

# The Denied Image: Art Interventions Between Iconoclasm and Institutional Critique.

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Cohen, Gilli (2020) "The Historical Significance of Black Lives Matter Iconoclasm". McGill Journal Of Political Studies, June 26  
<https://mjps.ssmu.ca/2020/06/26/the-historical-significance-of-black-lives-matter-iconoclasm/> [accessed 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021]

**Gianluca Cosci** "*Double Negative #1*", 2014. Oil on found painting, 48.7 x 58 cm.

How and why actual iconoclasm within contemporary art is accepted and recognised as a valid means of artistic expression?

Could this acceptance trigger wider, more problematic questions in relation to ethical or even legal frameworks?

How far one could go towards this direction? Are there any limits to what could be artistically justified or justifiable?

Is Iconoclasm only ascribable to forms of destruction/modification of artworks made by other artists?

Could artists be iconoclastic even towards their own artworks as part of their practice?

Is Iconoclasm only a physical action or could it also be something more symbolic/conceptual/metaphorical?





By treating an oeuvre as a readymade, he points to the boundaries of art, the limitations that we set in the cultural reception and treatment of artists – and that often still involves Modernist and pre-Modernist ideals of the totemic, auratic art object and the artist as genius, no matter how much Postmodernist thought attempted to shift this.

Fulton, Jeni (2019) “Danh Vo on destroying art, designer playgrounds, and his first ever show in Hong Kong”.

