems modern, seems in fact to mark the real beginning of modern art.'⁵⁵ Foucault of course went a step further in his argument than either Fried or Reff when he attributed this conception of painting, Manet's conception, to museum displays, which presented paintings together as a common enterprise.

Fried's essay was among the sources cited by Crimp to elaborate Foucault's meager analysis of Manet, and Krauss and Foster followed suit.⁵⁶ Crimp and his successors also supplemented Foucault's analysis of the museum with André Malraux's *Museum Without Walls*, a theoretical discourse on the art museum that, like Sezneq's essays on Flaubert, predated and evidently informed Foucault's reading of *Olympia* and *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* as 'museum paintings.' If not directly, Foucault would have encountered Malraux in quotes and paraphrases featured in George Bataille's monograph on Manet, published in 1955 and referenced elsewhere

⁵² Michael Fried, 'Manet's Sources', *Artforum*, vol. 7, no. 7, March 1969, 28-82.

⁵³ Fried, 'Manet's Sources', 52-53.

⁵⁴ Michael Fried, 'Painting Memories: On the Containment of the Past in Baudelaire and Manet', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 10, no. 3, March 1984, 523.

⁵⁵ Theodore Reff, *Manet: Olympia*, New York: The Viking Press, 1976, 99. For Reff's initial rebuttal to Fried, see Theodore Reff, "'Manet's Sources": A Critical Evaluation', *Artforum*, vol. 8, no. 1, September 1969, 40-48.

⁵⁶ Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 45n7.

by Foucault.⁵⁷ As Crimp wrote, 'In the period following World War II, perhaps the greatest monument to the museum's discourse is André Malraux's *Museum Without Walls*.'⁵⁸ Malraux's three-volume enterprise told a history of world art through deluxe color reproductions, which he designated a '*musée imaginaire*,' an imaginary museum, usually rendered 'museum without walls' in English translation.⁵⁹ This notion, Malraux argued, extrapolated from the historical development of art within museums. In the nineteenth century, he wrote, 'the proper sphere of oil painting was becoming that which, beyond all theories and even the noblest dreams, had brought together the pictures in the museums; it was not, as had been thought until now, a question of technique and a series of discoveries, but a language independent of the thing portrayed — as specific, *sui generis*, as music.'⁶⁰ Malraux devoted his study to this 'independent language' of painting, assembling reproductions of works from different artistic traditions and geographies in the space of a single book. As Krauss observed, 'Malraux's notion of the *musée imaginaire* is, in fact, another way of writing "modernism," that is, of transcoding the aesthetic notions upon which modern art was built: the idea of art as autonomous and autotelic.... This, Malraux argues, was the ultimate effect of collectivizing all those paintings within the nineteenth century's institutional invention — the museum.'⁶¹

For Crimp, Malraux's conflation of the museum's functions with those of the book's photographic reproductions affirmed his reading of Rauschenberg's silkscreen paintings. The admission of Rauschenberg's silkscreen paintings, with their reproductions of canonical paintings, into the museum mirrored Malraux's admission of photography as an artistic form into his 'imaginary museum.' The doubling undermined the logic of museum, Crimp argued. 'So long as photography was merely a *vehicle* by which art objects entered the museum, a certain coherence obtained. But once photography itself enters, an art object among others, heterogeneity is reestablished at the heart of the museum; its pretensions to knowledge are doomed.'⁶² Crimp nevertheless distinguished Malraux and

⁵⁷ George Bataille, *Manet*, Paris: Skira, 1955. On Foucault's reliance on Bataille, see Sousloff, *Foucault on Painting*, 61-67; Rajchman, 'Foucault, or the Ends of Modernism', 42-43n17. On Bataille's reliance on Malraux, see James H. Rubin, *Manet: Initial M, Hand and Eye*, Paris: Flammarion, 2010, 307-308.

⁵⁸ Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 50.

⁵⁹ André Malraux, *Psychologie de l'art*, Geneva: Skira, 1947; André Malraux, *Les Voix du silence*, Paris: Gallimard, 1951; André Malraux, *Le Musée imaginaire de la sculpture mondiale*, Paris: Gallimard, 1954; André Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, trans. Stuart Gilbert, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. The phrase's translation is discussed by Krauss in 'Postmodernism's Museums Without Walls', 241.

