

of artificial environments to provoke an experience from the spectator, yet, though perhaps more visceral, the Science exhibition sought to have both an emotional and an intellectual effect: it strove to make science appear "friendly" but at the same time emphasize its objective quality and free it from tainted associations. For this purpose the Science exhibition, like the *Festival* overall, used not only an overt narrative but much verbal commentary to accompany the images and models. Unlike Hamilton, who did not include explanatory labels, the organizers of the Science exhibit were not entirely relying on the power of their imagery; as they hint in their text, they used the images to "prepare" the visitor for a more measured intake. Their assumption is that vision cannot be refused, and that the identification and formal familiarity created by the immersion in scientific imagery will create a "natural" interest in understanding this experience on a cognitive level as well. The images, and visual perception itself, then, are understood to have an unmediated impact and to condition the spectator for the next step in which audience participation is needed: reading.

Hamilton's assumptions are very similar in his reliance on visual immediacy in order to visualize Thompson's theories. The formal correspondences between the models and the imagery are presumed to "speak for themselves." Minutes of a 1950 meeting of the exhibition subcommittee state that Hamilton was quite clear about this; they note that, "Mr. Hamilton pointed out that the Exhibition will be entirely self-explanatory visually, and will require no captions."⁴⁰ Since his didactic goals are different—namely forcing the spectator to *see* differently, not necessarily to *feel* differently—Hamilton can dispense with words, yet the sensory stimulation with which he afflicted the spectator and which elicited feelings of claustrophobia and dislocation must also be seen as part of an emotion-based reaction. How does this corporeal notion, emphasized by the need to create an environment that would subjugate the viewer (i.e., a forced route, difficulties seeing in the dark, optical illusions) then relate to the assumption of visual perception as arbiter of truth? How can forcing the visitor to see be enough when in order for this force to be exerted the emotional ground needs to be prepared, the spectator's familiar visual field needs to be shattered? Like Nelson, Hamilton is trying to re-educate the visual sense by jolting the viewer into new territory; but if "habits" can keep one from seeing, then how can vision be accredited this awesome quality of directness in the first place? Even as Hamilton continued his exhibition work, creating in *Man, Machine, and Motion* and *This Is Tomorrow* environments to destabilize vision and call attention to its deceptiveness, a belief in the immediacy of optical sense perception and in the ability to communicate precise meaning persisted in his own work.

WILLIAM R. KAIZEN

The efforts of poets to come to terms with industry in the nineteenth century . . . are unmemorable, that is to say, hard-to-learn, uninfluential in image forming. The media, however, whether dealing with war or the home, Mars or the suburbs, are an inventory of pop technology . . . a treasury of orientation, a manual of one's occupancy of the twentieth century. . . .

—Lawrence Alloway

. . . the image should, therefore, be thought of as tabular as well as pictorial.

—Richard Hamilton

In a letter from 1957 written to architects and fellow Independent Group members Peter and Alison Smithson, Richard Hamilton listed his definition of the popular arts. He wrote, "Pop art is: Popular (designed for a mass audience), Transient (short-term solution), Expendable (easily-forgotten), Low Cost, Mass Produced, Young (aimed at youth), Witty, Sexy, Gimmicky, Glamorous, Big business."¹ Hamilton and the Smithsons had all recently contributed to *This Is Tomorrow*, Theo Crosby's multidisciplinary, multimedia exhibition on art as a cultural process, and were thinking of working together on a follow-up. After his list, Hamilton hesitates: "This is just a beginning. Perhaps the first part of our task is the analysis of Pop Art and the production of a table. I find I am not yet sure about the 'sincerity' of Pop Art." Although he capitalized "pop art," making it into a proper noun and so recognizing mass-produced goods as a properly definable phenomenon, he was still unconvinced that these objects were worthy of serious attention. He hesitated because, although the IG had been examining popular goods for some time, he was still unsure if they were no more than just passing fads.

