

NEW MONUMENTALITY, INTEGRATION OF THE ARTS,
AND THE SHAPING OF MODERN LIFE

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
in the School of Art
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

By

Giovanna María Bassi Cendra

December, 2015

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ABSTRACT

The American art history canon poses modern art as an individualistic and detached enterprise. However, an examination of the New Monumentality discourse reveals that modern art was as socially and politically engaged as the Federal Art Project murals. Inspired by the success of the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair, this discourse linked the concept of modern monumentality to the integration of the arts. The New Monumentality had a great impact on the development of modern art because it assigned visual artists a vital role in the construction of monuments. Several avant-garde artists, among them Alexander Calder and Isamu Noguchi, seized the opportunity that the new approach to monumentality afforded them and created art specifically for civic spaces. The New Monumentality enabled them to fight the chronic isolation of their work from society and to fulfill their desire to reach the masses and help shape human life.

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Introduction

The New Monumentality, a Response to the Isolation of Avant-garde Art from Public Life

Paris, 1937. After being attracted by a sculpture of totemic proportions, you pass through the transparent gates of a modern pavilion to find inside an ensemble of fascinating works of art that make its walls and free-flowing space come alive. The first thing to catch your attention is a mesmerizing fountain that plays freely with gravity's effect on the unique consistency of mercury to convey the idea of limitless abundance. Soon, the sense of plenty and liberty gives way to disgust and anxiety as you are confronted by the tortured figures caged in an enormous canvas on the wall to your right. After you tour the art exhibitions on the pavilion's upper level, you descend, a monumental mural guiding your way. It carries with it the loud sounds of political protest that you have just heard below, above, and even outside, where a mantle of photomontages cloaks the building announcing to the world the distress of the besieged Spanish Republic. This is a symphony that art and architecture compose together: sad, angry, urgent, but still hopeful.

Despite its short life, the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World Fair of 1937 was the first incarnation of successful modern monumentality (fig. 1). The Spanish architects José Luis Sert and Luis Lacasa designed a modern building that echoed the kindred spirit of the avant-garde art that made it come alive: Picasso's heroic *Guernica*, Alexander Calder's playful *Mercury Fountain*, Joan Miró's vibrant mural *Pagés Catalá en Revolta* (Catalan Peasant in Revolt), Alberto Sánchez's iconic sculpture *El Pueblo Español Tiene un Camino que Conduce a una Estrella*, Julio González's dignified sculpture *La Montserrat*, and an

ensemble of large photomurals by José Renau. This modern *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or whole work of art, essentially destroyed the influential art and architecture critic Lewis Mumford's idea that "The very notion of a monument is a contradiction in terms: if it is a monument, it cannot be modern, and if it is modern, it cannot be a monument."¹

There is a persistent idea in the canon of American art that modern art was an individualistic and detached endeavor exclusively dedicated to the expression of the inner self and the solution of formal problems. The modern art of the 1940s and 1950s is still frequently regarded as a reaction against and an emphatic break from the heavily politicized, socially oriented art that developed both in Europe and the US during the 1930s — which most of the time took the form of social realism, regionalism, or streamlined classicism. However, contrary to what the influential art critic Clement Greenberg argued, much modern art was as socially and politically engaged as the social realist Federal Art Project murals of the 1930s, as the integrationist artistic ensemble of the 1937 Spanish Pavilion demonstrates. By integrationist I mean art that establishes a synergetic relationship with architecture in order to form a cohesive artistic whole meant to affect human activity in a meaningful way, as *Guernica* did. However, after Greenberg's criticism was canonized in art history, scholars analyzed *Guernica* for decades as if it were a freestanding work of art and not a part of this large and audacious modern *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

¹ Lewis Mumford, "The Death of the Monument," in *Circle; International Survey of Constructive Art*, ed. Leslie Martin, Ben Nicholson, and Naum Gabo (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), 264; This essay was republished in Mumford's book *The Culture of Cities* (1938), which established him as a leading international expert on urbanism. Mumford, who is frequently regarded as a seminal critic of architecture, urbanism, technology, and American culture, also played an influential role in art criticism; his influence peaked after 1932, when he became a regular columnist for the *New Yorker*, a position he held until 1937. Through his association with a literary and fine arts circle, Mumford came into contact with progressive thinkers such as John Dewey and Waldo Frank and was drawn into the debates on modernism in the arts and the United States' place in relationship to new developments in Europe. Lewis Mumford, *Mumford on Modern Art in the 1930s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1–4, 16, 25.

Like Picasso, many avant-garde artists who had witnessed or participated in the socially committed integrationist art projects of the 1930s had become convinced that modern art had a social purpose too: the responsibility to help shape human life. These artists concluded that the best way to connect with the masses was to place their art in the places where everyday people gathered, in the urban environment. However, in the 1930s and early 1940s avant-garde art was still isolated in modern art museums, a few progressive art galleries, and the private quarters of educated elites. Likewise, avant-garde architecture was almost always excluded from the important public commissions of the time.

This uneasy, almost nonexistent relationship between avant-garde art and architecture and the general public engendered the New Monumentality, a discourse that emerged in New York during World War II with the architectural historian Sigfried Giedion, the artist Fernand Léger, and Sert's multidisciplinary manifesto "Nine Points on Monumentality" (1943). The cornerstone of Giedion, Léger, and Sert's new approach to monumentality was the integration of the arts, a strategy that assigned visual artists a vital role in the construction of new monuments. The New Monumentality discourse would validate and bolster the fight for the presence of modern art and architecture in the public realm that a few avant-garde architects and artists had started in the 1930s. These efforts would culminate, almost two decades later, in high-profile modern integrationist projects such as the UN Headquarters in New York (1947-50) as well as in the proliferation of modern public art in American cities during the 1960s (fig. 2).

The Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair was the starting point and model for the New Monumentality theory. Sert, the architect of the Spanish Pavilion, and his friend Léger, a French painter who had also worked in collaborative projects at the fair, met again

in New York during the war years. Their frequent participation in the multidisciplinary discussions of a close-knit social circle that gathered around Calder familiarized them with the predicament of the New York avant-garde, who felt that their work was alienated from society. During that period, they also developed a close relationship with the Czech-born historian Giedion, a passionate champion of modern art and architecture. Giedion, Léger, and Sert shared their experiences with artistic integration as well as their common frustration with the continued exclusion of modern art and architecture from public commissions. When they co-authored “Nine Points” in 1943, they formally connected the idea of modern monumentality with the integration of the arts for the first time.

Giedion, Léger, and Sert’s conception of the monument drastically departed from Mumford’s, who viewed it as an imposition on the public of static, oppressive, and anachronistic forms that perpetuated — as the fascists were doing — past modes of authoritarian power and retrograde social conditions. Unlike Mumford, they believed that the construction of modern monumentality was possible. In his essay “Death of the Monument” (1937), Mumford considered the monument an elitist and wasteful expenditure of resources and energy. He argued that the monument originated in mankind’s fixation with death and asserted that monumentality was the privilege of the elite, who, in their desire to achieve some sort of immortality, neglected the present as well as the needs of fellow human beings.² In this essay, Mumford also vehemently declared that art should never be assigned the task of

² Mumford argued that the monument sprang “...not out of life but out of death: to wall out life and to exclude the action of time by carving monuments in durable materials: the primitive burial mounds, the big stones of Salisbury plains and of Brittany, the pyramids and Sphinxes of Egypt...” He also declared: “So long as men are oriented toward death, the monument has a meaning: no sacrifice is too great to produce it. Just as a poor religious family of today would spend half a year’s income to celebrate fitly the death of one of its members, money that it would find impossible to spare to make possible the birth or education of a child, so the civilizations of the past sacrificed their life and their income and their vital energy to the monument.” Mumford, “The Death of the Monument,” 263–64.

preserving history: that task belonged to anthropological or archaeological history museums. For him, a work of fine art could never constitute a monument; it should only be appreciated in isolation at the art museum against the background of contemporary existence.³ In this sense, his thought approximated Greenberg's. Yet Mumford agreed with the influential American philosopher John Dewey, who held that art was a tool for social change and that it had to be integrated into everyday life.⁴ This contradiction led Mumford to conclude that the only kind of art that belonged in the urban environment was that devoted to the "fresh uses of life," i.e. applied or useful art.⁵ Ironically, even though Mumford was neither an elitist nor a formalist like Greenberg, he agreed with him in that art should never be involved in symbolic or representational functions.

In contrast, the authors of "Nine Points" triggered one of the earliest critiques of this modernist *tabula rasa* attitude and its unwillingness to deal with issues of monumentality and lasting collective expression.⁶ Although they also criticized the way that monuments were being shaped in their time, unlike Mumford they believed that there was an ongoing, real human need for monumentality. In their manifesto, they argued that modern society

³ Mumford argued: "...what makes a work of art eternal in the human sense is not what it carries over in the setting of its own generation, but what it signifies against the background of our own experience... while the social museum must necessarily seek to preserve the background, the museum of art properly speaking should forego any such attempt: one does not need a medieval house to appreciate a picture by Roger van der Weyden or Breughel the Elder... the more complete the detachment, the more effectively we can screen a symbol from what it meant for another generation, the more specific and final is our own response. For a work of art is not a monument: if it has life at all, it exists as a contemporary fact." Ibid., 267.

⁴ Greta Berman, *The Lost Years: Mural Painting in New York City under the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, 1935-1943* (New York: Garland Pub., 1978), 17; A. Joan Saab, *For the Millions: American Art and Culture between the Wars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 12-13.

⁵ Mumford, "The Death of the Monument," 267; Throughout his career, Mumford sought to democratize contemporary art, arguing that things such as store displays or sandwich joints held more aesthetic promise than antique objects. Saab, *For the Millions*, 1-2.

⁶ This modernist attitude had led to radical proposals such as Le Corbusier's unrealized Plan Voisin of 1925, which would have required bulldozing the historic urban fabric of Paris north of the Seine in order to replace it with a relentless scheme of modern cruciform skyscrapers linked with high-speed thoroughfares.

demanded the creation of a new kind of monumentality, one that would not constitute an autocratic imposition by the elite on the public, but a democratic expression that would emerge from the people and correspond to their current emotional needs. This new form of expression would represent the collective ideals of a newly reformed, democratic, international, and modern society. The most consequential principle underpinning their New Monumentality theory was the notion that the members of the avant-garde (painters, sculptors, and architects) had to collaborate with architects if they were to create monuments that both represented modern society and helped shape public life.⁷

Thus, the deepest implication of the New Monumentality discourse was that avant-garde art was as responsible as modern architecture was in achieving the difficult task of creating monuments. In my thesis I trace the origins and development of this interdisciplinary model as well as its legacy, focusing on the period between the late 1930s through the 1950s, when avant-garde artists and architects were finally able to place their work in the public realm by participating in emblematic projects all around the world such as the Ciudad Universitaria De Caracas in Venezuela (1944-70), the United Nations Headquarters in New York (1947-50), the Chimbote Civic Center in Peru (1950), or the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (1953-58). With such projects, avant-garde art was not a mummified object buried in galleries, museums, or private collections for the sole purpose of aesthetic contemplation, as Greenberg envisioned, nor a short-lived embellishment for the activities of everyday life, as Mumford proposed: it was a living entity that fulfilled cultural-symbolic functions.

⁷ Since at least the 19th century, there had been an ongoing concern among artists and critics about the apparent loss of integration of the arts. This concern generated several attempts at reintegration such as Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* operas, the Arts & Crafts movement, the Vienna Secession, De Stijl movement, and the Bauhaus. There had also been discussions on the continued relevance of monumentality and the possibility of generating modern monumentality. It was with "Nine Points" that these two discourses came together and the idea of the integration of the arts became linked to the generation of modern monumentality.

It is widely acknowledged that the New Monumentality was pivotal in the architecture world because it redefined the way that architects approached the major public commissions of the postwar period. What has been ignored in scholarship is the fact that this discourse also had a significant resonance in the art world. It is necessary to repeat here that a key principle of the new approach to monumentality was the integration of the arts, a strategy that assigned visual artists a critical role in the construction of new monuments. Several avant-garde artists — notably Picasso, Léger, Isamu Noguchi, Hans Hofmann, Miró, and Calder — seized the opportunity that this multidisciplinary approach afforded them and created art specifically for public monuments during the postwar period, recasting the integrationist tradition of the 1930s as a new aesthetic. Yet, the impact of the New Monumentality on modern art has hardly been assessed in art historical discourse. Even in architecture history, where this approach has been the focus of numerous investigations, the art side of the discourse has been ignored: no one has evaluated Léger's great contribution to the subject or the stakes for artists yet.

The New Monumentality discourse was stifled in American art history because points of view that encouraged artistic integration and political engagement contradicted Greenberg's notion of the purity of the medium and artistic freedom. As art historian Serge Guilbaut explains, throughout his career Greenberg promoted the idea that the art of the New York School was crucial to the development of art all around the world and that it emerged from an inevitable, long march toward a "purified modern art."⁸ This notion, which extricated modern American art completely from its social context and particularly from the

⁸ Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 6–7.

ideology and politics that shaped it, was echoed incessantly in art history.⁹ In addition, after Greenberg, modern art criticism tended to restrict the experience of art to an elite minority: the viewer who was not initiated in high art was simply left out of the account.¹⁰ In this context, it is easy to understand why certain forms of modern art that attempted to reach out to and represent the public were also left out of historical accounts. This formalist interpretation of modern art ended in the late 20th century with the rise of the social history of art and other methodologies. With my thesis I challenge traditional readings of midcentury art that derive from Greenberg's notion that American modern art developed almost exclusively in the realm of heroic painting, that it had nothing to do with any function other than aesthetic contemplation, and that it was apolitical and removed from life. Even the New York School painters participated in one way or another in integrationist art practices that joined architecture in the construction of modern monumentality: Arshile Gorky with his murals for the Newark Airport Administration Building (1935-37), Willem de Kooning with his mural for the exterior of the Hall of Pharmacy at the New York World's Fair (1939), Hofmann with his murals and floor mosaics for the central plaza in the Chimbote Civic Center, Peru (1950), and Mark Rothko with his murals for the Rothko Chapel, Houston (1964-67, installed 1971).

What these projects demonstrate is that several avant-garde artists never intended to isolate themselves from the public or abandon the monumental-civic role that art had been fulfilling since ancient times. On the contrary, they actively sought such opportunities and tried to take part of this tradition. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries,

⁹ Ibid., 6–10.

¹⁰ Hal Foster et al., "The Birth and Death of the Viewer: On the Public Function of Art," in *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Hal Foster and Dia Art Foundation (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 4.

the intense construction of monuments in the US had adopted the aesthetics of the American Renaissance, a movement in which architecture and its associated art followed Italian High Renaissance precedents.¹¹ Its most important prototype had been the Chicago Columbian Exhibition of 1893, which art historian Harriet F. Senie describes as “the purest statement of this vision of public art and public life” (fig. 3).¹² The Chicago fair inspired the City Beautiful Movement, which extended American Renaissance aesthetics well into the 1930s with monumental complexes like the San Francisco Civic Center (1912-32) (fig. 4).¹³

However, by the 1920s and 1930s, this classicizing form of monumentality disgusted progressive thinkers and practitioners who considered it completely incompatible with modern life. In New York, despite the initial widespread resistance to the avant-garde styles introduced by the Armory Show of 1913, modern art had taken a foothold.¹⁴ However, many critics felt that the US, an economic and military power since World War I, had yet to develop a distinct aesthetic tradition that reflected its democratic character.¹⁵ For example, in

¹¹ According to professor of architectural theory and contemporary culture Malcolm Miles, there was an intense commissioning of monuments in this period at both sides of the Atlantic. The proliferation of statues and memorials sought to “legitimize” the recently acquired powers of European or American states as well as the wealth of their businessmen; it also subsumed social conflict within the “myth of national identity.” Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 67; Harriet Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation, and Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 6.

¹² Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture*, 6.

¹³ Giedion observed in 1938 that in comparison with the “great buildings” of the 1889 fair (the Eiffel Tower, the Halle des Machines), the Chicago fair was a disappointing recoil for architecture: “Whoever saw the great buildings of 1889, not bound by tie and taste, must have been full of hopes... Here come new times, a new era is dawning...”; yet, they were wrong: “The Chicago World’s Fair of 1893 consciously turned away from the spirit expressed by the great constructions of 1889. Not Eiffel’s spirit dominated the ‘marble’ pavilions on Lake Michigan, but the spirit of the Paris Academy.” Sigfried Giedion, “Can Expositions Survive? Historical Note, 1798-1937,” *Architectural Forum* 69 (December 1938): 443.

¹⁴ Mumford, *Mumford on Modern Art in the 1930s*, 6, 8–9. In New York, the precisionist photography group led by Alfred Stieglitz was freely acknowledged; Marcel Duchamp developed an American branch of Dada; Katherine Dreier, Man Ray and Duchamp had founded the Société Anonyme in 1920; and new institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art (1929) and the Whitney Museum (1931) challenged the cultural hegemony of the conservative Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum.