⁶⁰ Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, 112, cited in Krauss, 'Postmodernism's Museums Without Walls', 243.

⁶¹ Krauss, 'Postmodernism's Museums Without Walls', 243.

⁶² Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 53.

Rauschenberg's destabilizations. Malraux's he saw as being somewhat accidental, Rauschenberg's deliberate. 'Malraux's dream has become Rauschenberg's joke.'⁶³

If the idea of modernism's self-reflexivity and of the museum's contributions to this development pre-existed Foucault in Seznev, Malraux, and others, the significance of Foucault's analysis for modernist art history seems to have rested in its synthesis of these ideas in relation to Manet and specific paintings. Nine years prior, George Bataille's monograph on Manet had already paraphrased Malraux, identified Olympia's 'borrowings' from Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, and observed 'in our museums, with modern painting hung beside that of the past, kinship of the painting of all periods.'⁶⁴ Yet, it was Foucault's designation of *Olympia* and *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* in 1964 as "'museum" paintings' that lodged in the minds of modernist art historians and proved singularly generative to art history's conceptions of the art museum and its effects on modernist modes of artistic production.

Art history's commentaries on Foucault's essay have resolved certain ambiguities and ambivalences present in the original, but others have persisted, and even intensified. If one accepts that *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* and *Olympia* are the first 'museum paintings,' for example, how does that correspond to the understanding of the museum emerging from Foucault's writings on institutions and power? Are *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* and *Olympia* expressions of the museum's power? Does that make Manet the perfect museum subject? Fried identified Manet's quotations as an attempt to both assert the national identity of French painting and to universalize the artistic traditions of other nations, in effect making France the inheritor of something called 'Western art.' That would neatly align Manet with nationalistic museological practices in France at the time.⁶⁵ Does Manet's painting then express the logic of the museum, or does it scrutinize it for the first time?

There is also a lingering tension between the museum as an idea and the museum as a historical reality.⁶⁶ Foucault's essay conceived both museum and library as dematerialized archives, implying that Manet was responding to the epistemic shift signified by the invention of the public art museum, rather than museology itself. Indeed, that is how modernist art history has primarily absorbed the lesson. For Crimp, Krauss, and others, the museum remained an idealized institutional formation, a 'heuristic' as Foster stated most explicitly, interesting in its

⁶³ Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', 56.

⁶⁴ Bataille, *Manet*, 58, 67.

⁶⁵ On nationalism and the art museums of Manet's Paris, see Daniel J. Sherman, *Worthy Monuments: Art Museums and the Politics of Culture in Nineteenth-Century France*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989; Carol Duncan, 'From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum: The Louvre Museum and the National Gallery, London', in *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, London: Routledge, 1995, 21-47; and Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999.

⁶⁶ Hetherington articulates this distinction as 'the museum' versus 'museums' in 'Foucault and the Museum', 21.

generalities, its paradigmatic structures, and boring in its particularities. Krauss, who identified specific museums in 'Postmodernism Without Walls,' generalized a total ideological program from individual architectural elements—the galleries *en filade*, the ramp, the cube—that overlooks significant variation among them and ignores the agency of subjects operating within them. Hal Foster was emphatic that even this specificity had little significance to artistic practice itself, which he related to a more generalized view of the museum. When adopting Foucault's thesis that Manet's painting responded to the museum, he assured the reader, 'this museum is mostly imaginary.'

With decades of new museum studies scholarship, inspired in part by Foucault, it has become harder to believe that Manet's museum was a generalised one, or a 'mostly imaginary' one. Colin Trodd, for example, writing on London's National Gallery in the mid-Victorian period, has shown the art museum to be a 'more fluid, ambivalent, or disordered environment' than art history has allowed.⁶⁷ Acknowledging Foucault, among others, as a source of the misunderstanding, Trodd also posited a misreading, 'in which the proclamations of post-structuralist gurus are used in ways that they never intended' and proposed a method employing a variety of period commentaries to recognize 'the critical materials and forces—philosophical, historical and social—that swarm around the public life of the art museum,' a method itself evidently informed by Foucault.⁶⁸