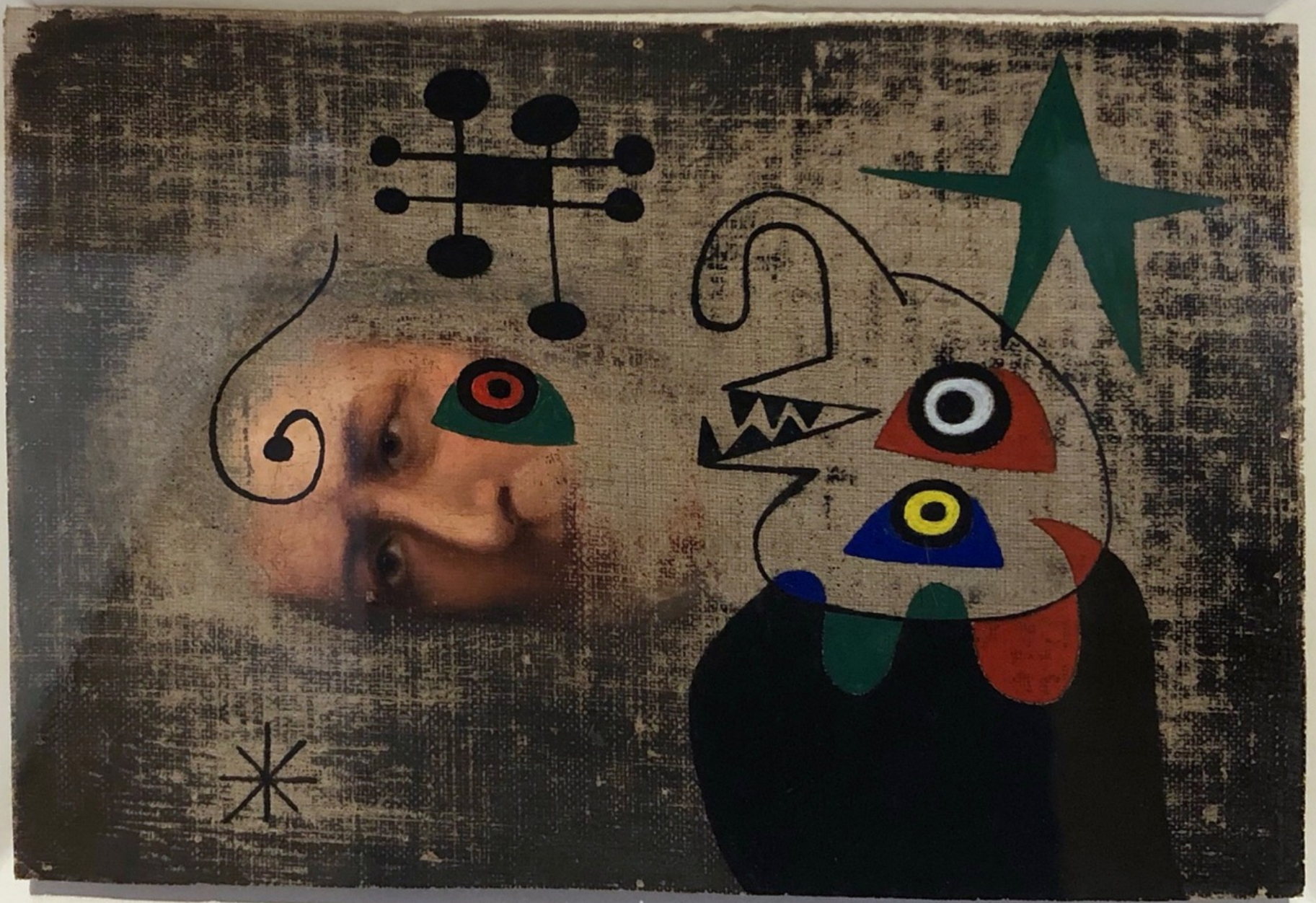
Art Basel Website

<https://www.artbasel.com/news/danh-vo-noguchi-art-sculpture-art-basel>

[Accessed 20th January 2022]

**Danh Vō** (born 1975)  
“Untitled”, 2008. Leather bag and 16<sup>th</sup> century German sculpture.





**Joan Miró** (1893 - 1983) "Personnage dans la nuit", 1944. Oil on found painting.  
The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, New York.





The origins of this line of research can be traced back to Dada but also to the concept of the *détournement* in the Situationist International movement, not only as defacement and alteration of pre-existing images, but also as a general attitude to express dissent and opposition to official narratives and as a way to subvert and resist authority.

Debord, Guy; Wolman, Gil, J. (1956) "Mode d'emploi du détournement", in *Les Levres Nues*, #8, Brussels, May; translated and published by Ken Knabb as "Methods of Detournement," in *Situationist International Anthology*, Bureau of Public Secrets (Berkeley, 1981 and 1989).

**Asger Jorn** (born Asger Jørgensen, 1914 – 1973) "Mater Profana (Defiguration)". 1960. Oil on found painting.





**Isidore Isou** (Isidor Goldstein 1925 - 2007)

“Traité de bave et d'éternité” (“*Venom and Eternity*”). France, 1951. 124 minutes.

“In making his film, Isou believed he had initiated the chiseling (or deconstructive) phase of cinema, which he called *discrepant cinema*. [...] In several clips showing men at work at industrial machines, Isou has scratched out their heads, creating white defacements that collectively suggest how such work transforms people into faceless, anonymous parts in an industrial process of reifying humans into interchangeable units of labour.”

(Trier, 2019: 39-40)

Trier, J. (2019) *Guy Debord, the Situationist International, and the Revolutionary Spirit*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill Publishers





**David Claerbout** (born 1969) "The Close", 2022 single channel video projection, black & white, 6 channel surround sound, (15 min).



**David Claerbout** "The Close", 2022 single channel video projection, black & white, 6 channel surround sound, (15 min). Reconstruction of amateur film, circa 1920, and digital 3D rendering.



“Remix culture as existing in a space where authority, ownership, and originality have been displaced: The Internet, where "the heap has reached the highest critical mass, permitting remix practices to Spread and Disseminate on a planetary scale. With its free-floating file sharing, splicing and sampling, and instant distribution of digital media, the Web has become an ideal ground for remix practices of all sorts."