¹⁵ Saab, *For the Millions*, 5.

1929, the American historian and social critic Waldo Frank labeled the US “the grave of Europe” and asserted that Americans had built their towns, morals, politics, dogmas, manners, and arts from the “relics” of a world that was no longer theirs and that was dying.¹⁶ That same year Mumford complained about the “general debacle of taste” that had taken over the nation since the late 19th century.¹⁷ He blamed both architects and patrons of art for this nostalgic “retreat” that disintegrated art.¹⁸ What deeply troubled Mumford and informed his emphatic rejection of monumentality in 1937 were the ubiquitous architectural and artistic pastiches of past times and foreign cultures that he believed had nothing to do with contemporary life. Mumford wanted to see these pastiches replaced by genuinely modern American art.¹⁹

A climate that would nurture the development of the New Monumentality discourse began to develop in New York in the early 1930s: there was a widespread interest in discerning a uniquely American artistic expression as well as art forms that could fulfill important public functions. In the US, a number of artists and critics had begun to celebrate

¹⁶ Waldo Frank quoted in: Ibid.

¹⁷ Mumford wrote: “What caused the collapse of taste during the last hundred years, and what is responsible for its present anemia — a pathetic state in which beauty lives for us only through repeated ‘transfusions’ from other cultures?” Lewis Mumford, *American Taste* (San Francisco: Westgate Press, 1929), 3.

¹⁸ Mumford declared: “...American taste retreated from the contemporary stage, and sought to build up little ivory towers of ‘good taste’ by putting together the fragments of the past. The architects led this retreat ...but they were anticipated by the great patrons of art, like Mrs. Jack Gardner; and presently our homes and our buildings ceased to have any fundamental relation to the American scene: they became fragments of the museum ...Art was reduced to tidbits; plagiarism became an emblem of reputability.” Ibid., 19–20.

¹⁹ That is why Mumford embarked in the quest for a “usable past,” a revisionist project that had been inspired by the literary critic and historian Van Wyck Brooks. In his essay “On Creating a Usable Past” (1918), Brooks unearthed American writers and artists from earlier generations who had made original contributions to national culture but who had been ignored by critics. Following this idea, Mumford published *The Brown Decades* (1931), in which he argued that in the early 20th century there had been a general decline in creativity among artists and architects and unearthed the achievements of a few American architects and artists such as Louis Sullivan and Albert Pinkham Ryder. In general, Mumford found the nihilism of content in abstract tendencies perplexing; he favored instead the social realism of artists like Reginald Marsh and William Gropper. For more information on Mumford’s position on art during the 1930s, see the Introduction to Mumford, *Mumford on Modern Art in the 1930s*, 1–38.

the long-awaited arrival of a democratic art that would be representative of the American landscape and reach its masses.²⁰ Cries for a national art form and desires to link democracy to the arts escalated during the 1930s, when debates over what constituted America and who got to define the arts reached the largest audiences ever; as art historian Joan Saab explains, back then, defining the arts became a means for defining national identity.²¹

A catalogue for the MoMA exhibition “Murals by American Painters and Photographers” (May 3-31, 1932) illustrates these growing concerns. MoMA’s Advisory Committee, led by Nelson Rockefeller, explained in the catalogue that in the US the interest in mural painting had increased astonishingly in recent years, stimulated by the Mexican muralist movement, recent controversy, or opportunity.²² MoMA became absorbed in this development and invited 65 American artists to produce mural studies for this exhibition. Except for a few avant-garde works by artists like Stuart Davis or Georgia O’Keeffe, most submissions were social realist or regionalist (fig. 5). Although MoMA exhibited all these studies, it clearly wanted to encourage modern artists to work in this medium.²³ In the catalogue, Lincoln Kirstein, the director of the exhibition, forcefully expressed his confidence in the great potential of the mural as a lasting form of artistic expression that could broaden audiences for modern art.²⁴ He also criticized the idea of an elitist and

²⁰ Saab, *For the Millions*, 5–7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

²² See Museum of Modern Art, “Murals by American Painters and Photographers” (1932), 5, reprinted in: Museum of Modern Art (New York), *American Art of the 20’s and 30’s* (New York: Published for the Museum of Modern Art by Arno Press, 1969).

²³ In the catalogue, the committee declared that they wanted to “encourage American artists to study the possibilities of this medium of artistic expression.” *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁴ Kirstein asserted: “...whether or not we have universal symbols we have walls, and for the present event, this is more important. Easel painting has become ingrown, inorganic. The accidental vision on the private wall, bought by whatever patron happens along, is as unsatisfactory to the ambition of an artist occupied with all the

individualist modern art, suggesting that there were many modern artists interested in the production of monumental public art, and expressed confidence in the public's capability to appreciate modern art if given the chance.²⁵ In addition, MoMA tried to persuade modern architects to allow modern artists to paint the walls of their buildings.²⁶

A kindred concern for establishing genuinely American modern art permeated the government-funded programs that renewed American monumentality between the early 1930s and the early 1940s. The most important was the Federal Art Project (FAP), an economic relief program for artists sponsored by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) between 1935 and 1943.²⁷ The creation of the FAP clearly was of interest to MoMA: only one year after the program was created, the museum hosted an exhibition of its sponsored murals entitled *New Horizons in American Art* (September 14 – October 12, 1936). MoMA viewed the FAP as an excellent opportunity to place more avant-garde art in the public realm. Holger Cahill, the director of the FAP, wrote the introduction to the exhibition catalogue. In his essay, Cahill emphasized the important socio-cultural, monumental role of the FAP

potentials of a permanent appeal as with the great mass of people who, if given such a chance, would look at paintings. Ibid., 10.

²⁵ Ibid. Léger shared with Kirstein the idea that the public would be able to appreciate modern art if given the chance. Léger expressed repeatedly this thought in several essays during the 1930s. For more information on this subject, refer to Chapter 2.

²⁶ In the catalogue, Lincoln Kirstein, the director of the exhibition, assigned the responsibility for the future of American mural painting to avant-garde architects, who, according to him, had often been reluctant to accept this medium. Ibid., 7–8.

²⁷ President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Federal Art Project in 1935 in response to the Great Depression, as part of the New Deal national work relief program. The FPA, which operated until 1943, provided work relief for painters, sculptors, muralists, photographers, and graphic artists with various levels of experience. It was the largest and most inclusive program sponsored by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), employing at its peak more than 5,000 artists. In addition to the FAP, the Treasury Department administered two art programs: a crash relief program known as the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), which operated from 1933 to 1934 and employed nearly 3,700 artists, and the Section of Painting and Sculpture (later Section of Fine Arts), which operated from 1934 to 1943. The latter was not a relief program; through anonymous competitions it awarded artists approximately 14,000 contracts to produce works of painting and sculpture for new federal buildings, especially courthouses and post offices. Saab, *For the Millions*, 15–20.

murals.²⁸ Cahill had been profoundly influenced by Dewey's ideas; in fact, one of the program's goals was to integrate art into daily life.²⁹ Like MoMA did through exhibitions like "Useful Objects Under \$10" (1938-43), the FAP also attempted to "desacralize" art and disseminate it to the masses.³⁰

However, although these government-sponsored programs transformed American monumentality, most of the works of art they sponsored for specific public sites were not avant-garde but were executed in social realist or regionalist styles, a situation that certainly upset a few modern artists.³¹ As Senie points out, there were some WPA programs that tolerated avant-garde art to an unusual degree, but they were usually those that supported artists directly rather than the commission-specific works.³² Two typical examples of the art that proliferated in public buildings such as schools, hospitals, libraries, or post offices are Ben Shahn's *The Jersey Homesteads* (1938) in the Roosevelt Public School in Roosevelt, New Jersey and Julius Woeltz's *Gang Plow* (1941) in the Post Office of Amarillo, Texas. The WPA imposed few limits on the type of work it financed and the artists that worked for

²⁸ Berman, *The Lost Years*, 56.

²⁹ Ibid., 17, 20; Saab, *For the Millions*, 12–13.

³⁰ Saab explains that although both Holger Cahill, the director of the FAP, and Alfred Barr, the director of MoMA, were profoundly influenced by Dewey's desire to integrate art and life, the models they created to redefine art and disseminate it to the masses took different forms throughout the decade. The FAP did it through its "pedagogy of artistic production," which posited that making art made good citizens. MoMA did it through its "pedagogy of cultural consumption," exercised through exhibitions like "Useful Objects Under \$10" (1938-43), which linked the "aesthetically informed" purchase of selected manufactured goods to a "functioning democracy." Saab also argues that the design shows at MoMA became crusades, not only for Barr and Philip Johnson's aesthetic categories, but also for what they considered the "American way of life" as rooted in mass-market consumer capitalism. MoMA's "democratization of modern design" was ideologically based on the ideals of progressive European design movements such as the British Arts and Crafts, the Dutch De Stijl, and the German Bauhaus, whose work the museum showcased. For an excellent account on the subject see: Saab, *For the Millions*, 9–13, 100–01; Berman, *The Lost Years*, 17.

³¹ Davis argued in 1937 that modern art had to be more widely available: "the fight of democracy is a fight for more art, not less." Saab, *For the Millions*, 24; As Senie and Saab explain, most of the WPA's visible commission-specific works were executed in social realist or regionalist styles. Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture*, 9–11; Saab, *For the Millions*, 29.

³² Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture*, 11.

the FAP's easel section had almost complete freedom to choose their own subject matter and style; however, the artists working in the mural division did not enjoy the same level of freedom perhaps because monumental murals were much more likely to be seen by large audiences than easel paintings, which could be installed in inconspicuous places.³³ Most likely, the mural sponsors were reluctant to have the works executed in avant-garde styles like abstraction, dada, or surrealism because they were more difficult to understand than the more conventional styles for the average American.³⁴ There was a widespread feeling that a work of art whose content was beyond the comprehension of the average person could not serve "the cause of the people."³⁵ In fact, the FAP called for an accessible aesthetic that employed aspects of the "American Scene."³⁶

Naturally, the exception to this rule occurred in New York City, where avant-garde artists painted more than 40 abstract, semi-abstract, and surrealist murals for a total of 20 percent of the total city output, a remarkable figure given that few galleries and museums accepted modern art at the time.³⁷ Outside of New York, only a handful of modern murals were executed, among them Karl Knath's semi-abstract murals in Falmouth, Massachusetts, and a few murals in Chicago and California.³⁸ The more progressive character of the New

³³ The WPA only stipulated that the projects had to be "useful" and realized in areas where unemployment was high. Saab, *For the Millions*, 15; Berman, *The Lost Years*, 22.

³⁴ For example, the artist Burgoyne Diller, head of the New York City FAP Mural Division recalled how unwilling patrons were to include abstract art in site-specific commissions because of all the extra work of "building up public sympathy and understanding." "Poverty, Politics and Artists: 1930-1945. The Artist Speaks: Part V," *Art in America* 53, no. 4 (September 1965): 96.

³⁵ Francis V. O'Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1973), 23.

³⁶ Arshile Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective* (Philadelphia; New Haven: Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2009), 83.

³⁷ Berman, *The Lost Years*, 136.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 136, 138.

York FAP provided avant-garde artists with an extraordinary opportunity: an audience, publicity, and a salary that was critical for them, since they had very little to no opportunities to show their art and be compensated for it.³⁹ Nevertheless, even in New York the majority of FAP art was not avant-garde.

Despite the great individual support that American modern artists such as Jackson Pollock or Davis received from the government during the 1930s and early 1940s, avant-garde art and architecture were still excluded from the most visible public commissions. The usual choice for important new complexes such as the Federal Triangle in Washington D.C. (1926-1947) continued to be conventional figurative art, Beaux-arts, and streamlined classicist architecture (fig. 6).⁴⁰ Conventional art styles were also the norm for privately funded developments such as the massive Rockefeller Center in New York City (1931-40), a project that shaped one of the city's most important public spaces.

The frequent selection of conventional art for important public works during the 1930s and early 1940s exacerbated the feeling of alienation of modern artists. Even avant-garde artists who received support from the federal government felt isolated from the public. For instance, Davis wrote frustrated in 1939: "...the powerful propaganda carried on by some critics and artists today for the cultural isolation of the American artist proves that the battle of the Armory Show has not yet been won, and that there are many who are willing to exploit cultural prejudices at the expense of progress..."⁴¹ During this period, the great majority of

³⁹ Ibid., 138–39.

⁴⁰ Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture*, 9–11.

⁴¹ Stuart Davis, "Abstract Painting Today," in O'Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions*, 121.

avant-garde art remained confined in museums and galleries dedicated to modern art or in private collections.

Still, several avant-garde artists considered that art had an essential social role to play in public space and embraced the opportunity to participate in such projects whenever it was available. Several modern artists felt that their work was “of its time” and that it served a social function; Davis actually wrote several articles on this subject.⁴² Even Léger, who was staying in the US on a foreign visa, wanted to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the FAP. In 1935, a group of artists led by Davis advocated for him before the FAP authorities, which resulted in Léger leading a team of young American artists, among them de Kooning, to design a vast mural environment for the pier of the French Line Shipping Company in New York Harbor; however, this project never materialized.⁴³

Sometimes artists who were very interested in shaping the human environment with their work were categorically excluded from the FAP and suffered constant rejection from other patrons. For example, despite his repeated efforts, Noguchi was rejected by the WAP in 1936.⁴⁴ The artist, who had been influenced by a few socially conscious artists he had met in New York — among them Arshile Gorky — felt that modern sculpture had become an elitist enterprise and sought to endow it with a social purpose: “Sculpture,” Noguchi asserted, “had become captive, like the other arts, to coterie points of view. There must be some larger,

⁴² Berman, *The Lost Years*, 57.

⁴³ Ibid., 42; “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 99; Carolyn Lanchner, “Fernand Léger: American Connections,” in *Fernand Léger*, by Fernand Léger et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 46. For more information on this collaborative endeavor refer to Chapter 2.

⁴⁴ Hayden Herrera, *Listening to Stone: The Art and Life of Isamu Noguchi* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 156.

more noble, and more essentially sculptural purpose to sculpture.”⁴⁵ Noguchi was convinced that art should serve humankind in other ways rather than pure aesthetic contemplation. His quest to make socially relevant abstract sculpture led him to create in 1933 *Play Mountain*, *Monument to the Plow*, and *Monument to Ben Franklin* (fig. 7).⁴⁶ Yet these visionary sculptural landscapes and sculptures were all rejected.⁴⁷ If they had been built, they would have constituted the most radical and earliest modern monuments. Although Noguchi’s thought fit the philosophy of the 1930s public art programs perfectly, his proposals were rejected because of their revolutionary nature and scale.

Even when avant-garde artists managed to insert their work in important public spaces and buildings, they usually faced great challenges. Such was the case with the ten mural panels on the theme of aviation that Gorky painted for the Administration Building of the Newark Airport between 1935 and 1937, which were among the first modern murals sponsored by the FAP (fig. 8).⁴⁸ Despite Gorky’s efforts to make his abstract murals accessible to the public by incorporating in them recognizable objects such as airscrews, a wheel, or wings, these murals faced strong opposition from the public and a few members of

⁴⁵ Isamu Noguchi, *Isamu Noguchi, a Sculptor’s World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), 30; Joan H. Pachner, “Noguchi, Isamu,” *Grove Art Online*, n.d.

⁴⁶ Noguchi, *Isamu Noguchi, a Sculptor’s World*, 21.

⁴⁷ These idealistic works remained unrealized except for *Monument to Ben Franklin*, which got built in Philadelphia in 1984. The New York City Parks Commissioner Robert Moses rejected *Play Mountain*, which Noguchi had designed for an empty block in New York City. Also, Noguchi could not get anyone to build *Monument to the Plow*, which he had envisioned for “somewhere in Oklahoma.” “Oral History Interview with Isamu Noguchi, 1973 Nov. 7-Dec. 26 - Oral Histories | Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution,” accessed May 28, 2015, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-isamu-noguchi-11906>. For a more detailed explanation of these pioneer projects for modern monuments refer to Chapter 2.

⁴⁸ The selection of Gorky’s work over a more conservative one by Eugene Chodorow had to do with Alfred Barr’s involvement; McMahon submitted both proposals to Barr for his opinion and he recommended Gorky’s work. Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky*, 75, 81–82.

the City of Newark Art Commission.⁴⁹ Although they were finally approved, Gorky's victory was short-lived: the panels were either painted over or destroyed in the 1940s during a building renovation.⁵⁰ Gorky's murals and his work of the 1930s were also forgotten in art history. These were considered a "low point" in his career, while his 1940s work, dominated by aspects of Surrealism, was critically acclaimed and Gorky was positioned as an "umbilical cord" between European Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism.⁵¹

Likewise, during the 1930s and early 1940s the outlook for avant-garde architects interested in participating in emblematic public commissions in the US looked grim. Despite the fact that modern architecture had begun to gain ground in the early 1930s in private commissions, there were almost no modern civic buildings. In fact, the catalogue of the 1932 MoMA exhibition "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition" (February 9 - March 23, 1932), written by the champions of the International Style, the architect Philip Johnson and the architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock, featured mostly European private residences or multifamily housing, as well as a few department stores, industrial, and office buildings.⁵² The same can be deducted from Giedion's article "The Status of Contemporary Architecture" (1934).⁵³ It is worth repeating here that in the US, significant public buildings such as the Federal Triangle in Washington, D.C. or the Rockefeller Center in New York

⁴⁹ Gorky incorporated in his murals these elements so that he could convey to the public a "new vision of our time" without resorting to the ubiquitous realistic styles. Ibid., 83, 89; "Poverty, Politics and Artists," 99.