Trodd advocated granular study of the complexities of a single art museum at a single moment in time to counter the generalizing impulse. The need is even greater when dealing with multiple institutions and the lived experience of an artist-visitor over an extended period of time. Manet was visiting the Louvre in the 1850s, the Uffizi in the fall of 1853, and the Prado in the summer of 1865. Already in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the emergent institutions eschewed a single common strategy or identity. The Louvre was not the Uffizi, was not the Prado.⁶⁹ In Paris alone, the Louvre's museology was not the museology of the Musée des monuments français or the Musée des artistes vivants. Michael Fried himself seemingly acknowledged this in 1996 when he asserted a different source for Olympia: the *Venus and Three Putti* panel now at the Louvre and formerly attributed to Botticelli.⁷⁰ This Venus, Fried argued, better approximates Olympia's gaze. Significantly, unlike the *Venus of Urbino*, the painting was in Paris when Manet was painting *Olympia*. It had just debuted in 1862 on the walls of a new Paris museum, the Musée Napoléon III, which the Second Empire had explicitly

⁶⁷ Colin Trodd, 'The discipline of pleasure; or, how art history looks at the art museum', *Museum and Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, 27.

⁶⁸ Trodd, 'The discipline of pleasure', 19, 27.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Lindsey Alberts, 'Francesco I's Museum: Cultural Politics at the Galleria degli Uffizi', *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol. 30, no. 2, July 2018, 203-216.

⁷⁰ Michael Fried, "'Manet's Sources" Reconsidered', in *Manet's Modernism; or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 153-155.

conceived as an alternative to the Louvre. The new museum inhabited the Palace of Industry from the 1855 world exposition, and was cast as a rival to the South Kensington Museum, a ‘museum of the arts applied to industry.’⁷¹ This displacement of Manet’s encounter from the Uffizi to the Paris Palace of Industry casts a different light on *Olympia*’s museological referents and suggests the need for more such granular work across art history and museum studies.

In review, Foucault’s legacy in modernist art history clearly goes far beyond study of Manet alone or even the study of mid-nineteenth century French painting. Douglas Crimp, Rosalind Krauss, and Hal Foster took Foucault’s brief analogy in the afterword for Gustave Flaubert’s novel and embedded it in central debates in the field, about the relationship between artistic production and institutions, modernism and postmodernism, hegemony and critique. Through such ‘translations,’ Foucault’s commentary on Manet helped shape the historiography of modern art in ways only now coming into view, forty years after Crimp’s original essay.

One such area now receiving scrutiny is cross-experimentation between the visual arts and museology. There is no allowance in Foucault’s equation of Manet-museum-modernism for experimentalism by artists and museum professionals within museum spaces. In Foucault’s telling, the institutional formation of the museum preceded modernism. New scholarship, informed by curatorial practices in contemporary art, challenges this narrative, exploring the constitutive role of modern artists in the history of museums and exhibitions. Gustave Courbet, for example, famously curated his own counter-exhibition to the salon in 1855, and took on museum administrative duties during the Paris Commune. Elena Filipovic has proposed Courbet’s counter-exhibition as a starting point for the telling of this new history, of the ‘artist-curated exhibition’ that stands at the margins of art history and museum studies and also apart from what Filipovic calls the ‘classical’ exhibitions organized by traditional curators.⁷²

Although a major step toward recognizing the museum as a historical space for experimentalism, the framing of this new history around the figure of the ‘artist as curator’ remains limited. Primarily written by scholars trained in art history, the ‘artist-as-curator’ histories continue to centre the artist and the artistic avant-garde’s notion of critique. In Filipovic’s account, the artist can ‘disown or dismantle the very idea of the “exhibition” as it is conventionally thought.’ Filipovic allows that ‘professional curators’ could do so too, but only after a ‘postwar generation of artists

⁷¹ On the Musée Napoléon III, see Isaline Deléderray-Oguey, ‘La collection Campana au musée Napoléon III et la question de l’appropriation des modèles pour les musées d’art industriel’, *Les Cahiers de l’École du Louvre*, no. 11, 2017, <http://journals.openedition.org/cel/721>.