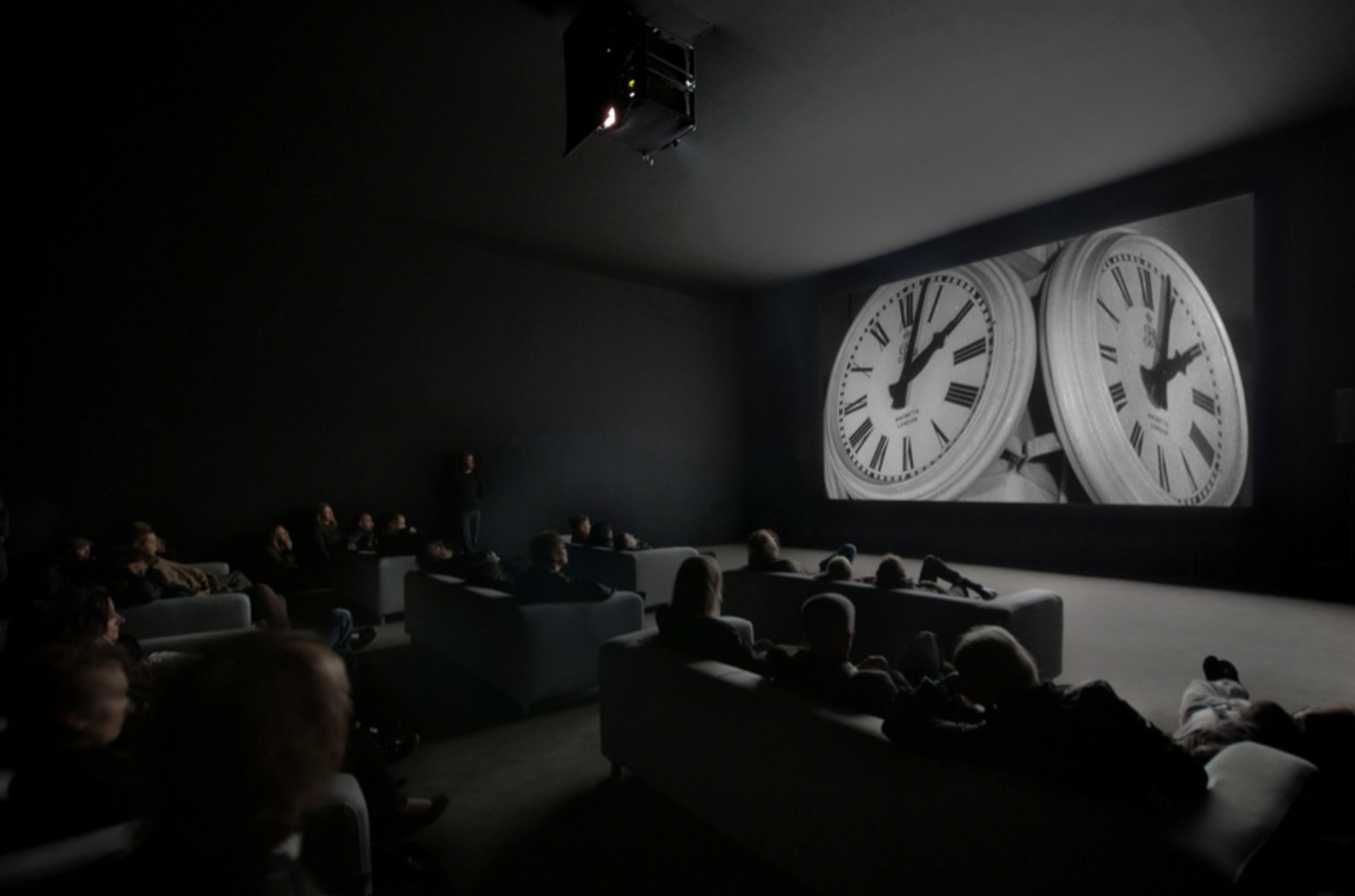
Davis; Webb; Lackey; DeVoss; (2010: 194)

Davis, Andrea; Webb, Suzanne; Lackey, Dundee; DeVoss, Dànielle Nicole (2010) “Remix, play, and remediation: Undertheorized composing practices”. Writing and the digital generation: Essays on new media rhetoric, p.186-197. McFarland & Company



**Douglas Gordon** (born 1966) *"24 Hour Psycho"*, 1993 Video installation. Commercially available video tape of the film "Psycho" by Alfred Hitchcock, video player with variable playback speed, video projector, semitransparent screen. Dimensions variable.