1. Richard Hamilton, *Collected Words 1953–1982* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), p. 28.

40. "Minutes of a meeting of the *Growth + Form Exhibition* Sub-committee held on Tuesday, January 31, 1950 at 4 p.m. at 6 Fitzroy Street, W 1," ICA Papers, Tate Gallery Archive, TGA 955.1.12.26.

Crosby was then the editor of the journal *Architectural Digest*, where he had published articles on mass culture by various members of the IG, including Hamilton. *This Is Tomorrow*, held in 1956 at London's Whitechapel Art Gallery, was the physical manifestation of these written explorations of pop culture. Crosby matched groups of architects, designers, and artists together and each group contributed its own section to the larger exhibition. Each was assigned a theme based on various social and scientific concepts in order to show how different cultural formations intersect and overlap within society as a whole. For Crosby and the IG, culture was no longer the exclusive property of the bourgeoisie, equivalent to high culture alone. *This Is Tomorrow's* vision of culture was expansive. It included the entire nexus of social connections and communication by putting on display a generalized field of culture where high and low were no longer opposed but parts of a larger social continuum.

By the mid-1950s the IG and Crosby had found that it was no longer possible to dismiss mass-produced commodities designed for leisure consumption as so much kitsch. Thanks to postwar prosperity, the British economy had shifted. With the improved standard of living and the growth in both leisure time and disposable income, consumer products flooded the market. Mass-produced entertainment was everywhere and it became an unavoidable part of everyday life. Lawrence Alloway, art critic and IG member, described the time as "edenic for the consumer of popular culture."² Technical improvements in magazine color photography, big-screen cinema, and the emergence of new products such as long-playing records and television had all recently become available in England, and the IG set out to carefully examine these objects.

At the same time, English historian Raymond Williams was developing a similarly expanded cultural theory. Williams had been looking at the origins of culture since the 1940s when he co-founded the review *Politics and Letters*.³ Taking literary criticism as its starting point, his book *Culture and Society: 1780–1950* (published in 1958)⁴ theorized the larger historical arc that had led to culture's equation with the fine arts. He traced the shifts of meaning in the word "culture," from its origin as a tending of natural growth (first in agriculture and then in human, moral development) to its identification in the nineteenth century as a

2. Lawrence Alloway, "Popular Culture and Pop Art," in *Pop Art: A Critical History*, ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 167–68. Established cultural authorities disparaged the influence of mass-produced culture. The Ministry of Culture, England's governmental arts agency, supported craft and small-scale production following the lead of William Morris a century before. The few institutions concerned with contemporary art, such as the Institute of Contemporary Art, upheld the conservative modernism of Henry Moore.

3. With Clifford Collins and Wolf Mankowitz. It ran from 1946–48.

4. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). Williams had been working on the book since 1950.

specialized field of activity tied to the bourgeoisie. For Williams, with the onset of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie, culture became a set of specialized activities (e.g., opera, ballet, chamber music, easel painting), in which the individual was set free from everyday life. Culture became the fine arts, a place for the cultivation of the individual subject. It was privatized so that it would exist over and above the social realm as a place that could, by accessing beauty or teaching morality, mitigate everyday life.

In his next book, *The Long Revolution* (1961),⁵ Williams set out to restore (at least in part) the pre-bourgeois notion of culture as generalized cultivation. He expanded the cultural field, making it the whole way of life of a society. The fine arts became one specific mode of communication within the larger social whole. This undercut the previous opposition between high and low culture that was, for Williams, a reflection of class division imposed by the bourgeoisie. Culture became the common culture, the various activities that comprise the social interaction of all members of a society who live in a particular time and place. Within common culture, art was but one of any number of specialized forms of communication with its own particular history and use to the larger social group. This generalization of culture had two major consequences. First, that art was no longer a rarefied activity, somehow more valuable than other types of social activity, and consequently that other types of social production besides art could and should be analyzed with the same rigor that was previously reserved for art criticism. In expanding culture to include any and all forms of human communication, Williams made popular goods acceptable objects of inquiry.