⁷² Elena Filipovic, ‘Introduction (When Exhibitions Become Form: On the History of the Artist as Curator)’, in *Artist as Curator: An Anthology*, ed. Elena Filipovic, Cologne: Walther König, 2018, 8.

so radically tackled the form that they fundamentally transformed the shape of exhibitions thereafter.⁷³ The emphasis on 'artist-curated exhibitions' minimizes curators' historical experimentation and artists' professionalization as curators. It also ignores entirely the contributions of any museum staff beyond curators. The bracketing off of museum work and artistic work, even that which takes place inside museums' walls, overlooks a lesson that now seems fundamental to the Courbet example: that modernism's entanglement with the museum blurs the lines between the museums' artists, critics, and agents.

Embracing a more complex, multi-nodal conception of the modernism-museology connection has implications beyond the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From Hans Haacke to Fred Wilson and Andrea Fraser, those artists associated with the contemporary genre of 'institutional critique' frequently launched their 'critique' from within its walls, either performing as museum professionals themselves or working in alliance with them. Indeed, strident criticism and fierce contestation are hardly limited to external voices. Museum spaces, both public galleries and private offices and conference rooms, are often spaces of dissent and conflict. Any history that remembers Haacke's famous *MoMA Poll* in 1970 but ignores MoMA professional staff's unionization the following year is partial.

There are emerging models for such an expanded view. Arseny Zhilyaev's anthology *Avant-Garde Museology*, published in 2015, gathers primary sources on experimentation within Russian and Soviet museums, and follows its subjects in eschewing the distinction between artist and museum worker.⁷⁴ The title itself 'avant-garde museology' affirms this approach, resisting the urge to associate avant-gardism with artists and traditionalism with museology. Although referring only to the early twentieth-century Russian and Soviet context, Zhilyaev's title might be adopted for the broad swath of museological practices deviating from those codified around idealized versions of examples primarily in France and the UK in order to open this expanded field of study.⁷⁵

Claire Bishop's recent writing on the 'radical museology' practiced by certain contemporary art museums too proves instructive. Specifically developed around what she calls 'the provocative rethinking of contemporary art...driven by a sense of present-day social and political urgencies' at contemporary art museums in Madrid, Eindhoven, and Ljubljana, Bishop's notion of 'radical museology' recognizes a potential for difference among museum spaces and even a potential for museological radicalism.⁷⁶ Bishop stated her desire 'to break with the pessimism of

⁷³ Filipovic, 'Introduction', 9.

⁷⁴ Arseny Zhilyaev, ed., *Avant-Garde Museology*, New York: e-flux, 2015.

⁷⁵ Adam Jolles presents a potential variant in the concept of 'the curatorial avant-garde.' That schema remains limited by its focus on the figure of the curator, and in application, the figure of the 'artist as curator.' See Adam Jolles, *The Curatorial Avant-Garde: Surrealism and Exhibition Practice in France, 1925-1941*, State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 2013.

⁷⁶ Claire Bishop, *Radical Museology: or, What's 'Contemporary' in Museums of Contemporary Art*, London: Koenig Books, 2013, 27.

the most important critical writing on contemporary museums to date, which is dominated by tirades against spectacle and blockbuster exhibition' and '[to defend] the inspirational new missions for the museum of contemporary art as a public institution.'⁷⁷ Explicitly referring to Krauss and her impact on critical writing on the museum, Bishop's commentary responds to the whole Foucault-informed tradition in modernist art history and its hegemonic conception of the museum. Recognition of experimentalism in museum history supports Bishop's defense of new museums of contemporary art, just as her assessment of them provides new perspectives on that history.

A second occlusion in Foucault's modernism-museum thesis is the geography of modernisms and museums beyond Western Europe. Foucault's imagined museum contained the Western tradition represented by Giorgione, Raphael, and Velázquez, and his museum-going subject was Manet, a man who was affluent, white, French, and Paris-born. The assertion that modernism emerged from this encounter has severely limited the geography of modernist art in ways that remain operative for a modernist art history struggling to conceive of itself globally. Certainly, the 'encounter' was different for those seeing European paintings in the context of the colonial museum, as it was for many people who saw them in Paris. Museum studies has definitively demonstrated that Paris's museums too were products of colonial geographies, with visitors seeing much more than Foucault's fantasy canon of European painting, even as those displays continued to affirm European, and particularly French, supremacy.⁷⁸