⁵⁰ Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky*, 89; "Poverty, Politics and Artists," 99.

⁵¹ Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky*, 75.

⁵² In this catalogue, Johnson and Hitchcock described this new "style" as one in which functionalism and logic ruled the architectural organization of spaces and volumes, modern construction technologies and materials were utilized throughout and were frankly expressed, space was free-flowing in accordance to the new constructive techniques, and there was an overall preference for compositional simplicity as well as no applied ornamentation. Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* (New York: Norton, 1932).

⁵³ Sigfried Giedion, "The Status of Contemporary Architecture; with Portfolio of Examples from Nine Countries," *Architectural Record* 75 (May 1934): 378–446.

continued had been built in conventional styles. Although this situation had started to change in the museum field at the end of the 1930s with the pioneer MoMA building designed by Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone (1939), most museums based on the modern aesthetic were not built until the 1950s and 1960s; for example, Mies van der Rohe built Cullinan Hall at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 1958.

The continued exclusion of modern art and architecture from significant public commissions was frustrating for progressive practitioners and thinkers such as Giedion, Léger, and Sert. Still, what was even more appalling to them was the fact that the US and the other “civilized” Western democratic governments were using the same kind of aesthetic expression that the Nazis and fascists were employing in Europe, a fact that the 1937 Paris World’s Fair had made obvious. Giedion, Léger, and Sert considered this situation untenable.

Moreover, Giedion, Léger, and Sert comprehended that one reason for the exclusion of avant-garde art and architecture from important public commissions was that governments and private patrons felt that challenging avant-garde art and stripped modern buildings were incapable of generating comprehensible monuments that people could identify with and stand for their cultural, religious, or political values. Modern architecture in the International Style had veered towards strict functionalism and nudity and was deprived of any sort of expressive or symbolic content. It was conceived as a self-sufficient entity that had very little to do with artistic expression and everything to do with the fulfillment of physical needs; in fact, thanks to the legacy of the Austrian-Czech architect Adolf Loos, any sort of decoration on building walls was considered almost immoral.⁵⁴ As a result, avant-garde art and

⁵⁴ The modernistic aversion to decoration was first expressed by the Austrian-Czechoslovak architect Adolf Loos in “Ornament and Crime” (1908). When Hannes Meyer took over the direction of the influential Bauhaus school in 1928, he took this position to an extreme with his manifesto “Building,” where he equated architecture

architecture had become detached from each other, a situation that many people considered unsatisfactory. In fact, it was this growing dissatisfaction about the excessive bareness of modern architecture that had motivated the 1937 Paris fair organizers to call for the integration of the arts at the fair.⁵⁵

In 1943, Giedion, Léger, and Sert, concluded that modern architecture desperately needed an injection of expressiveness if it wanted to compete with conventional styles and build the monuments of the future. After considering the successful experiences of modern artistic integration at the 1937 Paris fair, especially that of the inspiring Spanish Pavilion, Giedion, Léger, and Sert assumed that the integrationist approach would help modern artists and architects overcome the chronic isolation of their work from society: art would endow modern architecture with greater expressivity and architecture would endow modern art with a more defined social purpose. The futures of the architectural and artistic avant-gardes appeared to be linked: if modern architecture failed to secure the great public commissions, avant-garde art failed too. Neoclassical revivals called for Beaux-arts art; however, modern buildings would demand avant-garde art. When they wrote “Nine Points,” Léger, Giedion, and Sert triggered a wave of discussions that shaped the theory of the New Monumentality, which would motivate architects and artists to work together to produce some of the most idealistic and moving modern monuments of the 20th century.

to a biological process. See Ulrich Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970); Also see Hitchcock and Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922*, 73–74, where they stressed that “subordinate works of sculpture and painting” should remain independent identities and not be combined or merged with architecture.

⁵⁵ Catherine Blanton Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World’s Fair of 1937*, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), 59.

In Chapter 1, I discuss how the 1937 Paris World's Fair, on the eve of World War II, made monumentality a critical matter in intellectual circles, since it was inextricably linked to politics. At the fair, competing nations, notoriously Russia and Germany, aggressively exploited art and architecture to convey ideology and advance their political agendas. Although it seems contradictory to discuss monumentality with fair art and architecture, these nonetheless constituted valuable experiments that could be translated to the permanent urban environment; in fact, world's fairs frequently left cities permanent landmarks, as it happened with the *Exposition Universelle* of 1889 and the Eiffel Tower. In this chapter I also explain how the 1937 Paris fair helped to cement the idea that the integration of the arts was the most efficient strategy to create compelling monuments. I argue that, through an outstanding integration of avant-garde art and architecture, the Spanish Pavilion was the first incarnation of successful modern monumentality. The pavilion, which would become a model for the New Monumentality theory, challenged the prevalent notion that modern art and architecture were incapable of generating moving monumental expression — essentially disproving Mumford's idea that a modern monument was an oxymoron at its inception.

In Chapter 2, I deal with the New York milieu that fostered the development of the New Monumentality discourse. I argue that the integrationist projects and ideas of the 1930s had predisposed artists to think that modern art and society should be together: prominent art historians such as Meyer Schapiro promoted the idea of a social modern art; the FAP had been populating the city's urban spaces and public buildings with integrationist, monumental works of art and several avant-garde artists had participated in these projects; and finally, the influential MoMA intensively promoted the concept of the integration of the modern arts through exhibitions and endorsed the notion that modern art had an important political

function to fulfill. I also explain that Léger's presence in New York during the 1930s and during the war years was decisive to the formulation of the New Monumentality theory: Léger constituted a key link between the idea of collective art and modern monumentality, and his stance both influenced and was influenced by the American art world. I demonstrate that the New Monumentality was borne out of shared concerns and frustrations of the architectural and artistic avant-gardes. Out of the multidisciplinary conversations nurtured by the growing cosmopolitanism of New York, which summoned the avant-garde practitioners fleeing from Nazi wrath, an interdisciplinary manifesto emerged. I discuss how Giedion, Léger, and Sert responded to the plight of avant-garde artists like Noguchi, who were very interested in shaping civic space and public life with their art, but who were constantly rejected by both the government and private patrons.

Finally, in my Conclusion I briefly trace the broad developments of the New Monumentality theory during the late 1940s, when it intensified in New York, and during the 1950s, when it engendered integrationist modern projects such as the UN Headquarters in New York or the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Though it remains understudied, the New Monumentality had a deep resonance in the art world. We can still hear the avant-garde's voice when the colored light coming through Léger's *Stained Glass Window* lights our way to the library at the Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas; when Rothko's murals at the chapel in Houston invite us to meditate; and when we gaze at Calder's *Spirale* moving in the wind against the silhouette of its predecessor, the Eiffel Tower in Paris (fig. 66).

Chapter 1

The Spanish Pavilion, the Integration of the Arts, and the Battle for Modern

Monumentality at the 1937 Paris World Fair

*Alberto, arbre de les voreres d'un riu, amb
un estel al cim.
Estel campany de Guernica, del pagés català en revolta
i del Montserrat de Juli González
De quam Alberto pastaba pans amb la farina
Pans que els pastors penjaven a la muntanya.*¹

(Alberto, tree of the banks of a river, with
a star on the summit.
Star of the campaign of Guernica, of the Catalan peasant in revolt
and of the Montserrat of Julio González
Of which Alberto kneaded loaves with flour
Loaves that shepherds hung on the mountain.)

Joan Miró's poem speaks about the kinship that united a few artists at the Spanish Pavilion of the 1937 Paris World's Fair. Miró's words reveal a nostalgic longing for his land and for a time when, moved by a feeling of patriotism, he and a few countrymen worked together on a modern *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a whole work of art.² With it, they hoped, the dreadful outcome of the Spanish civil war that they sensed was coming perhaps could be derailed. In the midst of a global economic crisis and ideological warfare that threatened to become an international conflict of catastrophic consequences, and jolted into action by the

¹ Words pronounced by Joan Miró in 1976, on the occasion of the exhibition of Alberto's work at the Galeria Layetana in Barcelona, reproduced in: Fernando Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español en la Exposición Universal de París en 1937* (Sevilla: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1983), 80.

² The term *Gesamtkunstwerk* was first used by composer Richard Wagner in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849) to describe his concept of a work of art for the stage based on the ideal of ancient Greek tragedy. In such work, all the individual arts would contribute under the direction of a single creative mind in order to express one overriding idea. The term is now applied retrospectively to projects in which several art forms are combined to achieve a unified effect, such as the Roman fora, Gothic cathedrals, or some Baroque churches and palaces. Ingrid Macmillan, "Gesamtkunstwerk," *Grove Art Online*, n.d.

bloody events of the raging Spanish Civil War, this group of artists and architects produced one of the first embodiments of modern monumentality. The Spanish Pavilion's success as a moving expression of collective thought and feeling was due, in great part, to an extraordinary integration of modern art and architecture. The pavilion was the peak of several experiments at the Paris Fair that sought to generate modern monumental expression through the integration of the arts. By working in these projects, avant-garde artists and architects defied the exhausted mantra that avant-garde art and architecture were incapable of generating meaningful monumental expression for the public. They provided a model for those who also considered it their duty to speak up for their beliefs and help shape public life.

The 1937 Paris World's Fair (May 24 – November 25, 1937) was an ideal site for artists and architects to test the theory that art and life should be integrated. It was located in a significant site in the heart of the city, where the most intense human activity unfolded among the city's most important monuments.³ The extensive fairgrounds run on both banks of the Seine River from the Grenelle Bridge and the Ile des Cygnes to the Place de la Concorde, and included the gardens of the Champs-Élysées and the Grand and Petite Palais.⁴ In addition, there were three fair annexes distributed throughout the city: Kellerman, Porte Maillot, and Porte Saint Cloud.⁵ The fair's classicist, monumental urban design merged effortlessly with Haussmann's Paris (fig. 9). Jacques Gréber, the official architect of the fair, had created a harmonious compound based on the classical principles of symmetry and

³ Its site had taken a special significance for the Republic. After its first use in 1798 for an industrial fair, it became the location for all national celebrations and after 1867, the location of all international exhibitions held in the city. Catherine Blanton Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937*, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), 6, 9.

⁴ Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 16.

⁵ Ibid., 15.

perspective that utilized the preexisting gardens of Trocadéro as its main axis.⁶ The fair's urban design generally drew positive reviews and was regarded as an impressive spectacle.⁷

For many people, the monumental area surrounding the Trocadéro was the most memorable part of the fair, especially at night.⁸ The fair's grand central mall crossed over the Seine from the new Palais de Chaillot at the Trocadéro hill to the Champs de Mars on the other side. Arriving to the fair in the summer of 1937 from the Trocadéro, you would have been awed by the grandiose view of the promenade, with its show of hundreds of water jets springing from an immense reflecting pool at the center, framed by waving flags and national pavilions. You would have immediately sensed the dominance of the Russian and German hulks among the foreign lineup; yet it would seem to you that no other structure could really overpower the Eiffel Tower, centered on the mall beyond the river (fig. 10). This overture would have given you a clue of the great political theater that would be performed by a few stone, glass, and metal actors. If you turned around, the curving arms of the Palais de Chaillot would have welcomed you, although you might have felt just a tiny particle within this magnificent order of things. At night, you would have seen the *Fete of Light* designed by the architects Messrs, Baeudouin and Lods (fig. 11).⁹ Standing in front of the reflecting pool and

⁶ Ibid., 15–17.

⁷ An *Architectural Record* critic asserted that the whole fair was "...recognized as a startling and rather brilliant spectacle." "1937 International Exhibition; with Views and Plans," *Architectural Record* 82 (October 1937): 82.

⁸ In his review of the fair, the critic T. F. Hamlin wrote: "Finally, the memory returns again and again, as in the Exposition itself one's feet seem led inevitably back, to the Trocadero center at night, with the changing, delicate lights on the Eiffel Tower, the almost elemental power and grace of the multitudinous small jets, and the central torrential plunge of that vast fountain. There the spirit of all the best at the fair is incarnated. Clarity, power, delicacy, schooled but vivid and varied exuberance; these form the essence of the fair's contribution." T. F. Hamlin, "Paris 1937," *American Architect & Architecture* 151 (November 1937): 32.

⁹ The *Fete of Light* impressed the *Architectural Record* critic, who proclaimed that its architects had created "a grandiose spectacle visible from all points of the Exposition." He described this show as follows: "Sound effects and illumination were coordinated to produce a lighting composition. Fountains of water emerged

looking towards the Eiffel Tower, with all the building façades lit, the fountains coming alive with dancing light and water shows choreographed to music,¹⁰ and fireworks painting the sky, you would have been awed by the modern spectacle that the architectural historian and critic Henry-Russell Hitchcock compared to a surrealist landscape by Max Ernst.¹¹

The *Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques Appliqués à la Vie Moderne*, as the fair was called, was meant to promote the integration of art in modern life. The fair had been conceived as a reiteration of the successful 1925 Paris *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels*.¹² According to historian Robert W. Rydell, this event had helped to focus attention on the emerging modern architecture through machine-age designs such as Konstantin Melnikov's Russian Pavilion; but it had also called attention to the relationship between modern art and architecture and how the former could also help to construct the human environment.¹³ The 1925 fair introduced Art Decó, a style that percolated into daily life by appearing in fashion, furniture, sculpture, glass, metal, ceramics, and bookbinding.¹⁴ The avant-garde also attempted this approach. In his Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau, the architect and painter Le Corbusier rejected any kind of artistic complement or decoration based on models from the past; his pavilion urged other artistic fields to join architecture in

directly from the river and from bases of bridges. Smoke was released and sent to considerable height for screens on which light in color was projected." "1937 International Exhibition," 82–83.

¹⁰ This music was composed for the occasion by Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, and other prominent French composers; Shanny Peer, *France on Display: Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World's Fair* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 44.

¹¹ In his review of the fair, Hitchcock wrote: "...the real splendor of the exposition is the fireworks designed by the architect Beaudouin... The fireworks bathe the tower in a bouquet of rockets, like some surrealist landscape by Max Ernst, in a way the photograph can hardly suggest." Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," *Architectural Forum* 67 (September 1937): 160.

¹² Peer, *France on Display*, 23.

¹³ Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 67.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

the quest of constructing a new aesthetic — one that could produce a habitable work of modern art. Integral to his pavilion design were pieces of modern furniture and works of avant-garde art by himself and Amédée Ozenfant, with whom he had founded Purism, and cubist works by Fernand Léger, Juan Gris, and Jacques Lipchitz.¹⁵ Le Corbusier would play a fundamental role in the development of the New Monumentality theory, since he was closely associated with its proponents and exercised a great influence on them. Following this precedent, the 1937 fair planners declared that this exposition would bring together the “original creations of artisans, artists, and industrialists” and would attempt to “show that attention paid to art in the details of everyday life can make one’s existence more pleasant, regardless of one’s social condition.”¹⁶ Their idea was to demonstrate that art could improve human existence by shaping all objects and aspects of the human environment. This was a similar notion to the one that John Dewey, Lewis Mumford, Holger Cahill, and Alfred Barr were trying out in the US with the Federal Art Project and some MoMA exhibitions.¹⁷

The Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris fair generated moving collective expression through an outstanding integration of the arts. Yet, this concept was not unique to the Spanish Pavilion; as art historian and curator Josefina Alix Trueba explains, it was one of the fair’s central ideas.¹⁸ It was the fair planners, among them Gréber and Edmond Labbé, the Commissar General of the Fair, who initially called for artistic integration; although they

¹⁵ Fernand Léger, *Functions of Painting* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), xxiv; Judi Freeman and John Musgrove, “Purism,” *Grove Art Online*, n.d.

¹⁶ *Exposition Internationale de Paris 1937. Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne. Programme, Classification, Règlement Général, Règlement de Participation pur la Section Française* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1937), Vol. 1, Annex, p. 300; translated and quoted in: Peer, *France on Display*, 26.

¹⁷ The ways in which this conviction was carried out in the US have been outlined in the Introduction of this thesis.