The IG, with their after-hours meetings at the Institute of Contemporary Art, had begun to explore these goods. In autumn of 1952, after their first year of meetings was almost over, Reyner Banham assumed the convenership. "The subject matter," Hamilton said, "changed overnight," the focus turning to popular culture in general and American popular culture in particular.⁶ Inspired by pop goods that artist John McHale brought back from a trip to the United States, their discussions ranged from Elvis to violence in the cinema to automobile styling.⁷ Hamilton contributed a lecture on how "white goods" (e.g., washing machines,

5. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., 1961). This book was written as a direct follow-up and clarification of the ideas he proposed in *Culture and Society*.

6. *Talking Art 1*, ed. Adrian Searle, (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1993) p. 73.

7. Hamilton describes the IG at this time: "When John McHale visited the U.S. in 1955, he returned with a box full of exotic things he had acquired there. He had gone around buying *MAD* magazine and comics of the most extreme kind of lots of pop records. Elvis Presley and Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" were being heard and discussed at the Independent Group before they were even played on the radio here [in England]. They were analyzed at the ICA and regarded as a sociological phenomenon, though there was an admiration and enjoyment of them. So much that it directed our interests into what was going on in the popular arts, other than the cinema" (ibid., p. 74).

dishwashers, and refrigerators) were presented in advertising. With their examination of these products, the IG set out to reclaim culture. They had found that the vertical pyramid of bourgeois culture, with high culture on the top and low on the bottom, was becoming horizontalized, flattened out by mass commodification. In horizontal culture as in common culture, no one form of cultural production was inherently more valuable than any other. Each product would have to be judged on its own merits, each as potentially valuable as the next in terms of interest or as a point of critical reflection.

*

For the *This Is Tomorrow* exhibition catalog, Hamilton created the collage *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*⁸ Before constructing the collage, he had programmatically written down all the areas of popular culture that would comprise it: "man, woman, humanity, history, food, newspapers, cinema, TV, telephone, comics (picture information), word (textual information), tape recording (aural information), cars, domestic appliances, space."⁹ He gave this list to his wife, Terry, and to their friend Magda Cordell, who spent days clipping out magazine images that matched these categories. Hamilton then made a selection from these clippings and used these to generate the final picture.

Beneath his list he added, "The image should, therefore, be thought of as tabular as well as pictorial." As much as *Just what is it . . .* hangs together as a picture, it is also a tabulation of horizontal culture. In linking *Just what is it . . .* to the criteria that he had defined for making the collage, Hamilton's tabular image graphed his preconceived list onto a final representation consisting of units subsumed by it. *Just what is it . . .* holds in suspension both the image it presents and the generative structure used to build that image. It is both a picture of the modern man and woman at home in the house of tomorrow, surrounded by latest consumer goods and scientific gadgets and, at the same time, it is the separate units chosen from the mass media and used to create the image. After the list Hamilton continued with a longer statement:

TV is neither less nor more legitimate an influence than, for example, is New York Abstract Expressionism. The wide range of these preoccupations (eclectic and catholic as they were) led to a willful acceptance of pastiche as a keystone of the approach—anything which moves the mind through the visual sense is as grist to the mill but the mill must not grind so small that the ingredients lose their flavour in the whole.¹⁰



Richard Hamilton. *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* 1956.

8. It was also printed on a poster used to advertise the exhibit.

9. *Collected Words*, p. 24.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Hamilton. *Hommage à Chrysler Corp.* 1957.



This is the tabular image, appropriating the new environment of mass-produced imagery, cutting it up and then pastiching it back together without completely subsuming it in the final construction.

With the tabular image, Hamilton created a taxonomy of horizontal culture. Rather than build a classical taxonomy, where the world is subsumed by a top-to-bottom hierarchical order, he spreads common culture across the surface of the picture, tabulating together various bits and pieces of pop imagery. Because the separate units of *Just what is it . . .* were filtered through a calculated process of selection, it is as if Hamilton had polled the media and graphed the results. He creates a nonlinear taxonomic chart of pop culture, a systematic image that can be

read both point-by-point and in toto. Each separate unit both maintains its existence as individual datum and becomes a part of the overall field that is the sum total of all the data.

