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to reconstitute Expo 67 through a contemporary lens provides a critical framework to reimagine transnational, national, local and other visual, conceptual, socio-political, identitarian, and economic ideals and surviving myths of the world's fair. By re-knowing and re-formulating Expo 67, Gagnon, Johnstone and their collaborators offer an important revision of past fact, an account of the current moment, and crucial questions about future trajectories. ¶

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Heather Diack
***Documents of Doubt: The Photographic Conditions of Conceptual Art***
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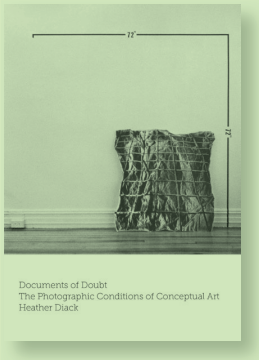
In the summer of 1970, John Baldessari (1931–2020) famously set fire to every painting he had made between 1953 and 1966. This body of work was cremated at a San Diego funeral home in one baby-sized and nine standard-sized caskets. Some of the ashes were then shaped into cookies and displayed as part of *Information*, MoMA's 1970 survey on conceptual art. Before pushing his paintings into the furnace, Baldessari did take the time to photograph and make slides of some, but preservation becomes slippery if what is carefully inventoried in photographs is then intentionally destroyed, and what is jarred and conserved no longer resembles the original or its documentation. In "Burning with Contingency," the introduction to *Documents of Doubt*, Heather Diack, an art historian at the University of Miami, explores how conceptual artists in the 1960s and 70s used photography not as simple evidentiary record but as performative participant, infusing more doubt than certainty into their projects. In the process, Diack offers a comprehensive framework on the nature of conceptual photography, analyzing a series of practitioners who utilized the medium to enact what Diack refers to as a "deliberate suspension of belief" (121).

Across four monographic chapters, *Documents of Doubt* traces the shifting role of photography in the works of Mel Bochner (b. 1940),




Bruce Nauman (b. 1941), Douglas Huebler (1924–97), and John Baldessari. Though much of their work seems obsessed with taking measure, and though many of their photographs serve as documents, each of these artists challenges the idea of photography as self-evident or "transparent." Diack's focus is on how and why these four, none of whom formally trained as photographers, turned to and adapted their use of photography in the late 1960s and early 70s. Their work, and Diack's analysis, is revealing of the specific social and formal concerns that shaped artmaking at this historical juncture, addressing foundational questions about materiality and dematerialization, and contributing to a shift away from high modernist ideals of originality toward a new framing of truth and documentation in society at large.

Baldessari's double-exposed black and white photo-composite *Artist as Renaissance Man* (1966) shows the artist himself as Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (1490). As Baldessari's too-long right arm pushes past the edge of Leonardo's circle, he mocks divine dimensions and collapses the imagined dualism between conceptual and material realities, placing photography at the centre of this argument. Diack points out that rather than disembodied, this work is corporeal—Baldessari "gives form to thought and thought to form" (177). In Leonardo's layer of the image, both arms fit the circle, and in the other the right arm is abnormally long. Which is "right," so to speak? The answer is, neither. For *Police Drawing* (1970), a forensic artist created a portrait of Baldessari based on descriptions from students who had seen him for fifteen minutes. The final piece includes a full-body photo of Baldessari, a photo of the sketch artist with the students, and the composite portrait he produced based on their recollections, as well as a thirty-minute videotape of the whole exercise. As Diack points out, Baldessari's layering of evidentiary mediums draws attention to the imperfect process of evidence collection and to the indeterminacy inherent in any testimonial. The inability of art, and of photography in particular, to pin down a singular truth is at the centre of Diack's inquiry.

As the author notes, Bochner, Nauman, Huebler, and Baldessari shared obsessions with quotidian record keeping, order, and measurement at a time when the power of documents was central in the public psyche, with photographic and photocopied documentation playing an incendiary role—from the Vietnam war to the 1969 moon landing, to the Kent State Massacre in 1970, The Pentagon Papers

(1971), and the Watergate Scandal (1972). Alongside Joshua Shannon's *Recording Machine: Art and Fact during the Cold War* (2017), and Kate Palmer Albers's *Uncertain Histories: Accumulation, Inaccessibility, and Doubt in Contemporary Photography* (2015), as well as recent media archeology scholarship such as Lisa Gitelman's *Paper Knowledge* (2014), Diack frames her inquiry into the works of each artist within a context both saturated with documentation and marked by a growing lack of credibility. Diack contributes to this literature on the role of documentation and photography in the 1960s and 70s by drawing out the ways in which each of the artworks under discussion employed an apparently ambivalent aesthetic to address the "political, social, and aesthetic challenges of this moment, including the difficulties of bearing witness" (9).