¹⁸ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 18.

never made an official request, their remarks carried a similar weight in effect, especially for the French.¹⁹ A number of national and privately funded pavilions adopted this strategy, also employed in the free space that surrounded the pavilions: freestanding sculptures were distributed along walkways and terraces, and exterior walls were decorated with murals or photomontages.²⁰ Even useful objects were aestheticized and presented as art. For example, a gigantic propeller was displayed in front of the Marine Building as if it were a sculpture.²¹ The integration of the arts strategy followed a similar logic to that of the Federal Art Project. It was adopted to give work to artists and artisans in a time of deep economic recession; fair authorities were responding to pressures from some artists' unions.²² Alix Trueba explains that these artists began to reflect seriously on the role that they should play in society and the meaning and value of their work; to question the traditional meaning of the work of art as a singular piece and the artist as a privileged, divinely-inspired being; and to leave aside easel painting for collective art with an emphasis on mural painting.²³

One of these artists was Léger, who participated actively in the 1937 fair and who would become one of the authors of "Nine Points on Monumentality" (1943), a multidisciplinary manifesto that formally connected the idea of the New Monumentality with the integration of the modern arts for the first time. As art historian Edward F. Fry argues, Léger was the "most public artist of his time" because of his insistence on the social function

¹⁹ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 59–60, 107; Paul F. Norton, "World's Fairs in the 1930s," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 24, no. 1 (March 1, 1965): 28, doi:10.2307/988276.

²⁰ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 60.

²¹ "1937 International Exhibition," 87.

²² These organizations were the Union of Modern Artists (UAM), the Corporative Union of French Artists, and the Sindical Confederation of Modern Artists Decorators (CSADM). Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 18.

²³ *Ibid.*

of art and the need to communicate to the masses through any means.²⁴ During the 1920s, Léger dramatically shifted his early inclination to formalism and purity of media to the integration of art and architecture and the return of painting to great subjects.²⁵ He thought that art should be put to the service of all men, not only the privileged.²⁶ In the essay “The Spectacle: Light, Color, Moving Image, Object-Spectacle” (1924), he proposed that art be used to help mitigate the anxieties posed by modern urban existence: “...that vast spectacle [the metropolis]... is badly orchestrated; in fact, not orchestrated at all. The intensity of the street shatters our nerves and drives us crazy... Let’s tackle the problem in all its scope. Let’s organize the exterior spectacle.”²⁷ For him, the solution was to create “polychromed architecture.” Léger concluded that art had an essential role to play in society: “Color and light,” he asserted, “have a social function, an essential function.”²⁸ These words sum up his idea that art had a larger purpose than mere aesthetic contemplation.

During the 1930s, Léger concluded that the most productive way to put art to the service of humanity was through collaboration with architects, creating murals or compositions that integrated with the overall architectural scheme, or using his knowledge of color in relation to architectural or urban space.²⁹ Giedion, who would get to know Léger very well during the artist’s exile in the US, recalled how he exclaimed “*Donnez-moi des*

²⁴ Fry, in the introduction to Léger, *Functions of Painting*, xix–xx.

²⁵ In his essays of 1913 and 1914, Léger stressed the formal, visual qualities in painting and their priority over subject matter. He was probably the first to formulate the principle that “Each art is isolating itself and limiting itself to its own domain” (1913). However, by 1945 Léger had concluded that abstract art had reached the end of its development except for its use as mural decoration or as pure color in architecture (In: “The Human Body Considered as an Object”). In the essay “Mural Painting” (1952), he declared that it was normal and logical for easel painting to return to “great subjects.” Ibid., xxiii–xxiv.

²⁶ Ibid., xxi.

²⁷ Ibid., 46.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., xxvi.

murs!” (Give me the walls!) over and over again.³⁰ On the occasion of the 1937 fair he proposed *Paris Completely White*: “I asked for 300,000 unemployed to clean and scrub the façades. Create a white and luminous city – in the evening the Eiffel Tower, like an orchestra leader, playing the most powerful projectors in the world upon the streets (airplanes could have cooperated in creating this new fairyland!) Loudspeakers would diffuse melodious music in key with this new colored world...”³¹ However, his idea, which would have turned the whole city into a *Gesamtkunstwerk* where entire buildings and urban spaces acted as canvases for Léger to “paint” to the sound of music, was never realized.

Léger’s interest in murals and his concern for the role of painting in architecture were probably influenced by his exposure to the ideas of De Stijl.³² His close association with Le Corbusier might have played an important role as well. His increasing involvement with architecture began with his 1925 collaboration with Le Corbusier in the Pavillon de l’Esprit Nouveau.³³ Léger subscribed in part to Le Corbusier and Ozenfant’s ideas of Purism, sharing their interest in the machine aesthetic; he contributed regularly to their journal *L’Esprit Nouveau*.³⁴ His relationship with Le Corbusier grew stronger; in 1933, he traveled with him to Greece to lecture in the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM 4). According to the architectural historian Joan Ockman, although the idea of the synthesis of the “major” arts (architecture, painting, and sculpture) might have been always implicit in Le

³⁰ Sigfried Giedion, *Architecture, You and Me: The Diary of a Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 53, 55.

³¹ Léger’s recollection of this proposal is included in “Modern Architecture and Color” (1946). Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 152–53.

³² Léger must have seen their work at his dealer’s Galerie de l’Effort Moderne in 1923. Judi Freeman, “Léger, Fernand,” *Grove Art Online*, n.d.

³³ Léger, *Functions of Painting*, xxvi.

³⁴ Léger had met Le Corbusier and Ozenfant in 1920. Ian Chilvers, “Léger, Fernand,” ed. Hugh Brigstocke, *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*, n.d.; Freeman, “Léger, Fernand.”

Corbusier's work, it was Léger, speaking in this congress, who first broached this subject directly; Le Corbusier would begin to develop his idea of synthesis after World War II.³⁵

In the CIAM 4 talk, which was published in French in the magazine *Quadrante* in 1933, Léger warned architects of the excessive purity of modern architecture: "The modern architect ...*has gone too far*, in his magnificent attempts to cleanse through emptiness."³⁶ He felt that the sleek modern architecture was too individualistic and elitist, and argued that the common man would feel lost in it: "It is a modern minotaur ...who rears up before the little modern fellow, who has hardly gotten over his knick-knacks and frills, and thinks of them all the time. 'Nature abhors a vacuum.' The average man is lost in front of a large dead surface."³⁷ A solution for this problem, Léger believed, lay in the reintegration of art and architecture: "In the past, pictorial art was closely bound up with architecture — mosaics, frescoes. The painter-artist submitted to architectural limitations. This was the *great* order in antiquity, which I hope to see revived."³⁸ Léger recognized that easel painting had given artists a great freedom and enabled them to achieve prodigious innovations; however, he felt that this medium, which was completely based on individualism — and he also implied, was

³⁵ Joan Ockman, *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation / Rizzoli, 1993), 65; Christopher E. M. Pearson, *Designing UNESCO: Art, Architecture and International Politics at Mid-Century* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 74.

³⁶ Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 94; This lecture, delivered on August 9, 1933, was later translated and published as "The Wall, the Architect, the Painter" in *Functions of Painting* (1973). In this book it is described as previously unpublished; however, it was published in French as "Discours aux architectes" in *Quadrante* (Milan) 11 no. 5 (September 1933): 44-47; see note 134 in: Carolyn Lanchner, "Fernand Léger: American Connections," in *Fernand Léger*, by Fernand Léger et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 68; Ockman, *Architecture Culture*, 65.

³⁷ Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 95.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

kind of selfish — had taken over contemporary painting completely.³⁹ Instead, he was interested in producing collective art, as it had been done in the past. Léger thought that the great “masterpieces” of collective art were monuments of the past such as public buildings or cathedrals.⁴⁰ Léger’s 1933 CIAM talk prefigured “Nine Points,” the essay that would trigger ten years later the New Monumentality discourse. Léger saw in modern architecture a partner with which art could become “collective,” or socially relevant, once more.

The early 1930s had been a period of frustration for Léger; although his reputation was already established, he was always short on money and could not find enough opportunities to satisfy his desire to make large-scale mural paintings.⁴¹ Several commissions that would have awarded him this opportunity fell through during the 1930s, including a vast mural environment for the pier of the French Line Shipping Company in New York Harbor, which he did in collaboration with Willem de Kooning and other young US-based artists.⁴² However, he periodically worked on the decoration of smaller architectural surfaces and spaces, usually in collaboration with Le Corbusier.⁴³ Léger finally got his chance to execute some of his ambitious ideas in the 1937 fair, where he was involved in large-scale projects in

³⁹ In this essay, Léger wrote: “It was the advent of individualism that imposed this form on us. To have the picture you like for yourself, in your house; to put together individual collections, that’s where we are.” Ibid.

⁴⁰ Léger wrote: “The simplified and rational architecture that is going to conquer the world must serve as a possibility for reviving this collective art that created immortal masterpieces before the Renaissance.” Ibid., 94.

⁴¹ Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 38.

⁴² For a detailed explanation of this collaborative project refer to Chapter 2.

⁴³ In 1934, Le Corbusier and Léger traveled to Burgundy to plan a mural for the courtyard of the architect Jean Badovici’s house, which the artist executed in 1936. Léger also created murals for architectural interiors designed by members of the Union des Artistes Modernes (UAM). In 1935, he created two paintings, one of them a large canvas, for the prototypical “young man’s home” at the *Exposition Universelle et Internationale* in Brussels. The same year, he collaborated again with Le Corbusier and created two works for the exhibition *Les Arts dits Primitifs dans la Maison d’Aujourd’hui*, presented in the architect’s apartment and studio by the publisher and art dealer Louis Carré. One of these works created a dialogue with a sculpture by Le Corbusier. Matthew Affron, “Léger’s Modernism: Subjects and Objects,” in *Fernand Léger*, by Fernand Léger et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art : Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 135–36; In 1934, Le Corbusier and Léger hoped to create a house for the dancer and choreographer Léonide Massine, but this project fell through. Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 39–40.

five pavilions.⁴⁴ Art historian Matthew Affron explains that during this period Léger was trying to align his work with the ruling leftist movement Front Populaire; however, his fair works demonstrated his refusal to submit to social realism, the style that this party favored, and his confidence in the imaginative competence of the public.⁴⁵

In the 1937 fair, Léger worked again with Robert Mallet-Stevens, one of France's leading modern architects, with whom he had collaborated in the 1925 Paris fair.⁴⁶ In 1937, Léger created *Le Syndicalisme Ouvrier*, a vertical mural for the main hall of Mallet-Stevens' Pavillon de la Solidarité Nationale. This work hung among eleven works by other artists, among them Raoul Dufy.⁴⁷ In contrast to these other works, which conveyed their themes through figural vignettes, Leger's panel presented objects related to the theme of organized labor that worked in a symbolic way, almost like union logos: hammers, rope, shovels, and a medallion inscribed with human figures.⁴⁸ Léger created other murals for the 1937 fair. For the Union des Artistes Modernes Pavilion, he collaborated with Albert Gleizes and Léopold Survage to produce the mural *Accompagnement d'Architecture*, a wall-sized band of interconnected shapes against a continuous background.⁴⁹ In addition, he painted the mural *Le Transport des Forces* for the railroad exhibition at the Palais de la Découverte, which

⁴⁴ Affron, "Léger's Modernism," 140.

⁴⁵ Léger's abstract style placed him at the center of controversy among the Front Populaire members. The writer Louis Aragon, who challenged modern painters to abandon aesthetic autonomy for documentary realism and to depict the great social themes of the day, attacked Léger for failing to work in this way. In "The New Realism Goes On" (1936), Léger responded to these attacks by saying that a representational art of popular subjects would never do justice to the people. Ibid., 122, 139–40; In this essay Léger said: "To want to say to these men 'the modern is not for you, it's an art for the rich bourgeois,' is monstrous." Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 115.

⁴⁶ Léger had produced murals and exhibited easel paintings in the 1925 Pavillon de Tourisme by Mallet-Stevens, along with other works by Robert Delaunay. Freeman, "Léger, Fernand."

⁴⁷ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 62, 114.

⁴⁸ Affron, "Léger's Modernism," 141.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

integrated effortlessly with the palace (fig. 12).⁵⁰ This monumental canvas, executed by three of his students, depicted a green mountainous environment intersected by a rainbow and waterfall and framed by the structure of a power installation. It was an allegory of the force of nature, represented by the waterfall, working in harmony with the force of technology, represented by the industrial plant.⁵¹ In all these works Léger experimented with formal elements that would enable him to create monumental collective expression: large-scale format, strong color contrasts, and juxtaposed symbolic elements in a collage-like organization that could evoke meaning without resorting to the literalism of realist art.

In two other collaborative projects at the 1937 fair, Léger experimented with the novel technique of photomontage to produce ideologically charged murals, a technique that was heavily used at the fair for propagandistic aims and intelligently exploited at the Spanish Pavilion by the artist Josep Renau.⁵² However, Léger's work differentiated from these other photomurals and posters in that it merged painting and photography. Affron argues that by merging painting and photography, Léger explored the limit of his thought on modern art's political power.⁵³ One of these projects came through Charlotte Perriand, an architect and

⁵⁰ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 19.

⁵¹ Affron, "Léger's Modernism," 142.

⁵² Large-scale photomontage was a novel technique that was widely used at the Paris 1937 fair; it was frequently employed with strong ideological overtones and was linked to propagandistic aims. Peer explains that the lines between pedagogy, publicity, and propaganda blurred at the fair, where nationalist ideologues and advertisers exploited similar methods to attract the public. The critic Lucien Rebatet noted that at the fair everyone imitated the "arsenal developed by the clever and cynical agents of Soviet propaganda... Graphics, slogans, montages and enormous photo enlargements became the obsession in 1937." However, he criticized how these techniques were "applied systematically and uniformly" and therefore lost all their effect: "By assaulting the visitor repeatedly, they end up knocking him out." Peer, *France on Display*, 48–49; In contrast, when these techniques were used soberly and artistically, they could yield outstanding effects; such was the case at the Spanish Pavilion, as noted by the art critic Gisele Freund. She considered that many times the employment of this technique was dangerous when it suggested too many ideas; however, the photomontages at the Spanish Pavilion were good because they were simple, clear, and had a central theme. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 129–30.

⁵³ Affron, "Léger's Modernism," 141.

furniture designer that had been charged with organizing photomural installations for an outdoor annex to the exposition's Centre Rural.⁵⁴ For this project, Léger executed three panels; the largest, showing a landscape populated with numerous figures, depicted the theme of the countryside as an environment for both contemporary and traditional leisure.⁵⁵ With this mural, Léger promoted one of the Front Populaire's central reforms: holidays for the working class.⁵⁶ The other project was the supervision of a few murals for Le Corbusier and Jeanneret's Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux.⁵⁷ He is individually credited for *Travailler*, a panel in which he depicted a worker operating an industrial motor, surrounded by a floating array of elements from industry: a propeller, an electrical pylon, a set of high-tension insulators, and other artifacts (fig. 13).⁵⁸ In this mural Léger emphasized the benefits of modern technology harnessed to human control.⁵⁹ Since Léger was very active at the 1937 fair and knew many of the avant-garde artists working there, it is safe to assume that he examined carefully the work of his colleagues. He collaborated with Le Corbusier, and it is known that he visited the Spanish Pavilion.⁶⁰ Léger's experience at the 1937 fair must have been very significant for him, not only because it finally granted him several opportunities to try out his theories on collective art and modern artistic integration, but also because he witnessed other outstanding experiments in this regard.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 143.

⁵⁵ The landscape was populated by a hunting dog, women in Breton dresses, a musician, football players, a fisherman, and two children reading. Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 144.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Barbara McCloskey, *Artists of World War II* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), 28.

⁶⁰ Calder recalled Léger's presence at the Spanish Pavilion: "*Léger was there and said to me: 'Dans le temps tu étais le Roi du Fil de Fer, mais maintenant tu es le Père Mercure.'*" (In the old days you were the Wire King, now you are Father Mercury)." Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 796–97.

One of this collaborative experiments was Dufy's impressive mural *La Fée Electricité* (The Electricity Fairy) on a concave wall in the main hall of Mallet-Stevens Palais de la Lumière et de l'Electricité. In this gigantic mural, he blended mythology and allegory with historical fact and technological description; he narrated the story of the electricity fairy based on *De Rerum Natura* by Lucretius and illustrated the history and applications of electricity.⁶¹ Other interesting experiments were done at the Palais de l'Air (Air Pavilion) and the Pavillon des Chemins de Fer (Rail Pavilion). The architects of these buildings, Alfred Adoul, Jack Gérodias, and René Hartwig, considered from the outset the participation of artists and attempted to provide suitable spaces for their work.⁶² Likewise, a team of artists led by Robert Delauney that included his wife Sonia and Albert Gleizes, among others, tried to match the form and content of their work to the intentions of both buildings.⁶³ They used a colorful array of abstractions based on circular geometry that recalled working gears or clocks. With these forms, they alluded to the speed and precision of transportation.⁶⁴ Robert inserted paintings and bas-reliefs between the monumental pillars that supported the volumes of the Rail Pavilion, both inside and outside of the building (fig. 14). In its upper and lower halls, Sonia, Herbin, Survages, and Metzinger created enormous murals that covered entire walls. In the grand main hall of the Air Pavilion, which looked from the outside like a transparent aerodynamic turbine, Robert created the futuristic *Hélice et Rhythme*, a floating spiral walkway that was a three-dimensional rendering of his abstract paintings. At the

⁶¹ Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, "The Electricity Fairy / Raoul Dufy," *Museum*, accessed July 12, 2015, <http://www.mam.paris.fr/en/oeuvre/electricity-fairy>.