After *Just what is it . . .*, Hamilton returned to painting, adapting his collage tabulation and continuing his examination of the effects of consumer culture on subjectivity. He created painted collages that depict the results of mass culture on the horizontal subject. His subject, literally the figure in his paintings, was the product of commodification. In the horizontal culture that Hamilton and the IG defined, advertising and leisure goods were quickly coming to dominate the archive of forms through which the subject entered society. Following Williams, to become a member of society is to be acculturated, the subject entering society through the adoption of various forms of culture one is born into. Since the war, the cultural archive had been overrun by commodification. Hamilton's tabular paintings presented the process of acculturation as mass-acculturation, depicting

Hamilton. *She.* 1958–61.



the subject as the site on which mass culture was inscribed.

In his first painted tabular work, *Hommage à Chrysler Corp.* (1958), car parts—a bumper, a headlight, a tail-fin—are fragmented, decomposed and hybridized, dissolved into lines and washes of chrome, red, and sooty black. The vaguest outline of a salesgirl stands behind the car parts, only her lips and one breast visible, the breast a mechanical drawing of the support structure of a bullet bra. Surrounding both woman and car are a variety of painterly marks dispersed across the ground, suggesting an interior, but one that never meshes into a proper architectural space: a block of color hints at a wall, horizontal lines hint at floor boards. Different painterly marks, each made in a separate technique (wash, dry brush, a solid painted black bar, a small red cross, hatch marks), float in the background. Some of these marks work to provide spatial cues; others reference nothing but their own existence. Together, with the scraps of figure and car, they put on display a range of plastic styles. Much of the painting is left white as if either unfinished or as if these pieces were collaged onto paper. Each separate element of Hamilton's image is distinctly visible, scattered around the field of the painting. While they exist together on the plain of the painted surface, each retains its individual identity as much as it makes up the total image.

In creating the tabular image, Hamilton hoped to upend the long-standing tradition in Western art that "a painting is to be experienced as a totality seen and understood all at once before its components are examined."¹¹ *Hommage . . .* consists

11. Ibid., p. 104.

of separate marks or images, each presented side by side, one next to the other, on the canvas. The final image never quite comes together. Like *Just what is it . . .*, the total image has a clear overall reference (automobile advertising in this case), but unlike *Just what is it . . .*, *Hommage . . .* does not cohere in perspectival space. *Hommage . . .* maintains a surface heterogeneity that presents its lack—its construction as image—openly. The separate units need to be read and understood both as individual units and as over-all image. With *Hommage . . .* Hamilton wants the image to be “scanned like a poem or a comic book”¹² rather than read all at once in its entirety. Like a comic book, each frame, or in the case of the tabular painting, each separate unit, exists both for itself and for the overall meaning of the entire work.

In *\$he* (1958–61), his next tabular painting, Hamilton takes advertisements for kitchen appliances as the basis of his image. He depicts a woman in a kitchen, caught in a web of labor-saving devices, the domestic interior transformed into a grotesquerie. Her refrigerator drips blood that pools around a toaster and a vacuum cleaner. Her body is in fragments; her hips and ass rise from the canvas in plaster relief, transformed into a toilet seat. Her one eye is a plastic toy that winks on and off, a mechanical come-on to viewers as they walk past. *\$he* is a pastiche of bigger and better appliances, the subject lost in a void of appliances that overflow their use. *\$he* exists as the product of consumer identity, a Frankensteinian construct built from labor-saving devices, the branded subject of consumer identity.

In “An Exposition of \$he,” Hamilton elaborated his source material.¹³ He described each tabular unit comprising the painting next to reproductions of the original advertisements he used to create the final image. As in his essay in the *This Is Tomorrow* catalog, he seems to describe the tabular image itself:

The ad for the Westinghouse vacuum cleaner demonstrates an endearing characteristic of modern visual techniques which I have been at pains to exploit—the overlapping of presentation styles and methods. Photography becomes diagram, diagram flows into text. This casual adhesion of disparate conventions has always been a factor in my painting. I want ideas to be explicit and separable, so the plastic entities must retain their identity as tokens. The elements hold their integrity because they are voiced in different plastic dialects with the unified whole.¹⁴

These plastic dialects are the formal methods through which Hamilton presents each separate element. Like the various techniques employed in the ads,

Hamilton uses a variety of painterly techniques to separately define each tabular unit. Each element stands on its own, the units comprising his overall subject while remaining visually distinct.