**Christian Marclay** (born 1955) *"The Clock"*, 2010. Single channel video, duration: 24 hours



John Stezaker (born 1949) "Pair IV," 2007. Collage, 7 11/16 x 9 7/8".





“Artists collaborate over space and time, even if they lived centuries and continents apart. Profound creativity requires maximum exposure to others' works and liberal freedoms to reuse and reshape others' material.”

Vaidhynathan (2001: 186)

Vaidhynathan, Siva (2001)  
*Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How It Threatens Creativity*. New York University Press (2001: 186)

**John Stezaker** (born 1949) “Tear”  
2014/18 Modified found painting  
50,8cm x 40,6cm





**Joseph McGrath** (born 1930) Still from the satirical black comedy film “The Magic Christian”, 1969

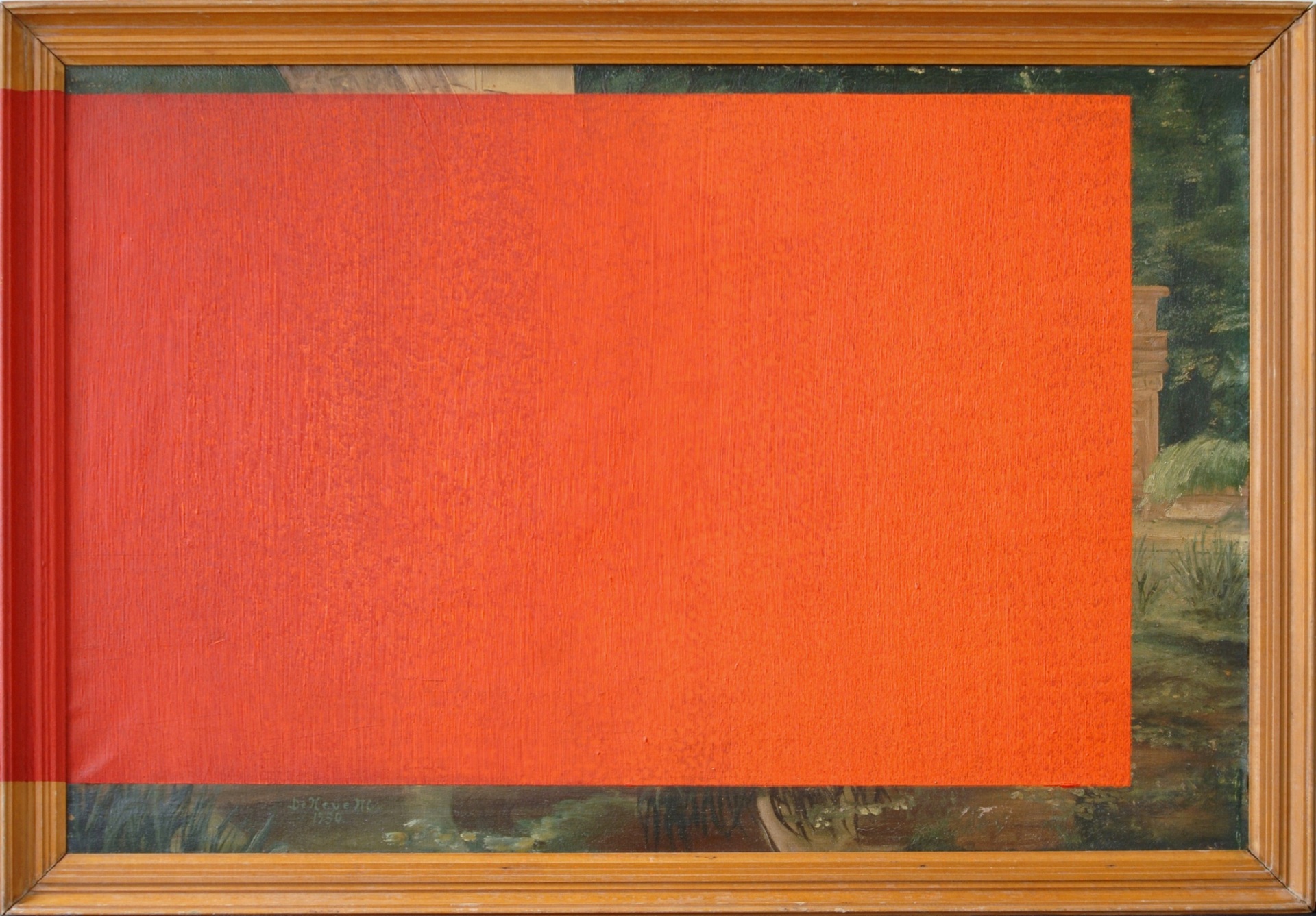