In some cases, connections to the politics and social dynamics of the time are overt. For *330/Variable Piece #70: 1971 Global* (1974), Douglas Huebler places a cover story from *The Boston Globe*, featuring then-President Richard Nixon, alongside a sequence of three appropriated portraits of the artist Bernd Becher, and an FBI wanted poster for a certain Benjamin Cohen. Becher, himself known for creating image sets or typologies, is here lumped in with a President on the eve of scandal and resignation and a criminal wanted by the FBI. Viewed together, the FBI mugshots, the artist's self-portraiture, and the likeness of the president, rhyme and play off one another. Huebler's accompanying text reads: "AT LEAST ONE PERSON WHO WOULD CUT OFF HIS NOSE TO SPITE HIS FACE." The artist draws a conceptual lariat around the three appropriated photographs, tying together their subjects. Fact-based journalism and carceral photography are lumped in with conceptual art practice, and the personal features of each man become intermixed. In Diack's analysis, Huebler's incriminating aphorism draws attention to Nixon's infamously self-destructive duplicity, but also displaces it onto the others to keep the viewer guessing.

In instances where politics are more elusive, Diack expands on Tony Godfrey's question about conceptual artists: "Why, if they were so politically motivated, is there so little direct reference in their works to the Vietnam War or the student riots in Paris in 1968?"[1] According to Diack, works such as Bruce Nauman's *Studies for Holograms* (1968–69), a series of self-portraits in which the artist's face is shown up close in distorted poses, is representative of ambivalence, but of a sort that should be taken seriously. Though Diack concedes the series is playful, she connects the work to images of torture and forced interrogation. She compares Nauman's self-portraits to Ana Mendieta's *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints)* (1972), in which the artist photographed her own face in distorted expressions pressed against a pane of glass. Diack acknowledges the difference in positionality between the two: one artist is a white, cisgender, American male known for his embrace of humor, failure, and absurdism, while the other is a Cuban woman of color whose work directly addresses racial stereotyping, the objectification of women's bodies, and domestic violence. Connecting Nauman's photographs to images of torture, while also comparing them to Ana Mendieta's practice, stretches the stakes of Nauman's self-portraits and belittles Mendieta's. However, these comparisons do make apparent what Diack calls "photography's ambivalent relationship to reality" (87)—always inevitably fragmented, unreal, and delayed (we're too late to do anything about what we see).

Rather than foreground contemporaries whose works are more outwardly subversive—for example Adrien Piper, Martha Rosler, or Eleanor Antin—*Documents of Doubt* centres on the playful. There is an irreverence but also an apparent banality to the works under consideration. Diack's choice of four white male artists, whose careers have already all been subject to numerous monographs, survey exhibitions, and abundant academic inquiry, is questionable. The author justifies the decision with a promise to "pry further into their overlooked complexities" (25). I do wonder, as other readers might, if such efforts might be better applied toward works by artists who have been sidelined by the intersection of structural inequalities that circumscribe choices of display, collection, and research—and whose politics, not incidentally, might not require such artful prying.

Diack sees the "ambivalent ineffectuality" of the works under discussion as revealing of "social conflict through their state of indecision" (15). By raising doubts about the ability of photographs within their own practice to be impartial or truthful, the author argues that each of these artists make visible the always tenuous relationship between photography and fact or truth. For *Misunderstandings (A Theory of Photography)* (1970), Mel Bochner compiled a deck of index cards in a manila envelope: one holds a photograph of the artist's own hand, and the others each feature photographed quotes about photography from authors as varied as Émile Zola, Mao Tse-Tung, Marchel Duchamp, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and the disembodied yet ever authoritative *Encyclopedia Britannica*. "In my opinion, you cannot say you have thoroughly seen anything until you have a photograph of it," writes Emile Zola (long predating Susan Sontag's argument that the advent of photography fundamentally altered the way we see). The photograph of Bochner's hand is a negative from a work originally entitled *Actual Size (Hand)* (1968), a print made to scale, resized to fit an index card. While the encyclopedia insists, "Photography cannot record abstract ideas," here we sit with a

purely conceptual photo project. To complicate matters, in writing about the work, Bochner has explained "three of the quotes were fakes, I made them up," though he has yet to reveal which three these might be. "Rather than provide clear insight into the ontology of photography," as Diack points out, *Misunderstandings* instead "frustrates one's ability to 'know' photography at all" (74).