This two-level split in Hamilton's tabular image points toward the divide in consumer culture at the institutional and the individual levels. At the institutional level, consumer culture tends toward homogenization. It creates large numbers of identical products that it markets to the largest possible number of people. This reduces the subject to pure consumer. But at the micro level, the level of the individual subject, this system breaks down. The subject's desire constantly tries to escape the homogenizing pull of mass culture. Hamilton's two-level tabulation shows this split, his subjects comprised of various points drawn from the mass archive. His tabular subject is the product of consumer culture, constructed from the vast array of consumer goods that compete for attention in the mass-market place, fragmented by and composed of the forms of mass commodification.

Hamilton's tabular image depends on this subject, and his individual units always come together through figuration. “Although some of my pre-Pop pictures may seem to the casual observer to be ‘abstract,’” he has said, “I believe it is true to say that I have never made a painting which does not show an intense awareness of the human figure.”¹⁵ But he creates this figure from objects of mass production, constructing them from consumer images and things. Unlike the advertised image, which presents a unified subject, the fantasy subject of happy commodification, Hamilton reveals the subject as the object of commodification. If capitalism makes all things equivalent by reducing their status to goods in the marketplace, Hamilton's figure presents the subject as the product of this leveling out. His figure is no longer the singular, unified subject. The various pieces that comprise it jostle together and drift apart across the painting's surface. Though they may be contiguous, they never come together as a unified whole. They are the tabulation of consumer culture.

*

Over the next ten years, Hamilton pursued the tabular image through several series of paintings, each centered on a different theme: fashion (both men's and women's), architecture, cinema, and, in the series *Swingeing London*, the news.¹⁶ In 1967 Hamilton's art dealer, Robert Fraser, was arrested along with two of the Rolling Stones for drug possession. Because rock stars were involved, the trial was extremely public and the tabloids had a field day. The bust was reported

12. Ibid. Hamilton is describing the work of Paul Klee, whose work he cites, along with Duchamp's *Large Glass*, as predecessors of the tabular image.

13. Ibid., pp. 35–38.

14. Ibid., p. 38.

15. Ibid., p. 269. Even in later work where he explores the environment and landscape it is always in relationship to the figure.

16. Although I will only discuss the print *Swingeing London 67*, the entire series consists of several different prints and a painting.

ence of the colors against the descriptions around them. These added colors become the real-world point that the reports misrepresent, and, through mass dissemination in the tabloids, these misrepresentations become part of the common culture. They enter into the larger social sphere, becoming part of the cultural archive that forms subjective identity. In *Swingeing London 67*, this archive is shown to be founded on misrepresentation. *Swingeing London 67* tabulates the lack at the center of the consumer system, the inability of mass forms to account for individual subjectivity.

In his description of Andy Warhol's *Ambulance Disaster* (1963), Hal Foster describes this lack as a missed encounter with the real: "these pops, such as a slipping of register or a washing in color, serve as visual equivalents of our missed encounters with the real. . . . Through these pokes or pops we seem almost to touch the real."²¹ Hamilton's *Swingeing London 67* also presents this missed encounter with the real. The sum total of the different descriptions of the trial circle around each and around the actual spots of color, but they never quite get to the actual event. Even the washes of color that Hamilton puts next to the descriptions, playing the literal against the descriptive accounts, are mechanical reproductions of the color he placed on the original collage. Hamilton's real is missed because it points toward the lack in the system's ability to process information that isn't mass-mediated.