**Ai Weiwei** (born 1957), *"Colored Vases"*, 2006/2008, nine vases from the Neolithic age (5000–3000 BC), industrial paint. Private Collection, USA.



*“Ai Weiwei, I believe, has owned in one way or other the things that he has destroyed [in his art]. The Han dynasty vase was an acquisition of his, he owned the piece, and decided to destroy it. [Caminero] was destroying someone else’s property. That strikes me as a form of vandalism and not a form of art.”*

Kerry Broucher interviewed by Philip Kennicott after an art attack on Ai Weiwei work: “Hirshhorn leader discusses the line between art and vandalism” Washington Post February 19th, 2014



**Gianluca Cosci** *"Double Negative #2"*, 2012. Acrylic and oil on found painting 66,5 x 95 cm



*Ai Weiwei [...] said about his dipping ancient vessels in synthetic paint that “you can cover something so that it is no longer visible but is still underneath, and what appears on the surface is not supposed to be but it’s there.”*

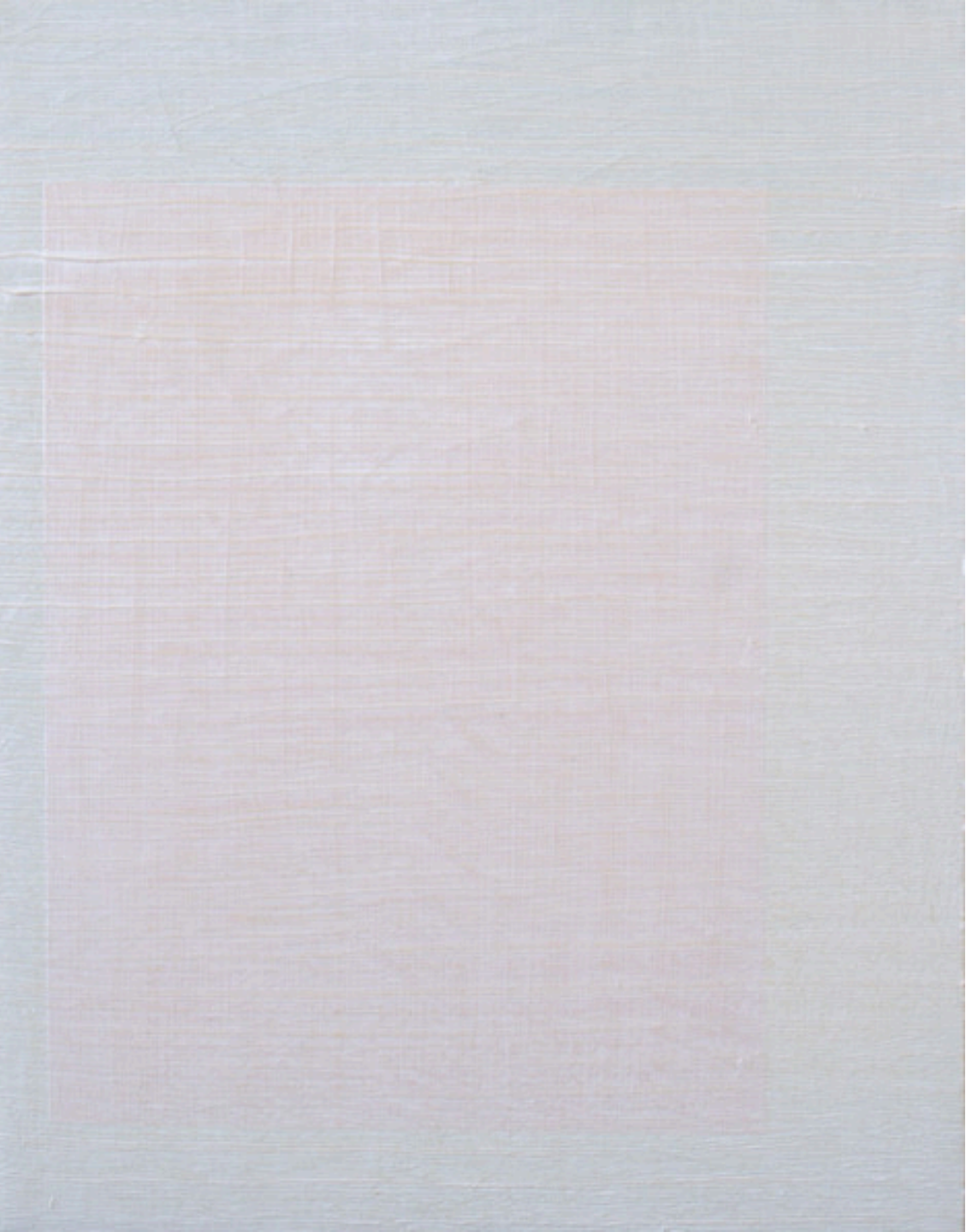
(Gamboni, 2013, 191)