⁶² Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 65.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

ground level, murals by Sonia and Felix Aublet surrounded the visitor. These ensembles derived from Robert's conviction that abstract art suited the demands of mural painting.⁶⁵

Not all experimentations with the integration of the arts were avant-garde. For example, Henry-Russell Hitchcock considered that the classicizing Italian Pavilion by Marcello Piacentini was very successful in its integration of the arts. He declared that this pavilion "easily" excelled among other conventional buildings "by excellence of the cooperating architectural and artistic talent."⁶⁶ Piacentini's pavilion, which stood across the river from the German Pavilion, was somewhat more receptive of modern architecture and less aggressive than its German and Russian counterparts; it displayed a stripped classicism that merged renaissance and classical forms with modern rationalist forms.⁶⁷ However, like them it conveyed a particular ideological posture through its architectural and artistic expression. A triumphant sculpture of a soldier mounted on a horse, which represented the *génie fasciste* greeted visitors in front of the pavilion's tower.⁶⁸ This tower, whose main body displayed a rationalist design, was nonetheless composed in the classical order of base, body and top. Its imposing and heavy proportions were bizarrely crowned with a ring of sculptures of standing human figures that recalled pinnacles. The pavilion's classical elements seemed to legitimize the country's regime by recalling Italy's imperial past, while its rationalist elements aimed to project it to the future. Hitchcock was obviously impressed with the Italian pavilion and dedicated several paragraphs of his fair review to it. Although he criticized the academic conception of its architecture, he asserted that it had a certain dignity that should

⁶⁵ Ibid., 66, 119.

⁶⁶ Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," 160.

⁶⁷ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 45–46; Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 21.

⁶⁸ Peer, *France on Display*, 47.

not be underestimated.⁶⁹ Yet, he dismissed the exterior art of the building: "...the wonderful tower wall of dove gray glass mosaic is not wholly ruined by the sculpture which forms the focus."⁷⁰ For him, the successful artistic integration occurred inside, where the rationalist architect Giuseppe Pagano had handled the installations.⁷¹ Hitchcock felt that on the whole the Italian Pavilion had achieved a high-quality artistic integration similar to that of the Spanish Pavilion:

There is much excellent installation in the Italian building by various artists and architects... The best section is perhaps that of the graphic arts arranged by Erberto Carboni, with its ingenious, if rather terrifying, use of successive color screenings of Mussolini's face as a symbol of the four color process. The music room with ceiling and wall panel by Massimo Campigli is another example, along with the dining room murals by Severini, of the intelligent way in which Italians have used their world known artists. In this they are only rivaled at the exposition by the Spanish, who have murals by Picasso and Miro, sculpture by Picasso and Sanchez and a fountain of mercury by the American Alexander Calder.⁷²

It is interesting that despite their strikingly different styles — the Spanish Pavilion was patently modern — Hitchcock found that there was a conceptual affinity between them and felt compelled to compare them. This affinity was their use of "political propaganda in terms of architecture and associated arts," which he believed found "its most effective

⁶⁹ Hitchcock wrote that Piacentini, an "academician" and "the dean of Fascist architects" had "scrapped his rather traditional forms to conform to the contemporary esthetic," but considered that he had failed to consider that the Eiffel Tower would completely dwarf his efforts. He concluded, "Although without much originality or real contemporaneity of feeling and wholly expressed in terms of permanent materials, the general effect is not lacking in dignity. The Italians certainly adapt the classical tradition to twentieth century taste far more thoroughly than do the French academic architects of the permanent museums..." Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," 164.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ McCloskey, *Artists of World War II*, 93.

⁷² Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," 165.

expression” in them.⁷³ He also evaluated the results achieved with dissimilar economic means and artistic talent:

For it is most interesting to compare what the Spanish have done with very little money and the finest artistic talent, with what the Italians have done in their Hall of Honor with (apparently) all the money in the world, and with artistic talent inferior for all its ingenuity to the really distinguished and quite contemporary architectural ability of Giuseppe Pagano. The “Thermolux” window by Beppe Guzzi, after Nino Strada’s design, is an interesting idea technically and Mario Sironi’s enormous suspended mosaic is certainly handsome and startling for all its super-Campigli Early Christian character, while the black terra cotta heads of Mussolini and Victor Emmanuel are both surprisingly discreet and admirably placed. But beside the murals of Picasso and Miro in the Spanish pavilion, and the surrealist sculpture of Sanchez and the mobile mercury fountain of Calder, their associated works of art appear rather conventional and flat.⁷⁴

In the end, the critic felt that despite the successful integration achieved by the Italians and their greater expenditure of money, the works of art there were eclipsed by the artistic superiority of the avant-garde Spanish. Yet, like other non-avant-garde experiences of artistic integration at the fair, the “imperfect” Italian Pavilion served to motivate artists like Constantino Nivola, who also contributed with murals, to pursue this kind of endeavor in the postwar period.⁷⁵

The fair organizers had another motivation to call for the integration of the arts at the 1937 fair: They were trying to address a growing dissatisfaction with what was viewed as excessive bareness in modern architecture.⁷⁶ Labbé declared that a jumble of lines and “nude” shots was as “dangerous” as the worst excesses of unbridled decor of the 19th century

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The Italian Constantino Nivola would collaborate with Sert and several other modern architects a few years later in the US. “Guggenheim,” accessed July 9, 2015, http://www.guggenheim-venice.it/inglese/collections/artisti/biografia.php?id_art=159.

⁷⁶ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 60.

and emphasized that the fair was a reaction against this excessive bareness; he added that the architects and collaborators of the fair commission invited participants to reserve an important place to “decoration.”⁷⁷ In the early decades of the 20th century, avant-garde architecture had veered toward a strict functionalism in reaction to the decorative excesses of eclectic architecture and Art Nouveau. Thanks to the influential Austrian-Czechoslovak architect and theorist Adolf Loos, ornamentation and any sort of artistic content embedded in architecture began to be regarded as wasteful and degenerate, incompatible with the modern industrialized times, or a mere instrument of manipulation utilized by undemocratic authorities.⁷⁸ Within the functionalist philosophy, architecture was conceived as an independent, self-sufficient entity that did not need to rely on art or any subjective artistic content at all; its sole purpose was the fulfillment of physical needs. When the functionalists led by Hannes Meyer took over the influential German Bauhaus School in 1928, this trend began to dominate the avant-garde.⁷⁹ The Bauhaus ended up contributing to the dissemination of the functionalist doctrine even though paradoxically, one of the school’s foundational

⁷⁷ Edmond Labbé made the following remarks in the Preface to Favier, Jean, *L’Architecture. Exposition Internationale, Paris 1937*, Vol. I (Paris, 1938), n.p.: “*L’exposition des Arts décoratifs and industriels de 1925 avait été féconde en enseignements... il est apparu du magnifique effort qui a été réalisé par cette grand manifestation artistique que le fatras des lignes et des plans nus est aussi dangereux que les pires excès de décor déchainé au XIXe siècle, et bien avant... L’Exposition [of 1937] s’est efforcée de réagir contre un nudisme architectural devenu excessif. Tous les architectes et collaborateurs du Commissariat général ont été invités à réserver une place importante à la décoration.*” Ibid., 59–60; In the official magazine of the fair, Labbé remarked: “I am sure they [the people] will enjoy the poetry of its decorations – which has come off victorious in a duel with the integral nudism of recent architecture...” Norton, “World’s Fairs,” 28.

⁷⁸ In “Ornament and Crime” (1908), Adolf Loos had equated the application of art on building walls by cultivated modern men to a degenerate act and derided it as wasteful and a form of “craft slavery.” Ulrich Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), 19–24; In “Architecture” (1910), Loos took this notion even further by declaring that “Only a very small part of architecture belongs to art: the tomb and the monument. Everything else, everything that serves a purpose, should be excluded from the realms of art.” Adolf Loos, “Architektur” (1910), quoted in: Ockman, *Architecture Culture*, 24.

⁷⁹ In his program for the school “Building” (1928), Meyer took the functionalist position to an extreme by arguing that “all things in this world are a product of the formula: (function times economy)” and that “building is a biological process, building is not an aesthetic process.” Hannes Meyer, “Building” (1928), reproduced in: Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes*, 117–20.

aims, as articulated by Walter Gropius in 1919, had been to “create the new structure of the future, which will embrace architecture and sculpture and painting in one unity.”⁸⁰

With functionalism dominating their minds, the architectural avant-garde had left aside issues like artistic expression or monumentality. The architectural historians Christiane C. and George R. Collins explain that the modern movement made such a point of breaking with historic styles and traditions that the achievement of monumentality was not even considered worthwhile.⁸¹ Perhaps this contributed to the failure of modern architects to secure commissions for important public buildings both in Europe and the US. There had been a number of important competitions that avant-garde architects lost to classicizing styles, such as the Chicago Tribune Competition (1922), the Geneva League of Nations Headquarters (1927), and the Palace of the Soviets in the USSR (1931).⁸² Hans Meyer and Hans Wittwer’s proposal for the League of Nations, which they claimed was a “scientific solution” that “symbolizes nothing,” failed to secure a commission.⁸³ Le Corbusier’s avant-garde proposal was also rejected. By contrast, the four finalist proposals recalled the stripped classicism of Russian social realism.⁸⁴ Similarly, the Palace of the Soviets competition received entries from the entire world, including proposals by Le Corbusier and Walter

⁸⁰ Walter Gropius, “Programme of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar” (1919), reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 49–53; Art historian Harriet F. Senie argues that true collaborations between architects and artists within the Bauhaus never really took place perhaps because Gropius’ actual involvement with painting and sculpture was slight and he never really specified how this integration would happen; Harriet Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation, and Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 63. In the end, even though the Bauhaus workshops did produce brilliant works of high and applied art that served to complement modern architecture, the public faces of its buildings were deprived from artistic expression, as evident from the exterior of the iconic Dessau Bauhaus building itself.

⁸¹ Christiane Crasemann Collins and George R. Collins, “Monumentality: A Critical Matter in Modern Architecture,” *The Harvard Architecture Review*, 1984, 15.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 17–18.

⁸³ Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 133–34.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 212–13.

Gropius. They lost to Boris M. Iofan's enormous neoclassical pylon, a building that rose up from a classical court and was topped by the gargantuan social realist statue of a worker; a figure that, as the architectural historian and critic Kenneth Frampton suggests, was a reference to the Statue of Liberty (fig. 15).⁸⁵

The selection of retrograde over avant-garde designs for emblematic buildings such as the League of Nations or the Palace of the Soviets demonstrates how the rejection of modern architecture in these commissions affected modern art: classicizing buildings called for classicizing art. This situation was highly obvious at the 1937 fair, where the most emblematic buildings, those that would become permanent landmarks in the city, the new Palais de Chaillot (fig. 9) and the Musée d'Art Moderne, were designed in stripped classicist style and were populated by conventional murals and sculptures (fig. 16).⁸⁶ By the 1930s, modern architects hoped to get civic buildings done in styles other than "fascist, Nazi, social realist, and Washington, D.C., classicism," and thus became concerned with the subject of monumentality and the city.⁸⁷ However, they were not making much progress. Perhaps this motivated them to start looking at ways in which they could make their buildings more palatable to commissioning authorities. One of them was by making them more expressive through the integration of the arts.

Meanwhile the rejection of avant-garde art and architecture in Europe was being spearheaded by the totalitarian regimes in Russia and Germany. The Communist Party in Russia had adopted Social Realism and classicist architecture after deciding that people

⁸⁵ Ibid., 213.

⁸⁶ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 17–18; The *Architectural Record* critic described this palace, considered the most important structure of the fair, as a "new shining white museum of semi-classic monumentality." "1937 International Exhibition," 81.

⁸⁷ Collins and Collins, "Monumentality," 17.

would be incapable of understanding and responding to the abstract aesthetics of Constructivism and Modern architecture.⁸⁸ The repudiation of the avant-garde in Russia after the revolution of 1917 had occurred after an initial period of intensive efflorescence during the first years of the 20th century, a phenomenon that was paralleled by the situation in Germany during the Third Reich.⁸⁹ Movements like Expressionism, Cubism, and Dada were often viewed as intellectual, elitist, and foreign by the demoralized post-World War I German public and linked to the economic crisis, which was blamed on an alleged international conspiracy of Communists and Jews, with which modern art was often associated.⁹⁰ After shutting down the Bauhaus School in 1933, the Nazis favored a weighty, colossal, streamlined Neoclassicism.⁹¹ In 1937, the Nazis mounted the *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition, which Stephanie Barron describes as “the most virulent attack ever mounted against modern art”.⁹² Meanwhile, in the Haus der Deutschen Kunst, they exhibited what they considered Germany’s finest art: that which followed the 19th-century Munich school and the “heroic” landscape of Romanticism.⁹³

Although the situation in France was not nearly as dark for avant-garde artists and architects interested in working in the public realm, the government continued to favor more

⁸⁸ Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, 204–14; David Britt, *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-Modernism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989), 199.

⁸⁹ Stephanie Barron et al., *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany* (Los Angeles, CA; New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; H.N. Abrams, 1991), 12.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹¹ David Jenkinson et al., “Germany, III: Painting and Graphic Arts,” *Grove Art Online*, n.d.

⁹² This exhibition displayed more than 650 important paintings, sculptures, prints, and books that had been confiscated from 32 public German museum collections with the purpose of clarifying for the public through defamation and derision what type of modern art was “un-German” and therefore unacceptable. The National Socialists rejected any kind of modern art that had existed in Germany prior to 1933, whether abstract or representational: from the expressionistic paintings of Die Brücke to the social criticism of Otto Dix, to the efforts of the Bauhaus to forge a new link between art and industry. Barron et al., *Degenerate Art*, 9.

⁹³ Jenkinson et al., “Germany, III: Painting and Graphic Arts.”

traditional styles for emblematic permanent projects. The avant-garde must have considered the 1937 Paris fair as an excellent opportunity to tilt the balance to their side; yet, in the fair, French officials gave only “equivocal support” to avant-garde art.⁹⁴ The government made a very conservative selection of artists for most of the official pavilion commissions.⁹⁵ There was an exhibition in the Petit Palais that included a few works of art by the avant-garde, among them the *Demoiselles d’Avignon*, exhibited publicly for the first time; but overall the show emphasized the work of realist artists.⁹⁶ In addition, the Prime Minister Léon Blum had to intervene before the fair commission to keep Le Corbusier’s pavilion and the abstract murals by the team led by Robert Delauney.⁹⁷

Alix Trueba explains that, as it had occurred in the 1925 fair, once more there was a battle between the “old” and the “new,” between the classicizing official architecture and the architecture of the avant-garde.⁹⁸ Although there were some very interesting avant-garde buildings at the fair, such as the Japanese Pavilion by Junzo Sakakura, the Finnish Pavilion by Alvar Aalto, or the French *Union des Artistes Modernes* pavilion by G.H. Pingusson, F. Ph. Jourdain, and A.J. Louis, most of the French official buildings were not avant-garde.⁹⁹ The new Palais de Chaillot by J. Carlu, L. A. Boileau, and L. Azéma, which replaced the old

⁹⁴ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 688.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁹⁶ The rooms where this avant-garde art was exhibited were by-passed on purpose by the officials in charge of president Albert Lebrun’s inaugural official visit to the fair. Ibid., 637–38, 689.

⁹⁷ Peer, *France on Display*, 37.

⁹⁸ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 17.

⁹⁹ The UAM building was not commissioned by the government but by a private group. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 50.

Trocadéro Palace, was designed in a stripped classicism.¹⁰⁰ The new *Musée d'Art Moderne*, also in this style, had little to do stylistically with the art that it housed (fig. 16).¹⁰¹ Hitchcock declared frustrated that the permanent buildings of the fair were “of no particular interest but merely characteristic examples of International, official architecture.”¹⁰² The architectural historian and curator Elizabeth B. Mock wrote: “One wishes that this exposition were going to leave as splendid a monument as the Eiffel Tower... the completely remodeled Trocadéro and a Museum of Modern Art... are pompous, heavily pretentious examples of the current Beaux-Arts version of modern architecture, and one almost regrets the loss of the old Trocadéro, which was at least amusing.”¹⁰³ Evidently, she found both the new Palais de Chaillot and the museum unworthy to become Parisian monuments.

Although the fair did give opportunities to avant-garde architects, they were excluded from the commissions for permanent buildings. Art historian Catherine B. Freedberg notes that Auguste Perret's Musée des Travaux Publics was commissioned as an afterthought and his designs for the Palais de Chaillot were not even considered.¹⁰⁴ Le Corbusier's Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux, designed with his partner Pierre Jeanneret, was the only one out of his

¹⁰⁰ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 17–18; The *Architectural Record* critic described this palace, considered the most important structure of the fair, as a “new shining white museum of semi-classic monumentality.” “1937 International Exhibition,” 81.