A major step forward in rethinking Manet's museum encounters was the recent exhibition *Posing Modernity* at Columbia University's Wallach Art Gallery and its subsequent expansion featuring *Olympia* at the Musée d'Orsay. In that show, curator Denise Murrell explored the prevalence of Black figures in late nineteenth-century French painting, beginning her story with Manet and Laure, the Black woman who modelled for the clothed figure in *Olympia*.⁷⁹ Foucault's discussion of *Olympia's* quotations, and Fried's, ignored Laure's presence, a presence that Murrell showed to be Manet's most significant departure from the sources they cite, the

⁷⁷ Terry Smith and Claire Bishop, 'Claire Bishop: Museum Models, Radical Spectatorship', in *Talking Contemporary Curating*, ed. Terry Smith, New York: Independent Curators International, 2015, 140.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Alice L. Conklin, *The Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013; John Warne Monroe, *Metropolitan Fetish: African Sculpture and the Imperial French Invention of Primitive Art*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019.

⁷⁹ Denise Murrell, curator, *Posing Modernity: The Black Model from Manet and Matisse to Today*, The Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, New York, October 24, 2018-February 10, 2019; Cécile Debray, Stéphane Guégan, Denise Murrell, Isolde Pludermacher, co-curators, *Le Modèle noir, de Géricault à Matisse*, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, March 26-July 14, 2019. Denise Murrell, *Posing Modernity: The Black Model from Manet and Matisse to Today*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.

most glaring marker of his modernity.⁸⁰ Is that elision an oversight or a feature of Foucault's modernism? Murrell's manifestation of her scholarship in the form of an exhibition, one that could intervene in the presentation of *Olympia* at the Musée d'Orsay, offers a potent model for future curatorial praxis between modernist art history and museum studies, the academy and the museum, that might better represent the full range of experiences that defined modernism and modern life.

Murrell's exhibition and catalogue made no mention of Foucault's commentary on *Olympia*, or to any of the subsequent recapitulations of it. Is art history finally moving on? Foucault's name did appear in the opening pages of the exhibition catalogue, but the citation was not to 'Fantasia of the Library.' It was to Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Murrell identified the 'intent' of her exhibition as being 'to achieve what Michel Foucault describes [there] as the object of our questions of the "document" of history: a reconstitution of the past, with descriptions that are "necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge."' ⁸¹ In the concluding pages, she returned once again to Foucault: 'It is the ongoing challenge of art history to perform the Foucauldian excavations that lead to a remaking of the modernist document.'⁸²

Foucault's modernism-museum thesis has become part of the 'document' of art history in the forty years since Douglas Crimp's 'On the Museum's Ruins' and must now be excavated along with so much else. Its legacy going forward, and the part of Crimp's bound up in its interpretation, will persist to the extent that it continues to prompt new questions about modernisms past and present. More than anything else, review of commentaries on modernism and the museum in U.S. art history demonstrates the need for continued exploration of the subject, which is energizing in a field that has for some felt exhausted. Even decades later, theories of modernism remain overly reliant on idealized museums and idealized museum encounters. What are most needed now are granular histories allowing for broader variation and localized specificities in modernism's museums and museum's modernisms.

Alexander Kauffman is the Andrew W. Mellon – Anne d'Harnoncourt Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where he researches and

⁸⁰ The figure's presence is noted repeatedly by Bataille (*Manet*, 69, 74), but not by Foucault. See note 57 above. On her identity and its significance in Manet's work and art history, see Murrell, *Posing Modernity*; Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, 'Still Thinking about Olympia's Maid', *Art Bulletin*, vol. 97, no. 4, December 2015, 430-451; Griselda Pollock, 'A Tale of Three Women: Seeing in the Dark, Seeing Double, at Least with Manet', in Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories*, London: Routledge, 1999, 277-306; Lorraine O'Grady, 'Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity', in *New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity, Action*, ed. Joanna Frueh, Cassandra L. Langer, and Arlene Raven, New York: Harper Collins, 1994, 152-170.

⁸¹ Murrell, *Posing Modernity*, 3.

⁸² Murrell, *Posing Modernity*, 161.

Alexander Kauffman

Manet, museum, modernism: Michel Foucault and
modernist art history

develops exhibitions for the museum's collection of modern art. He completed his PhD in the history of art at the University of Pennsylvania in 2017. This article, an earlier version of which was presented at the College Art Association Annual Conference in 2019, stems from a book project on museology and modernist art.

alex.kauffman@gmail.com



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