Gamboni, D.; Brougher, K.; Ferguson, R. (2013) *Damage Control: Art and Destruction Since 1950*. Munich/London/New York: Del Monico - Prestel



**Gianluca Cosci** "*Untitled*" 2018 Oil on canvas  
on found painting. 65 x 98.5 cm





Blessing, Jennifer (2018) "Robert Ryman, Surface Veil III"  
<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3755> [accessed 20th January 2022]

Boehm, Gottfried; Thierry Greub (Ed.). (2018) *Cy Twombly: Image, Text, Paratext*. Morphomata

**Gianluca Cosci** "*Whitewashing #1* "  
2014. Oil on canvas on cardboard. 50 x 35 cm.



**Gianluca Cosci** "*Untitled #*" 2012  
Oil on found painting 67 x 54 cm





“And if our gospel also is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case, the God of this world has blinded their unbelieving minds, that they should not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (Two II Corinthians)

Filippo wished to say that [...] the spreading of the word-was veiled from the people of Milan, who were perishing because he could not function the lawfully appointed prelate of their city. (Betts: 1967)

Betts, Richard J. (1967) *Titian's Portrait of Filippo Archinto in the Johnson Collection*. The Art Bulletin; Mar 1st; 49, 1; 59-61

“**Titian** (1490 – 1576) *Portrait of Cardinal Filippo Archinto*”. 1558  
Oil on canvas, 114.8 x 88.7cm.  
Philadelphia Museum of Art





"Experimenting with the ways a diaphanous 'veil' of this kind could both distort and intensify the features of a sitter by half-obscuring them."

(Decaux: 2009)

Decaux, Anne Hélène.  
(2019) "The Many Heads of Francis Bacon" Nov 25th  
<https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/the-many-heads-of-francis-bacon> [accessed 12th June 2021]

**Francis Bacon** (1909 - 1992)  
"Head" 1949, oil on canvas.  
83 x 66,5 cm.



**Gianluca Cosci, “*Senza titolo*”**  
2021. Oil on found painting.  
60 x 50 cm.





**Gianluca Cosci** "*Untitled #3*", 2016/2022.  
Oil on canvas, 150x100 cm



**Gianluca Cosci** "*Untitled (Kemijärvi Series)*" 2007. Fujiflex photographic print, 67 x 100 cm.





**Lewis Baltz (1945 – 2014)** *“Tract House #6,”* 1971.



Restricted views and visual losses to invite the viewer to participate in the creation of the image.