¹⁰¹ The commission for the new museum was the result of an open competition in which modern proposals by architects like Le Corbusier and Robert Mallet-Stevens were rejected in favor of the one presented by four young architects that had recently graduated from the École des Beaux Arts: J.C. Dondel, A. Aubert, P. Viard, and M. Dastuge. Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 18.

¹⁰² Yet, Hitchcock still believed that the museum was superior to the official architecture that was being built in Washington: “Since it is official architecture it should be compared with current government work in Washington, a comparison which proves distinctly to the advantage of the French, both for straightforwardness of conception and for simplicity and dignity of form within the classical tradition.” Hitchcock, “Paris 1937,” 159, 162.

¹⁰³ Elizabeth Bauer Mock, “Paris Exposition,” *Magazine of Art*, May 1937, 268.

¹⁰⁴ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 49.

seven proposals that was built.¹⁰⁵ Although Le Corbusier was finally able to build something for the fair, the pavilion by France's most famous architect was located in the faraway site of the Porte Maillot Annex.¹⁰⁶ When this pavilion, conceived initially as a museum of contemporary aesthetics that would bring together the work of the most prominent artists, sculptors, and painters, lost its assigned site because Le Corbusier was unable to secure private funding, the architects morphed it into a demountable pavilion: a "*machine à exposer*" that aimed to educate the public on CIAM's principles of urbanism.¹⁰⁷ However, Le Corbusier must have conserved some of his original idea; when he received a grant for the purchase of artwork, he enlisted other collaborators, among them Sert, Léger — who executed four murals, including the mentioned *Travailler* — and Miró, to infuse the pavilion's interior with color, lettering, and overall graphic effects.¹⁰⁸ Architectural historian Danilo Udovicki-Selb argues that this gave the pavilion's interior the stamp of Le

¹⁰⁵ Le Corbusier's first project was an attempt to build the entire exhibition on his own; the second and third projects were a giant housing slab and a skyscraper that aimed to establish building norms for new urban housing in Paris; the fourth project was a small apartment building; the fifth project was his proposal for the new museums of modern art, intended as permanent buildings of the exhibition; and the sixth project was a museum of contemporary art conceived as a square spiral of glass that he morphed later into the seventh project, his Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux. Danilo Udovicki-Selb, "Le Corbusier and the Paris Exhibition of 1937: The Temps Nouveaux Pavilion," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56, no. 1 (March 1, 1997): 42, doi:10.2307/991215.

¹⁰⁶ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 19; Udovicki-Selb, "Le Corbusier and the Paris Exhibition," 42–44. There is disagreement in scholarship about the fair leadership's attitude toward Le Corbusier's work. Udovicki-Selb argues that fair leaders went to great lengths to accommodate the architect's wishes, granting him a site and some funds to execute his Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux. He also explains that Jacques Gréber was supportive of his pavilion. However, the fact still remains that Le Corbusier failed to secure the commissions for the new museums of modern art that would become permanent buildings in the city, and that his other proposals were authorized only on the condition that he obtained private funding, which he was unable to secure. In any case, most critics at the time viewed the siting and magnitude of Le Corbusier's pavilion as a blatant rejection of avant-garde architecture.

¹⁰⁷ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 19. The pavilion unapologetically represented the ephemeral character of the commission: its modern steel structure looked like scaffolding and was covered by a canvas tied to the ground with exterior cables. On its different levels, connected by ramps, a didactic exhibition illustrated the principles of the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM)'s Athens Charter; Udovicki-Selb argues that Le Corbusier was more responsible for the program, or conceptual and spatial unfolding of the exhibits, than for the pavilion's actual architectural structure and detailing, which he attributes to Jeanneret. Udovicki-Selb, "Le Corbusier and the Paris Exhibition," 45, 51–52.

¹⁰⁸ Udovicki-Selb, "Le Corbusier and the Paris Exhibition," 52.

Corbusier's art more than his architecture.¹⁰⁹ In the end, critics felt that Le Corbusier had not been adequately represented at the fair and interpreted this as a rejection of modern architecture.¹¹⁰

The battle for their aesthetic positions was not the only one that artists and architects had to face at the fair: given the grim political and economic situation that surrounded the fair and the high visibility of this international event, it is not strange that many artists viewed their work there as an opportunity to transmit ideological thought. The situation in France was extremely tense. The country was experiencing a period of great economic and political instability; it had acquired a large debt as a result of World War I, and tensions with Germany escalated because of its debt to France.¹¹¹ French Studies expert Shanny Peer explains that economic depression, political destabilization, and the erosion of local consensus characterized this era of "mounting despair and divisiveness."¹¹² Between 1932 and 1934, five cabinets had lasted an average of less than twelve weeks each; and while right

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Hitchcock complained, "It is sad that the leading French architect, Le Corbusier, is barely represented at the Exposition. The Pavilion of New Times relegated to the annex at the Porte Maillot is no more than a great tent... Here, it is true, are ideas and ideas of the first order, but they seem singularly far from realization in France..." Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," 160; The critic Elizabeth B. Mock argued for the utilization of Le Corbusier's pavilion at the 1939 New York Fair: "This 'traveling exposition of popular education' is designed to instruct the public in the new possibilities of architecture and city planning by means of photographs, charts, models, and films. After the close of the exposition this twenty-three ton museum will tour provincial France. Why not bring it to New York for the 1939 exposition?" Mock, "Paris Exposition," 269, 273; The *Architectural Record* critic also emphasized the artist's exclusion: "Le Corbusier and a group of followers, excluded from participation in the design of exhibition buildings, created their own exposition by erecting a tent outside at Porte Maillot... The showing was not a pathetic one, as might be expected from such a protest. It was one of the most exciting, convincing, and most easily remembered exhibits of 1937 Paris." "1937 International Exhibition," 83.

¹¹¹ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 14.

¹¹² Peer, *France on Display*, 21.

wing leagues protested in the streets, engendering fears that fascism was brewing in France, socialists and communists joined forces to protest the right.¹¹³

Peer argues that the struggling Third Republic needed to redefine its national vision, both to counteract the competing ideologies and to rally French consensus in the face of the German military threat.¹¹⁴ French politicians regarded the Paris fair as an opportunity to achieve this goal. As Rydell explains, world's fairs were highly regarded by governing authorities as "larger-than-life metaphors" that could help people understand human experience unfolding in the 20th century.¹¹⁵ Governments and private businesses on both sides of the Atlantic spent lots of money in these events because they viewed fairs as a medium to buttress their own authority and direct ordinary citizens through a turbulent period.¹¹⁶ In addition, fairs were not just transitory, decorative spectacles; even though they usually lasted a few months, they had a deep impact on the lives of citizens long after they closed, leaving important institutions or infrastructure to the cities that hosted them and giving visible form and legitimacy to emerging aspects of culture.¹¹⁷ In the introduction to the official catalogue of the fair, Léon Blum, France's Prime Minister, expressed his hope that the fair would bring together the bitterly divided French and make them "more greatly

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 22.

¹¹⁵ Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 3, 5–6.

¹¹⁷ Rydell explains that many anthropological and commercial exhibits of American fairs found a permanent home in museums around the country after their "staff-and-plaster" buildings were demolished. Even entire museums owe their existence to fairs, such as the Philadelphia Commercial Museum, which permanently houses the "gospel of imperial abundance" that was displayed at the Chicago Columbian Exposition and posterior fairs; Ibid., 35.

aware of their profound unity and strength.”¹¹⁸ Peer argues that the fair was successful in helping to refashion a new national identity.¹¹⁹

Other nations’ leaders looked at the fair as an opportunity to advance their political agendas as well. The 1937 Paris fair was the last large-scale international event held in Europe before the outbreak of World War II.¹²⁰ The developments in France occurred in the midst of an increasingly volatile international context, where fascism and communism had emerged as the “unavoidable ideologies” in Europe.¹²¹ In the early 1930s, when the conferences for disarmament failed, the world prepared for an arms race, as the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany, and other organizations in Europe seemed unstoppable.¹²² Italy launched a battle against Ethiopia in 1935, Franco rebelled in Spain against the Republic in 1936, and Hitler rearmed Germany for the war he was planning to wage. As a result of this context, the 1937 exposition became a “propaganda battleground” and a site for the visualization of state ideology.¹²³ In addition, to many people, the fair appeared to be the last chance to avert war.¹²⁴ When the Republican-Socialist senator Tournan presented the project for the fair in 1932, he expressed the hope that this “international exposition of civilization”, besides highlighting achievements in science, arts, letters, and industry, would “promote the

¹¹⁸ Blum quoted in Peer, *France on Display*, 5–6.

¹¹⁹ Through its inclusion of pavilions that celebrated rural life, regionalism, and folklore besides the usual ones that boasted technological advances, like the Photo-Ciné-Phono pavilion or the Palais de l’Air, the fair organizers demonstrated how France could reconcile tradition and modernity by integrating new methods and technologies while still remaining specifically French. *Ibid.*, 1–2.

¹²⁰ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World’s Fair of 1937*, 2.

¹²¹ Peer, *France on Display*, 21–22.

¹²² Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 14.

¹²³ Peer, *France on Display*, 22.

¹²⁴ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 2–3.

peace-seeking goals of the League of Nations.”¹²⁵ On May 24, 1937, the *Christian Science Monitor* announced that the fair was dedicated to the “cause of universal peace.”¹²⁶ However, as usual in international exhibitions, in the 1937 Paris fair, countries asserted nationalistic interests while paying lip service to the cause of unity.¹²⁷

In sum, the high political stakes of this international event transformed it into a matter of state representation for all its participant countries. In a review after the fair closed, Jacques Morane noted that what was on display in Paris was primarily nations: “In 1900, foreign delegations had merely provided space and cover to the motley crowd of national exhibitors. This time, for the most part, they exposed not products, but nations...”¹²⁸ He felt that products were displayed with the principal goal of representing societies: “...objects were not included for their own sake, but as parts of a synthetic whole encompassing the economic, social and political activities of a people. Commercial publicity disappeared and was replaced by national propaganda.”¹²⁹ Morane astutely perceived that unlike the fairs of the past, in which commercial interests ruled, the 1937 Paris fair was run by state ideology.

Yet, these “national representations” were not necessarily accurate. The US Pavilion — which ironically Hitchcock considered among those that featured the “worst of conventional modernism”¹³⁰ — was intended to represent the nation as the prosperous

¹²⁵ Peer, *France on Display*, 23.

¹²⁶ A Staff Correspondent of *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Paris Fair Dedicated to Peace: Dazzling Sentinel of the Paris Fair,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (1908-Current File), May 24, 1937, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/news/docview/514322468/abstract/A6CEA380ECA744D7PQ/7?accountid=7107>.

¹²⁷ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 9.

¹²⁸ Jacques Morane quoted in: Peer, *France on Display*, 7.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Hitchcock, “Paris 1937,” 169.

epicenter of technology and modernity. Reaching 145 feet in height, this pavilion surpassed all others, including the German pavilion.¹³¹ Paul Lester Wiener, who would later become Sert's partner in the firm Town Planning Associates (TPA) in New York, explained that he and Charles Higgins had designed the pavilion as "...a symbol of the chief American contribution to modern architecture ...the skyscraper."¹³² In addition, as noted by an *Architectural Forum* critic, the pavilion integrated art that reminded its audience of the nation's colonial origins: the tower was decorated on its sides with Native American motifs (fig. 17).¹³³ Weiner explained, "Just as other foreign pavilions used the folk art of their countries as decoration... we chose Indian art, heritage of the first real Americans, to identify our pavilion."¹³⁴ However, Native American Indians did not create these motifs; instead they were made by Eduard "Buk" Ulreich, an Austrian-born artist who had worked for the Federal Art Project and was labeled by the *Architectural Record* critic a "recognized authority on Indian art."¹³⁵ Thus, while on the surface the pavilion advertised cultural inclusion, it really conveyed an exclusionary view: a white man's interpretation of "the Indian."¹³⁶ What the skyscraper and the "native" motifs really advertised was the success of a modern empire based on a current capitalist economy and built on a colonial past.

¹³¹ "The height of the building, 145 feet from the river's edge to the top of the tower, is the greatest in the foreign group – not excepting the German Pavilion." "U.S. Pavilion Carries Skyscraper Motif to Paris; P. L. Weiner, Designer," *Architectural Record* 82 (December 1937): 21–22.

¹³² Ibid., 20–21.

¹³³ "American Pavilion," *Architectural Forum* 66 (February 1937): 62.

¹³⁴ "U.S. Pavilion Carries Skyscraper Motif to Paris; P. L. Weiner, Designer," 22.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ This cultural "inclusion" was not very different from what Rydell defines as the "*coloniale moderne*": a "conjuncture of modernist architectural styles and representations of imperial policies that stressed the benefits of colonialism to colonizer and colonized alike," which was embodied in fair buildings such as the Mayan Temple of the Chicago Century of Progress Exhibition of 1933. Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 62.

There were other national pavilions that were less subtle than the US pavilion in their exploitation of art and architecture as vehicles for nationalist propaganda.¹³⁷ In a dispatch to *The New York Times* dated Jul 24, 1937, correspondent Anne O'Hare McCormick cleverly observed that nations were representing themselves differently than in the past: "If for no other reason, the Paris Fair is interesting as the first exposition of this new flaunting of political parties and symbols as distinct from nations in the old sense. Itself an enterprise of the French Popular Front, its most conspicuous foreign exhibitors are Sovietism, National Socialism and Fascism decidedly as such."¹³⁸ What was obviously displayed in these pavilions was the dominant political ideology of a nation, rather than its whole society and cultural heritage. McCormick concluded that the new element in the 1937 world's fair was that "For the first time so blatantly, the national pavilions are conceived and executed as 'national projections'."¹³⁹ Hitchcock agreed with her, juxtaposing the photographs of the symbolic exterior sculptures of the Russian, German, and Italian pavilions to illustrate her statement (fig. 18).¹⁴⁰ Hitchcock's compelling juxtaposition suggested that artistic expression was the element that carried the heaviest weight of the pavilions' political meanings.

Perhaps the most aggressive exploitation of artistic expression within the propagandistic race at the fair was that of Germany and Russia. The classicizing German and Russian pavilions would become icons of this strategy at the 1937 fair; photographs showing

¹³⁷ Peer explains that in the 1930s, the term "propaganda" was broader and less pejorative than it is today; it could refer to the propagation of a particular ideology or nationalist program or to the use of techniques, often borrowed from modern advertising, to promote a product or event like a world's fair; Peer, *France on Display*, 29.

¹³⁸ Anne O'Hare McCormick, "Europe: National Exhibitionism at the Paris Fair Temples of Propaganda National Projections," *New York Times*, July 24, 1937.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," 174.

their architectural and artistic face-off were reproduced incessantly thereafter (fig. 10). Writing about the German Pavilion, the critic Alexander Watt observed: “One instantly has the impression (as with the Russian, yet less with the Italian pavilion) that an innate desire for political propaganda has governed the whole construction and lay-out of the building.”¹⁴¹ In the context of the international political crisis, the enormous architectural massing of these pavilions, standing across from each other at the river’s edge on the main axis of the fair, left on their audience the impression that they were heroic warriors engaged in battle. A cartoon that appeared in the journal *Candide* on 15 July 1937 illustrated this in a comic way (fig. 19). Maurice Barret asserted in 1937 that visitors “...must have been gravely perturbed at the great pavilions of Germany and Russia, challenging one another for dominance over the scene just as the nations themselves were soon to challenge one another for dominance of the world, while the slim symbol of Peace, standing at the back of the hill, seemed to be virtually crowded out of the picture.”¹⁴² Ironically, it had been the unsuspecting French planners who selected the pavilions’ positioning, wishing for buildings that would form a gate to frame the Eiffel Tower, which was their own statement about nationalism and modernity in 1889.¹⁴³

In the German and Russian pavilions, whose designers were Hitler and Stalin’s favorite architects, art and architecture were manipulated and used unapologetically as a

¹⁴¹ Alexander Watt, “Paris, 1937: Survey of the Display Methods in the National Pavilions,” *Art & Industry* 23 (August 1937): 41.

¹⁴² Maurice Barret, “Les Expositions de Paris,” *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*, VIIIe Année, Nos. 5-6, June 1937, p. 103; translated and quoted in: Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 2.