Referring to *Ambulance Disaster*, Foster calls this lack "traumatic realism." The painting features two images, one over the other, of a crashed ambulance with a dead woman hanging from the wreckage. In the bottom image, the woman's face is obscured by a large blotch, an imperfection (purposeful or not) that occurred in Warhol's silk-screening process. Following Jacques Lacan, Foster describes this blotch as a tear or a "trou" (in French a hole, gap, or deficit but also a pun on the English "true") that leaps out at him, a lack in the technical process of the silk-screen reproduction of the original image. It is in this delinquency of technique, Foster says, "especially through the 'floating flashes' of the silkscreen process, the slipping and streaking, blanching and blanking, repeating and coloring of the images" that the trauma of Warhol's image can be located.²²

With both the repetition of the image and the breakdown in the mechanical process of reproduction, Foster is touched by the real that lies behind Warhol's image. For Foster, this lack is the punctum that locates the trauma of the image, more so than the horrible image of the crash or Warhol's repetition of that image. The *trou* is the gap between the two, between the horror of the crash and the banality of its repetition. It is the deficiency that points back toward the system

that generates truth through mass mediation. Like Hamilton's spots of color, Warhol's *trou* signals that the real is always missed in any account of an event, particularly in the representations of the mass media. In horizontal culture, truth only exists as the homogeneous surface floating on top of the mass-cultural archive. The *trou* points back to the real, to desire that is unmediated by consumption, to a point behind the system of mass production.

Swingeing London 67 is the image of tabulation itself. Hamilton presents metatabulation of the systems of horizontal culture. He uses the newspaper, the point at which factual information enters into larger cultural circulation, to point toward the general way in which mass production forms the subject. In replaying the trial over and over, each account circles around the real. Through the repetition and reconstruction of mass-produced information (the news), Hamilton demonstrates the gap between the thing/event as object and its subjective representation within the spectacle. Though the final image may generate a single overall meaning, its parts fall apart. In each instance, using the field of mass production in which sameness is inherent, *Swingeing London 67* demonstrates the way this field breaks down. Hamilton uses the tabular image to show that at the heart of this system of commodification lies a fundamental lack—the human subject's inability to access any desire beyond that of the marketplace.

If, as Foster says of Warhol's traumatic realism, the subject is touched by the real, Hamilton's tabular image also proposes that the real touches the subject. Hamilton's *trou* is a tear in the meaning of the image, the central lack around which the image is constructed, but it is also the point at which meaning is constructed upon the real. It is the screen of culture where subject and object meet. Lacan, in his seminars of 1964 gathered together as *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, theorized the screen as the place where individual subjectivity and the gaze of the object merge.

In the fourth seminar, "Tuché and the Automaton," Lacan recounts the story of Freud's grandson playing with a wooden spool attached to a length of cotton. The child, his mother having left the room, takes the spool in hand and tosses it away, yelling, "fort!" ("gone!"). With a tug, he reels it back in, "da!" ("here!"). Again and again, the child plays this game, back and forth, in the symbolic repetition of his mother's absence. For Lacan, this is the very moment when the child becomes possessed by desire, when need is transformed from cry into speech. The need for the mother is represented by the reel of string, an extension of the child into the world. Like language, the reel is a pulse that extends then returns to the sender.²³

For Lacan the child's *fort-da* game is the very pulse of symbolization, the game of speech in which the speaker reaches forever toward the Other. The turn

21. Ibid., p. 136.

22. Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), p. 134.

23. Even if there is no reply, for Lacan, every act of speech implies a return.

of the reel is used by the child to enact language for the first time. It is the foundational trauma of the mother's absence, the *tuché* of loss that pushes the child into symbolization and into social life.

The *fort-da* game, as the instantiation of language, also marks the formation of subjectivity within the child's unconscious. As the child plays, the reel symbolizes the division between subject and object. The alternation between there (*fort!*) and here (*da!*), comes to define the pulse of the child's subjectivity as it reaches out with language and is in turn affected by the language of others. The reel is the locus of the signifier, the object that comes to define the subject. In so doing it is the thing that forever links the subject to the objects of the outside world. Coming between subject and object, unfurled by the subject but presupposing the existence of the object, the reel is Lacan's *objet petit a*, the thing which is both self and other, the thing in which the two become intertwined.