In museums, one's behavior is prescribed, controlled and monitored. One is supposed to use the space according to its strict purpose.

Micro institutional critique.

**Gianluca Cosci** "*Old Masters VII*" 2021. Lambda Print on Digital Fuji Photo Paper mounted with Diasec Plexiglass Dibond 50 x 33 cm.





**Gianluca Cosci** "*Old Masters I*" 2019.

Fujiflex photographic print mounted on Diasec Plexi - Alu-Dibond, 67 x 100 cm.





**Louise Lawler** (b.1947) *"Pollock and Tureen, Arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, Connecticut"*, 1984. Silver dye bleach print 95.9 × 126.4 cm. The Met. N.Y.C.





Iconoclasm as a subversive tool against expectations, stereotypes and behavioural norms (rhetoric about inventiveness, creativity and originality).

Cortenova, G.; Petrova, E; Kiblickij, I. (2000) *Kazimir Malevich e le sacre icone russe: avanguardia e tradizioni*. Milano: Electa

**Gianluca Cosci** “Aniconic Icon (Black Circle)” 2020. Acrylic on painted Orthodox Icon 20 x 25 cm





The combination of subtle violence and destruction and aesthetic.

The importance for Arnulf Rainer of “*geheimnis*” or mystery.

Rastorfer, Mathias (2020)  
“Interview with Arnulf Rainer”.  
Galerie Gmurzynska, Zurich.  
22<sup>nd</sup> September  
<https://vimeo.com/460476617>  
[accessed 26th February 2021]

**Gianluca Cosci** “*Being Malevich*”,  
2014. Oil on found painting,  
46.5 x 57 cm



Art and poetry have always used, namely by creating moments where meaning remains latent.

To embrace latency goes against the grain of the logic of compulsive performativity because it is all about leaving things unsaid, unshown, unrevealed, it is about refraining from actualising and thereby exhausting all your potentials in the moment of your performance.

We have to re-think and learn to re-experience the beauty of latency.

(Verwoert, 2015: 146)

Verwoert, Jan (2015) “I Can, I Can’t, Who Cares? // 2009” in Beshty, W. (eds.) *Ethics*. London: Whitechapel Gallery

Alberro, A., Welchman; John C. (ed.) (2006) *Institutional Critique and After (SoCCAS Symposium Vol. II)*. Zurich: JRP | Ringier

Bellion, W. (2017) "Art and Destruction" *American Art* | Spring 2017 Vol. 31, No. 1

Boldrick, S.; Clay, R.; Brubaker, L. (eds.) (2013) *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present*. Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate

Debord, Guy (annotated and translated by Knabb, Ken). (2014 [1967]) *The Society of the Spectacle*. The Bureau of Public Secrets,

Freedberg, D. (2016) "The Fear of Art: How Censorship Becomes Iconoclasm". *Social Research*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (Spring).

Gamboni, Dario; Latour, Bruno; Weibel, Peter. (Eds.) (2002) *Iconoclash, Beyond the Image-Wars in Science, Religion and Art*. ZKM and MIT Press

Kurczynski, Karen (2008) "Expression as vandalism: Asger Jorn's "Modifications"". *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 53/54 (Spring - Autumn), pp. 293-313. The University of Chicago Press

McDonald, J. (2008) 'Destruction and Creation', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May, p. 17  
McPhee, J. & Reuland, E. (Eds.) (2007) *Realizing the Impossible: Art Against Authority*. Oakland, CA: AK Press

Sax, Joseph L. (1999) *Playing darts with a Rembrandt: public and private rights in cultural treasures*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan press

Schneider, A. (2006) 'Appropriations' in Schneider, A. and Wright, C. (eds.) *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, Oxford and New York: Berg

Setari, Nicola (2008) *Dall'iconoclastia all'iconoclash. Ricerche sulle strategie iconoclaste contemporanee*, Venezia, Archivio Università Ca' Foscari. Ph.D. Dissertation, 2008

Wyman, S. (2012) *Beyond the Veil: Indeterminacy and Iconoclasm in the Art of Robert Hayden, Janet Kozachek, and Tom Feelings*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press