¹⁴³ See note 91 in Peer, *France on Display*, 198; Udovicki-Selb explains that these pavilions formed a “triumphal gate” framing the Eiffel Tower, which had been called for in Gréber’s site-plan. Jacques Carlu, the chief architect of Paris, had suggested the profile of a “gate” in a 1935 winning competition entry. Danilo Udovicki-Selb, “Facing Hitler’s Pavilion: The Uses of Modernity in the Soviet Pavilion at the 1937 Paris International Exhibition,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 15.

weapon to the service of a particular ideology.¹⁴⁴ McCormick described this pair as “...depressing temples of nationalist propaganda, colossal pylons brandishing hammers and sickles in the bared teeth of colossal bronze Germans waving swastikas...”¹⁴⁵ Her words exemplify the negative reactions of many critics who ended up interpreting their gigantic scale and blatant political symbolism as proof that these nations were bullies. Both pavilions were designed in a style that Hitchcock described as a “megalomaniac mode of scraped classicism.”¹⁴⁶ Albert Speer designed the German Pavilion, a towering quadrangular volume of stone with fluted pilasters that rose even higher than the Russian pavilion (fig. 20). This volume was intended to contain the “assault” of the Russian Pavilion on the other side of the promenade.¹⁴⁷ A wide stairway flanked by two promontories with great sculptural groups led to its entrance. From its top, Kurt Schmid-Ehmen’s nine-meter-tall gilded bronze eagle, which held a swastika with its claws, appeared to monitor all human activity below.¹⁴⁸ The sculptural groups below, by Josef Thorak, represented nude men of athletic build. For art historian Fernando Martín Martín, they had a “falsely heroic air” that alluded to the “new” Germanic race with its male features.¹⁴⁹ Udovicki-Selb observes that at night, when indirect

¹⁴⁴ Udovički-Selb, “Facing Hitler’s Pavilion,” 15; Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 27.

¹⁴⁵ McCormick, “Europe.”

¹⁴⁶ Hitchcock quoted in: Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 44.

¹⁴⁷ Speer explained that during a visit to the fair, he got lost in a room where there was a model of the Russian pavilion. He saw that on top of a very high base, a sculpture measuring around 10 meters of height advanced triumphantly towards the German pavilion. He described how he conceived his proposal: “Contemplating it, I conceived a cubic mass to which some pilasters gave a rhythmic pattern that appeared to detain the assault, while, from the top of the cornice of my tower, an eagle with the swastika in its claws, measured with his gaze the Soviet pair. I won the gold medal for this project, my colleague too.” Alix Trueba, Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón español*, 20.

¹⁴⁸ Udovički-Selb, “Facing Hitler’s Pavilion,” 22.

¹⁴⁹ Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 26–27.

light illuminated the gilded interstices between the tower pilasters, the pavilion recalled the searchlights of the Cathedral of Light at the Nazi rallies in Nuremberg (1937).¹⁵⁰

In general, Western critics of the time rebuked the art and architecture of the German Pavilion. Hitchcock described it as a building with an “impossible scale” that was “reactionary and inhuman.”¹⁵¹ He also stated that its interior, every detail of its installation, and most of the material displayed in it suggested the “provincial museum practice of the late nineteenth century.”¹⁵² Elizabeth Mock concluded that the German Pavilion, “with its tremendous tower of cut-stone columns,” was a “perfect expression of Fascist brutality.”¹⁵³ Although with negative connotations, this pavilion remained ingrained in the minds of visitors, critics, and historians as a monument.¹⁵⁴ Not surprisingly, there were plans to turn it into a war monument for the city of Nuremberg after the fair ended.¹⁵⁵

The Russian Pavilion also exploited art and architecture to the service of national ideology. Addressing the fair planner’s wishes, Iofan attempted to develop a composition based on a synthesis of architecture and sculpture (fig. 21).¹⁵⁶ For Udovicki-Selb, the Russian Pavilion as a whole represented the eschatological drive to salvation ingrained in the

¹⁵⁰ Udovicki-Selb D, “Facing Hitler’s Pavilion: The Uses of Modernity in the Soviet Pavilion at the 1937 Paris International Exhibition,” *J. Contemp. Hist. Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 1 (2012): 22–23.

¹⁵¹ In Hitchcock’s words: “The impossible scale of the exterior of the German pavilion by Speer, a pupil of Tessenow, is sufficiently evident in any general view of the fair: at once reactionary and inhuman, this is certainly the worst building in Paris. Had it been four pilasters wide instead of three, had there been some refinement in the profiling, or originality in the use of sculpture, even some richness of materials or color, it need not have been so bad, nor above all so impolite to every other possible sort of surrounding building.” Hitchcock, “Paris 1937,” 163.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Mock, “Paris Exposition,” 269.

¹⁵⁴ Udovicki-Selb, for example, refers to this pavilion as a monument throughout his article.

¹⁵⁵ Mock informed that after the fair, the pavilion “will be moved piecemeal to Nuremberg, where it might serve as a war monument.” Mock, “Paris Exposition,” 271.

¹⁵⁶ Udovicki-Selb, “Facing Hitler’s Pavilion,” 32.

Communist project, and in many ways this “monument” resonated with the tradition of Russian icons.¹⁵⁷ Vera Muhina crowned Iofan’s upward movement with another disproportionally large social realist sculpture: the six-story-high figures of a *Rabotnik* (Male factory Worker) and a *Kolhoznitsa* (Female Collective-Farm Worker), a work that was meant to represent men and women’s joint struggle for emancipation.¹⁵⁸ For Udovicki-Selb, the silhouette of this shiny steel sculpture resembled the form of the five-pointed star of the Third International, which preceded the Soviet symbol of the hammer and sickle, and also recalled El Lissitzky’s 1920 new design for Malevich’s set for the opera *Victory over the Sun*, but done in a realistic mode.¹⁵⁹ He argues that this was one example of the many architectural and artistic elements embedded in the pavilion that recalled the work of the Russian avant-garde, evocations that were now rendered in a classical, traditional language.¹⁶⁰ This reveals the persistence of avant-garde spirit in Soviet artists despite “the stylistic and ideological realignment” that had occurred in Russia.¹⁶¹

Inside, the pavilion included some avant-garde art such as Nikolaj Suetin’s abstract Suprematist sculptures or a large-scale photomontage by Gustav Klucis that adorned a frieze

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 29.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 19, 26, 29.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 26–27, 29.

¹⁶⁰ For example, the grand stairway in the Russian Pavilion was a reference to Melnikov’s dynamic stairway running obliquely through his 1925 Paris Pavilion; however, Iofan’s stairway split his pavilion rigidly in two symmetrical halves. Muhina and Iofan used a wide variety of sources from the past: from ancient Doric to Hellenistic sculpture, such as the Louvre’s *Victory of Samothrace*; buildings topped with giant sculptures, such as those by the French Neoclassicist Jean-Jacques Lequeu; or the giant Neoclassic architecture of Louis-Etienne Boullé. Ibid., 27–28, 32.

¹⁶¹ Udovicki-Selb explains that in Russia there had been a switch in leadership from an “authentic avant-garde” to a “Party vanguard,” or the vision of a “mythical working class vanguard sponsored by the party and sanctioned by the state.” This retreat from the avant-garde was a concession to an increasingly conservative society; the Russian leadership apparently adopted classicizing styles in art and architecture because they came to believe that the masses were not ready to embrace the avant-garde. Iofan assured Frank Lloyd Wright, during his visit to Russia, that modern architecture would return to the Soviet Union in approximately 10 years, once the masses were ready to embrace it. Ibid., 26–27, 32–34, 45.

above the monumental staircase. However, in the most important rooms at the end of the circuit the visitor found Sergej Merkurov's statue of Lenin sitting in a Rodin-like 'Thinker' position, his statue of Stalin standing in a Napoleonic posture, and murals by Aleksandr Dejneka, all social realist works. Watt observed that in the interior, "every effort has been devoted to forming a gigantic propaganda display. As a result there is little actual material of interest on view, but rather a series of greatly enlarged photographs posted up to form partitions and great placards with inspired inscriptions assuring the world that the U.S.S.R. is the only real working-class Utopia."¹⁶² The whole ensemble generated the final impression that all efforts led to convey Russia's Communist ideology.

Despite these negative assessments, the Russian Pavilion drew more positive reviews than the German Pavilion. Although Hitchcock said that both were "the worst foreign buildings in the exposition" and described Muhina's sculpture as "strident,"¹⁶³ he considered that at night her sculpture gained some flair: "...the Russian sculpture comes a little into its own, vulgar, crude, impolite, but with a wonderful élan as the colored light like moonlight catches its silvery and turbulent surfaces."¹⁶⁴ The architectural historian concluded, "The Russian Pavilion by Iofan, like the German pavilion opposite, attempts to impose by size and solidity. But except for the sculpture, which has its virtues at night, the scale is not so inhuman"; he also found that its side façade had "a certain functional straightforwardness and esthetic push forward" that was agreeable when seen from the quay.¹⁶⁵ He considered that its

¹⁶² Watt, "Paris, 1937: Survey of the Display Methods in the National Pavilions," 38.

¹⁶³ Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," 160.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 32.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 166.

interior installation was not “markedly reactionary, but only provincial and careless.”¹⁶⁶ Others were more enthusiastic about the pavilion. Frank Lloyd Wright was impressed by its “low, extended and suitable base for the dramatically realistic sculpture it carries, and regarded it as “... the most dramatic and successful exhibition building at the Paris fair... Here, on the whole, is a master architect’s conception that walks away with the Paris fair.”¹⁶⁷ Auguste Perret considered that “this large pedestal which carries a giant statue, is the work of a veritable artist,” unlike the German pavilion, which for him carried “nothing, and whose destination is unknown.”¹⁶⁸ It appears that in the eye of the critics, the Russian Pavilion came off victorious with respect to the German in their battle for monumentality.

In the end, however, it was a much humbler soldier who passed to history as the ultimate victor in the battle for modern monumentality: the spirited Spanish Pavilion, which stood proudly on the gardens of the Trocadéro, bordering the water basins, very close to the German Pavilion. Its proximity to the latter underscored for the visitors the great difference between Speer’s “architecture of intimidation” and the Spanish Pavilion’s more modest scale, materials, and floor plan.¹⁶⁹ The Spanish Pavilion demonstrated that avant-garde art and architecture were as capable as conventional art of generating legible and moving monumental expression. Despite its modest scale and budget, the originality of its aesthetic language overshadowed the tired, clichéd expressions of buildings such as the Musée d’Art Moderne or the German Pavilion. This whole work of art effectively conveyed to an international forum the feeling and thinking of a nation in distress. It presented Spain as a

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Frank Lloyd Wright, “Architecture and Life in the USSR,” *Architectural Record* (October 1937): 61; quoted in: Udovički-Selb, “Facing Hitler’s Pavilion,” 26.

¹⁶⁸ Udovički-Selb D, “Facing Hitler’s Pavilion,” 20.

¹⁶⁹ Jordana Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937* (Barcelona: Ediciones de La Central, 2009), 12.

progressive society that deserved the attention of the international community, casting it as the victim of the evils of fascism. It also contributed to fuel the idea that modern art and architecture were the true expressions of democracy and freedom, while conventional, classicizing styles were better left to the representation of tyranny and oppression.

At the time of the planning of the Spanish Pavilion, Spain endured an even harsher political and economic situation than the rest of Europe. In July 1936, only a few months after president Casares Quiroga had committed to participate in the fair, civil war broke out. The pavilion's planning had to stop and resumed in the fall, when Largo Caballero's government began and his long-time supporter Luis Araquistain, a writer and socialist politician, was named ambassador to Paris. The news that reached Paris early in 1937 was discouraging: the Republic was in great danger. Despite the defense of Madrid, which had held off the Nationalist advance in late 1936, by early 1937 Franco's troops held the advantage on all fronts and Madrid's population had been systematically bombed in aerial attacks. There were reports of rebel gains, bloody reprisals against civilians in conquered zones, and build-up of German and Italian troops and arms. Meanwhile, France, Great Britain, and the US ignored this violation of the Non-Intervention Pact.¹⁷⁰

Araquistain's political objective was to persuade the European powers to fund the Republic's defense; in order to achieve this, he had to demonstrate that it was stable and productive, that it exercised religious tolerance, and that was independent from Soviet influence by emphasizing its liberal aspects: the protection of private property, industrial and agricultural reforms, educational programs, and the conservation of Spain's cultural and

¹⁷⁰ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 121–22, 607.

artistic diversity.¹⁷¹ Many Spaniards thought that without international intervention, Spain's defeat would be inevitable.¹⁷² Given this context, it is easy to understand why the prime objective of the Spanish Pavilion, as outlined by the Spanish authorities, was to create a unitary ensemble with a clear political propagandistic mission.¹⁷³ This mission, in the words of Spanish officials, was to prove to the world that Spain was strong in all its endeavors and that it held the support of the most important figures of intelligentsia, science, and art; the Spanish Pavilion had to represent the "current moment" and the "marvelous effort" that the Spanish people were doing to defend their independence and the "cause of peace" in the world.¹⁷⁴ With these words, the commissioning authorities implicated the international community by suggesting that the political stakes were higher than just the internal situation in Spain: peace in the world depended on their action as well.

That the Spanish Pavilion effectively conveyed this message is demonstrated by A. Loewel's comments in his account of the pavilion's opening: he asserted that visitors would learn from the pavilion that "Republicans and revolutionaries fight at once for liberty and in defense of an ancient and precious culture, for liberty and world culture; and without a doubt they will understand as well that within the Exposition it is here (in the Pavilion) wherein lies

¹⁷¹ Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 9–10.

¹⁷² Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 617.

¹⁷³ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 37.

¹⁷⁴ The Dirección General de Bellas Artes outlined the objectives of the Spanish Pavilion as follows: "*Esta exposición, a la que concurre el Gobierno de España en momentos decisivos, debe ser prueba de su pujanza en todos órdenes y la comprobación más evidente de que cuenta con todos los elementos más valiosos de la intelectualidad, la ciencia y el arte. El carácter que debe tener la Sección Española de la Exposición... puede y debe representar el momento presente y el esfuerzo maravilloso del pueblo español por defender su independencia y la causa de la paz en el mundo.*" This statement appeared in a brochure to inform contestants of the basic principles they should adhere to when participating in the Spanish Pavilion Project, "Bases a las que deben ajustarse los concursantes a la Exposición de Arte y Técnicas de París de 1937. Pabellón de España," quoted in: *Ibid.*

the moral center of liberty and Western civilization.”¹⁷⁵ Freedberg explains that one of the ways in which the pavilion’s planners achieved this communicative success was by placing a strong emphasis on Spain’s cultural and artistic preeminence instead of its industrial or technological accomplishments, as was usual in world’s fairs.¹⁷⁶ This was due to practical reasons, since normal industrial activity at the time was nearly suspended in Spain; however, authorities might have also felt that the most arresting way to make an international appeal was through art.¹⁷⁷ The idea that art was one of the most effective tools to move people and convey the cultural values of a nation prevailed at the fair, where most of the “national projections” employed this strategy. However, in the Spanish Pavilion, it was done even to the exclusion of commercial interests.¹⁷⁸

Araquistain, the ambassador of Spain in Paris and one of the pavilion’s organizers, sought the help of some of the leading members of the Spanish avant-garde: the politically committed Picasso, Miró, and González, as well as others from the *Escuela de París*, a large expatriate community that had emigrated to Paris because of its advanced artistic and intellectual activity.¹⁷⁹ The pavilion also displayed the work of younger and lesser-known artists that still lived in Spain served to stress the Republic’s continued support of cultural activity despite the war.¹⁸⁰ At the pavilion, the Republic used art and architecture as political weapons. The pavilion’s ultimate goal ultimately failed — it did not prevent the loss of the

¹⁷⁵ A. Loewel quoted in: Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 5.

¹⁷⁶ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 124–25.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 127–28.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 126; Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 49; Araquistain did this with the help of Max Aub, a writer working as a diplomat in Paris, who was a long-time supporter of modern art, and a friend of some of these artists. Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 10.

¹⁸⁰ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 127.

Spanish Republic.¹⁸¹ However, the Spanish Pavilion came to be regarded as a monument that represented an important moment of Spain's history; so much that the City of Barcelona decided to rebuild it on the occasion of the 1992 Olympics held in that city.¹⁸²

The members of the avant-garde that participated in the Spanish Pavilion were not oblivious to the game of political chess underway. They actively engaged in it because they ardently believed in the power of modern art to move people and change the world for the better. The most famous Spanish artists were mostly Republican sympathizers, and government authorities counted on their loyalty, requesting objects for the exhibition and commissioning from them new works for the interior and exterior of the pavilion.¹⁸³ The great majority of these artists did not hesitate to offer their services to the Republican cause.¹⁸⁴ They worked for their beliefs, not for money. Given the scarcity of funds available,

¹⁸¹ In June, as the pavilion was preparing to open, Bilbao fell; in August, Santander fell; at the end of October, a month before the pavilion closed its doors, the republican government moved from Valencia to Barcelona in fear of getting cut-off from the continent. *Ibid.*, 699.