Evident throughout *Documents of Doubt* is a momentous quantity of historical research and theoretical analysis, no doubt expanded from the author's 2012 PhD thesis on the same topic. Each chapter offers an in-depth survey of the subject artist's "philosophical, artistic, and ethical questioning" (221) of photography in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Eighty-seven black and white figures and twenty-five colour plates illustrate the book's chapters. The constellations Diack draws between photography, evidence, and doubt are illuminating for our present *post-truth* era, too. In "Credibility Gap," Diack's aptly titled epilogue, the author points to the direct slope from the disbelief generated by the U.S. government's duplicity in their pronouncements during the war in Vietnam, to the widespread questions of contingency, credibility, and mediation by images which remain at the fore of our relationships to power and truth. Diack's analysis serves to expand our literacy of conceptual photography as a site of "contested meaning" (167), instructing us to re-examine the collective memory and historicization of conceptual art based significantly on photographic documentation. This analysis also helps to frame how we reached our present high distrust—that is, both aesthetic and political distrust—in apparently truthful images. ¶

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1. Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art* (London: Phaidon, 1998), 15.

Charlotte Guichard
***La griffe du peintre. La valeur de l'art (1730-1820)***
Paris, Seuil, Coll. «L'Univers Historique», 2018

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€ 31 (relié) ISBN 9782021402315


Marie-Lise Poirier

Au XVIII^e^ siècle se déploie un nouveau paradigme onomastique se dissociant en partie du cadre strictement judiciaire pour signifier, en art, une marque d'authenticité où se forge l'aura d'un tableau. Charlotte Guichard, spécialiste des cultures visuelles et matérielles des Lumières et directrice de recherche au Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), examine les valeurs esthétique et commerciale de l'art par l'entremise de l'anthroponyme du peintre en tant que trace picturale dé-taillée de l'auctorialité dans *La griffe du peintre. La valeur de l'art (1730–1820)*. Guichard envisage la signature en tant que détail, aux sens où l'entend Daniel Arasse dans son étude récemment rééditée: d'une part, *particolare* (ou détail iconique), elle constitue un élément infime d'une plus vaste composition; d'autre part, *dettaglio* (ou détail pictural), elle est une marque marginale qui encourage la contemplation et suscite le désir du spectateur[1]. La signature participe aussi au culte du nom, prenant certes racine chez Pline l'Ancien et Giorgio Vasari, ce que Guichard démontre dans le chapitre 1, «De Pline à Vasari: l'héritage humaniste», mais triomphe au siècle des Lumières. De fait, la signature n'est pas anodine: elle s'impose comme un geste réfléchi faisant foi de la qualité de l'œuvre tout autant qu'elle est porteuse de la singularité de l'artiste, de sa «griffe» (p. 22).

Guichard précise toutefois que parler de signature au XVIII^e^ siècle relève encore de l'anachronisme, les termes «marque», «monogramme», «chiffre» et «nom» étant alors beaucoup plus communs dans l'usage des traditions de l'estampe, de l'antiquaire et des corporations médiévales afin de signaler la provenance et la qualité des objets fabriqués (p. 53, 55–56). D'ailleurs, rares sont les artistes français qui apposent leurs signatures sur leurs tableaux avant 1730. Cette pratique a souvent pour desseins de freiner la production de contrefaçons et de lier l'œuvre à son producteur en cas d'une circulation élargie, d'abord par la diffusion de la gravure, et ensuite, par les ventes aux enchères qui, à cette époque, se multiplient (p. 81, 99).

Les huit chapitres thématiques de cette étude s'articulent autour d'un corpus eurocentré, mais essentiellement français, rassemblant des œuvres dessinées, peintes ou gravées ainsi que divers documents archivistiques, tels que des registres, passeports et assignats. À cette liste s'ajoutent des pétitions, lesquelles se hissent, comme l'explique Guichard dans le chapitre 8, «Signatures en Révolution», en véritables étendards du patriotisme républicain. L'analyse de ces objets permet à l'autrice d'explorer la manière dont l'artiste renouvelle les codes sociaux et culturels de la signature entre 1730 et 1820 (p. 13), alors même que le nom se voit consacré par les institutions muséales, désormais soucieuses d'offrir aux visiteurs une attribution claire des tableaux (chapitre 5, «La patrimonialisation