Lacan asks, "Where do we meet this real?"²⁴ If the real is what eludes us, what exists beyond (or before) signification, past words and the possibility of conscious knowledge, where can it be found? In several of the seminars that follow,²⁵ Lacan identifies vision as one possible place where we are touched by the real. With these seminars, his goal is to "... grasp how the *tuché* is represented in visual apprehension."²⁶ Lacan tells the famous story of the sardine can. When he was a young man, working on a fishing boat, a sardine can was floating out on the waves, glinting, caught in the sunlight. "You see that can?" one of his companions on the boat says to him, "Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!"²⁷ But Lacan couldn't shake the feeling that it did indeed see him. "It was looking at me at the level of the point of light," he realized, "the point at which everything that looks at me is situated—and I am not speaking metaphorically."²⁸ Literally, then, as he looked out into the world, as his gaze reeled out toward the can, the light of the world stabbed back into his eyes, a *tuché* piercing his retina. The can's gaze touched back as it was touched by Lacan's eyes.

It is this return of the look that Lacan named "the gaze." As the subject looks out at the world, the world looks back, much like the child enacting language through the *fort-da* game. Vision is forever caught between subject and object on the screen, "the locus of mediation"²⁹ between them where each sees the other. The screen is the place where the reel comes to rest, the midpoint of its pulsation

24. Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), p. 53.

25. All grouped under the heading "Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*."

26. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

from here to there. On the screen, the subject is formed from the object and versa. "This is the function that is found at the heart of the institution of the subject in the visible," Lacan writes. "What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects."³⁰ And it is on the screen that the subject's look and the object's gaze join.

Echoing Williams's common culture, Foster describes the screen as "the cultural reserve of which each image is one instance."³¹ For Foster, the screen is the archive of culture, and this is the cultural reserve that Hamilton accesses with the tabular image. Hamilton's subject is forever caught up in the screen of culture which for the postwar subject means the screen of commodification. His tabular image reveals that vision is screened through the culture of capital. Hamilton's subject is the figure that creates and is created by this commodification.

Félix Guattari positions Lacan's psychoanalysis historically. He links it to the domination of the twentieth-century subject by pointing out that the subject Lacan describes is screened through the representations of capital: "What in fact does Lacan say? He says that ... desire can exist only insofar as it is represented. I think that Lacan is completely right in terms of the unconscious of the capitalist social field. ..."³² Lacan's screen is the place where the subject's desire and the desire of capital meet. The subject's desire, the same horizontal subject that Hamilton portrays with the tabular image, is formed through desire's commodification.

This is the figure, Hamilton's tabular figure, that Lacan described graphed through picturing, or, better still, graphed by light:

I must, to begin with, insist on the following: in the scopical field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture. This is the function that is found at the heart of the visible. What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which—if you will allow me to use a word, as I often do, in a fragmented form—I am photo-graphed.³³

This is how Hamilton's tabular image functions—as the photo-graphic screen where the look of the subject and the gaze of the object are founded on the des

30. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

31. Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p. 140.

32. Félix Guattari, *Soft Subversions*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext[e], 1996), p. 18.

33. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 106.

of the commodity. What is traumatic in the tabular image is not the return of the real per se, a real that can never return because it was both never there and is always there (as lack, as the hole in the center of the system). Rather, it is the turn of the reel, where subject and object come to rest on the screen of horizontal culture, that locates the trauma of the tabular image. This is the *trou* of the tabular subject, the truth that, by the mid 1950s, meaning was caught in the never-ending repetition of commodification. With the turn of the reel, the real returns as unfulfilled desire.

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Internationally recognized for her visually elegant, thought-provoking video art, Mary Lucier was a sculptor, photographer, and performance artist before she turned to video in 1973. In *Mary Lucier*, the first book published on Lucier's work, Melinda Barlow brings together a selection of Lucier's previously unpublished writings and drawings along with essays, reviews, interviews, and photographs of her ephemeral installations and performances to create an absorbing portrait of one of America's most accomplished video pioneers.

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