¹⁸² Martín Martín considers that the artworks exhibited at the pavilion give us a vision of the synthesis of Spanish art of one of the most prolific and brilliant periods of Iberian art; they constitute a sampling of the Spanish avant-garde that had begun in 1920. Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 67; The Spanish Pavilion that was rebuilt was a handicapped version, since it was just an empty shell that lacked the important works of art that had given it life. It was supposed to house *Guernica* once again, but its organizers failed to secure this loan. For more information, see: Ares Álvarez and Óscar Miguel, "Del GATEPAC a Corrales y Molezún. Reconstruir lo Efímero: La Paradoja de las Arquitecturas Ausentes," *P + C 1* (2010): 31–44; Architectural historian Jordana Mendelson notes that even the mural-sized photographs and posters by Josep Renau and his assistants, which were embedded in the exterior architectural framework of the building, were absent in this reconstruction. In addition, even though the reconstructed pavilion houses one of the most important collection of materials on the civil war, and inside numerous posters from the war are on display, there is little sign of the visual impact that photography and the graphic arts had upon the original pavilion's visitors. For Mendelson, the resulting structure clearly attempted to resist the yoking of modern architecture to the intentions of a government display of propaganda. Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 14–15.

¹⁸³ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 125.

¹⁸⁴ Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 68.

the architects and pavilion staff agreed to work for a token fee of 3,000 francs a month and the artists who contributed objects agreed to work at cost.¹⁸⁵

The Spanish avant-garde was seriously committed to politics in the 1930s. For art historian Fernando Martín Martín, the art of the pavilion reflected the “renaissance” or “dynamic awakening” of Spanish art whose spirit had been expressed in the Ninth Manifesto of the *Gaceta del Arte* in 1933:

Art is not a pastime: it is to freeze the time that passes:
 Art is a nation’s spiritual richness
 Art is the most energetic channel of humanity
 Art is the great vehicle for propaganda that people may utilize
 An aesthetic and propaganda system is required
 The preoccupation of the government is required.¹⁸⁶

This manifesto clearly articulated the belief that art could have a deep political impact and was an essential tool to shape the life of the nation. The artists that worked in the Spanish Pavilion shared this belief. For example, when rumors began to spread about Picasso’s alleged pro-Franco leanings, the artist made a statement in May, 1937 to clarify his sympathy to the Republican cause:¹⁸⁷ “The Spanish struggle is the fight of reaction against the people, against freedom. My whole life as an artist has been nothing more than a continuous struggle against reaction and the death of art... In the panel on which I am working which I shall call

¹⁸⁵ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 126; Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 43.

¹⁸⁶ “9th Manifesto,” *Gaceta del Arte* (October 1933). In this influential magazine from Tenerife important critics collaborated such as Eduardo Westerdahl, Guillermo de la Torre, García Bellido, Sebastián Gash, and among foreign people, artists and writers like Arp, Breton, Paul Eluard, Zervos, etc.; Excerpt of manifesto reproduced in: Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 67.

¹⁸⁷ Until his participation in the pavilion, Picasso had behaved as an “apolitic” person. Prior to January 1937, neither his art nor his remarks revealed any concern with the Spanish plight. It was not until the establishment of the Republic that he became noticeably interested in politics, yet his work was slow to reveal any concern, even after the outbreak of the civil war in 1936. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 605; Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 122.

Guernica, and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death...”¹⁸⁸ Picasso evidently considered that his art was a weapon with which he could fight back against those he believed were hurting Spain. In January, 1937, when he heard about the planned assault on his native city Málaga, he let out his anger in the anti-Franco poem and etchings *Sueño y Mentira de Franco* (fig. 22).¹⁸⁹ While working on the *Guernica*, he donated these etchings to the Spanish government so that all 18 originals could be sold in the pavilion along with postcards printed from them.¹⁹⁰

The Spanish Pavilion, which occupied a restricted and irregular site on the gardens of the Trocadéro, was flanked by the Polish Pavilion on the right, the Norwegian Pavilion on the left, and the Vatican Pavilion at its back. Its official architect was Luis Lacasa, one of the architects of the University of Madrid campus. It appears that Sert’s participation as architect occurred de facto, as the difficult circumstances surrounding the construction of the pavilion determined. Lacasa belonged to the *Generación del 25*, a proto-rationalist movement from Madrid. Like the other members of this group, Lacasa was familiar with avant-garde architecture and rejected eclecticism and historicism; however, his rationalist proposals still drew from regional tradition especially in their use of materials.¹⁹¹ In contrast, Sert’s

¹⁸⁸ Picasso’s remarks were written for inclusion in the American Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign’s sale exhibition of war posters and paintings, held in June 1937. They reached a larger audience when they were reprinted by Elizabeth McCausland in an article in the *Springfield Republican* (Massachusetts); Picasso’s statement as reproduced in: Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 603–04.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 607–09.

¹⁹⁰ Besides the funds obtained from these sales, Picasso donated to the government substantial amounts of money, and after the end of the war, he continued to contribute generously to needy individuals and various organizations charged with the care of refugees. Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 39.

architecture adhered more strictly to the principles of international modernism.¹⁹² After completing his training in Barcelona, he had traveled to Paris where he worked in Le Corbusier's studio from 1929 to 1931.¹⁹³ He was also one of the founding members of the *Grup d'Artistes i Tècnics Catalans per al Progrés de l'Arquitectura Contemporània* (GATPAC), a group that through their work, exhibitions, and journal *AC Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea*, aimed to more radically revolutionize Spanish architecture in accordance to the new means of production and technology. In their manifesto, published in AC, the group urged architects to embrace the “new spirit” — an obvious reference to Le Corbusier's ideas. Contemporary architecture, they argued, should do away with tradition and embrace the universal.¹⁹⁴

Besides his rationalist credo, Sert, like Le Corbusier, had a keen interest in the visual arts and strong relationships with the artistic avant-garde in Paris, which might help explain his willingness to commit to a collaborative project with artists. Sert's relationship with Le Corbusier had a great influence on his ideas and work. For Architectural historian Eric P. Mumford, Le Corbusier was not only a “seminal force” in the development of Sert's ideas, he was also a “kindred spirit” with whom he shared “an affinity for the vitality and poetic character of Spanish culture.”¹⁹⁵ Sert first met Le Corbusier around 1927, when GATPAC

¹⁹² Ibid., 39–40.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹⁴ The group's manifesto, published in AC, Year 1, number 1, stated: “*Estamos en presencia de un estado de espíritu nuevo que anula costumbre y tradiciones y que tiende a ser universal. La arquitectura contemporánea debe estar de acuerdo con estos caracteres. Adoptar un sistema histórico es falsear el sistema, y negar la época. En las arquitecturas regionales, producto de las condiciones de clima, costumbres locales y materiales de que se dispone, sólo el clima tiene un valor absoluto. Lo esencial subsistirá. Lo episódico, lo accidental, debe desaparecer.*” Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Eric Paul Mumford, Hashim Sarkis, and Neyran Turan, *Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953-1969* (New Haven; Cambridge: Yale University Press ; Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2008), 80.

invited him to lecture in Barcelona.¹⁹⁶ When Sert became Corbusier's apprentice, he came into contact with a few projects in which Le Corbusier was trying to address the issue of modern monumentality: the second project for the League of Nations (the first one had been rejected) and the Palace of the Soviets proposal, which was also rejected.¹⁹⁷ They also shared the idea that modern art and architecture should relate. Sert, who was the nephew of the renowned muralist José María Sert, had a very early interest in art: "I was very interested in art from my early years. I was much more interested in painting and sculpture than I was in architecture."¹⁹⁸ In addition, during his apprenticeship in Paris, Sert, who already knew Picasso through his uncle and Edouard Vuillard, came into close contact with the School of Paris; he got to know Léger very well. In Sert's own words, "That got me very much in this Paris group."¹⁹⁹ Sert traveled back and forth between Barcelona and Paris. In 1937, he was living in Paris; he had gained experience mounting art exhibitions by working for the Paris-based *Patronato Nacional del Turismo* as chief organizer of publicity and exhibitions for the Catalan section.²⁰⁰ This experience was invaluable when he worked in the Spanish Pavilion.

Art historian Fernando Martín Martín explains that there has been much debate in scholarship regarding the authorship of the architecture of the pavilion, which derived from the Catalan architect Oriol Bohiga's claim that Lacasa's collaboration had been more

¹⁹⁶ John Peter, *The Oral History of Modern Architecture: Interviews with the Greatest Architects of the Twentieth Century* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994), 250.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.; Architectural historian Eric P. Mumford explains that the architects' relationship evolved through the years: Sert then became his colleague and collaborator; in 1932 Sert and Le Corbusier worked with other GATPAC architects on an important master plan for Barcelona, the Plan Macià, which would lead to later collaborations. Mumford, Sarkis, and Turan, *Josep Lluís Sert*, 78–80.

¹⁹⁸ Sert's words in: Peter, *The Oral History*, 249.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 251.

²⁰⁰ Sert supervised the installation of the most important of these events in 1937, a large exhibition of medieval Catalan art that had been brought to Paris for safeguarding. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 140–41.

“theoretical” than “real.”²⁰¹ Freedberg explains that Araquistain, frustrated with the lack of response from the Spanish government when he asked for an architect to be appointed, requested Sert’s help; he apparently turned to Sert because Sert was already in Paris, knew the French building practices, and had already established a reputation through his early association with Le Corbusier. By the time Lacasa arrived in Paris in December 1936, Sert had already begun to design the pavilion.²⁰² Lacasa had designed a more traditional building with stone and brick, “*a la española*,” in his own words; but when he arrived to Paris he immediately understood that Sert’s proposal based on the rationalist principles of prefabrication and Corbusian simplicity would be more feasible to build in the short time they had and with the labor and materials they had available. Both architects agreed on the character of the solution and signed a preliminary draft in January.²⁰³ In the end, Freedberg, Alix Trueba, Mendelson, and Martín Martín agree that Sert’s hand was stronger in the design of the formal and structural aspects of the building, while Lacasa’s hand had primacy in its ideological content.²⁰⁴

The pavilion’s first stone was laid on February 27, 1937 and it was not ready for the fair’s inauguration on May 24; it was officially inaugurated on July 12, but it still had to close to reopen definitively a few days later.²⁰⁵ Yet, its execution was a feat, considering the difficult circumstances of its planning, meager funding, and delays brought about by the civil war. The pavilion could not have reached completion if it wasn’t for Sert’s rationalist design,

²⁰¹ Bohigas made this comment in the book “La Arquitectura Española de la Segunda República” (1970) Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 45.

²⁰² Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 134–36, 718.

²⁰³ Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 48.

²⁰⁴ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 134–36, 718; Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 38–41; Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 46–49; Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 11.

²⁰⁵ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 41.

which made use of readily obtainable, inexpensive materials, and cost-effective construction methods.²⁰⁶ The whole building was an embodiment of the principles of modern architecture (figs. 1 & 23). Sert utilized a “dry assembly” system with standardized materials, in accordance with the modern means of production and local availability. The official report submitted by the Spanish Republic to the French Commissioner General of the fair stated that the entire structural skeleton was done with standard profiles and “H” beams available on the premises. The ground floor was built on a foundation of rubble faced in brick and the ceilings, stage, entrance, and exit stairways were built with reinforced concrete. The pavilion’s ceilings were made of cement or wooden slabs; its exterior walls were done in glass or sheets of corrugated asbestos lined with insulating material and its interior walls were covered with sheets of *celotex* and the ceilings with sheets of *silvanite*.²⁰⁷ In addition, Sert adhered to the modern tenet of “truth to materials” and structural honesty: instead of trying to cover up the structural metal framework, he exposed it. The pavilion’s ensemble of “undisguised materials” was complemented by a straw carpet, which “harmonized” with the neutral coloration of the *celotex* and wood.²⁰⁸

The pavilion’s architecture was based on a very simple massing composed with two prismatic elements: a mass and a void that intersected forming an “L” shape in plan. The first element was a three-story-high rectangular volume whose longest side aligned with the main axis of the fair and formed the main façade of the building. The second element was a walled patio that was covered with a great retractable awning. Supported by Corbusian *pilotis*, the

²⁰⁶ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 168–69.

²⁰⁷ Transcript of the report submitted by the Spanish Republic at the close of the 1937 World’s Fair for inclusion in the French Commissioner General’s eleven-tome account of the exhibition; translated by Catherine B. Freedberg, pp. 717–26; *Ibid.*, 719.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

three-story volume floated over the ground, letting the exterior space of the fair flow freely into the pavilion's ground floor space all the way back to the patio. In accordance to modern architectural principles, the pavilion's structural metal framework allowed space to flow freely almost everywhere inside the building, unrestricted by load-bearing partitions (fig. 24). This structure treated the building's envelope as a modular system in which the infill partitions between columns and beams could be left open, constitute translucent or opaque panels, or what is most interesting, serve as display panels for propagandistic art in the form of photomurals or texts. The pavilion's volume and the patio were articulated by a monumental exterior ramp that led from the patio to the building's upper exhibition level. The focal element in the patio was a preexisting large tree around which a stage for performances revolved.²⁰⁹ Freedberg explains that Sert organized the court's plan and wall height to accommodate this tree, which almost worked as a "stage prop" (fig. 25).²¹⁰ She also notes that the union of the tree and stage recalls Le Corbusier's 1925 Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveaux.²¹¹ Le Corbusier's tree poked a hole through the roof of his patio, while Sert's tree poked an opening through the patio's awning. Sert used color as an important compositional element, privileging the natural color of materials: the color of stone for bases, of brick on the floor, of shades of gray for the asbestos sheets, and the color of wood, which was left visible through varnish.²¹² In addition, architectural surfaces were painted to create a palette in which white, red, black, and gray predominated: the patio walls were painted white, the

²⁰⁹ The city's Municipal Council had required the preservation of trees; they were for the most part original to the design of the 1878 fair. Ibid., 30.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 210.

²¹¹ Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 43.

²¹² Transcript of the report submitted by the Spanish Republic at the close of the 1937 World's Fair for inclusion in the French Commissioner General's eleven-tome account of the exhibition; translated by Catherine B. Freedberg, pp. 717-26; Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 720.

first section of the right façade was painted brownish red, the steel beams were painted in white and brownish red, the fabric that covered the patio was dark red. What is more interesting is the harmonic whole that resulted from the artists working with the same color palette: Renau's exterior and interior photomurals and posters were black and white; *Guernica* was black and white; Calder's *Mercury Fountain* was black and had silvery mercury emanating from it; Miró's *Pagés Catalá* was dominated by white, red, and black elements; González's iron *Montserrat* had an ashy patina; Alberto's *El Pueblo Español* was made in cement colored in brownish red or earthy tones; and Picasso's sculptures were made of white cement.²¹³ The use of this color palette was in part related to Spanish tradition and vernacular architecture.²¹⁴ Yet, as Alix Trueba argues, it also had strong symbolic connotations: it brought to mind war and the color of the left.²¹⁵

Besides the major elements that derived from modern architecture, Sert incorporated others that obviously drew from Spanish tradition and vernacular architecture: the wooden entry grate inspired by *mudéjar* architecture; the terracotta tiles on the patio's floor and the barred openings in its walls; the color palette; the insulating parasol roof solution; the large walled patio that served as the pavilion's core, inspired by domestic courts and enclosed public squares; and finally the white cubic forms of the rear wall.²¹⁶ All these elements made the architecture of the pavilion more poetic and expressive, as they evoked memories and stirred feelings for the Spanish land. Like other second-generation modernists who worked at the fair, Alvar Aalto and Junzo Sakakura, who designed the Finnish and Japanese pavilions,

²¹³ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 45–46.

²¹⁴ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 58, 202–08.

²¹⁵ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 46.

²¹⁶ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 58, 202–08.

Sert triggered an early critique of International Style orthodoxy. After the Spanish Pavilion, Sert increasingly deviated from the International Style's initial formal severity through the examination of local artistic tradition.²¹⁷ Sert's knowledge of Mediterranean architecture certainly informed his solutions; yet, these regional elements had only been hinted at in his previous work.²¹⁸ Perhaps the nature of the commission, which aimed to present a national projection of Spain, and Lacasa's input contributed to alter Sert's initial adherence to stricter rationalist principles.

The pavilion, which Frampton has described as "the last significant gesture of the Spanish Modern Movement," is now regarded as one of the greatest contributions of modern architecture.²¹⁹ Yet, its delayed opening prevented some contemporary critics from commenting extensively on it. The *Architectural Record* critic wrote: "Architect Sert is responsible for the design of an unfinished pavilion for Spain, more dramatic than if it had been entirely completed."²²⁰ He included in his article two floor plans of the pavilion, but made no further comments. He probably considered the modern structure of this pavilion was its most exciting feature. Hitchcock's opinion of the Spanish Pavilion was that it was far superior to the Italian Pavilion in its integration of the arts, as I've discussed above.²²¹ He most likely included the pavilion's architecture in the "demountable category": "...there is the group which might be described as demountable, in which the temporary character of Exposition building is emphasized by the visibly articulated construction. Here in this last

²¹⁷ Ibid., 204.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 195, 203.

²¹⁹ Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, 253.

²²⁰ "1937 International Exhibition," 82.

²²¹ Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," 165.

group are the boldest and most original solutions and the work of those architects who are most likely to be heard from during the middle years of this century.”²²² Hitchcock clearly suggested that it was in these more technological and rationalist solutions that the future of architecture laid. What stood out for the critic T. F. Hamlin was the Spanish Pavilion’s exploitation of architecture in the service of propaganda: “Spain’s pavilion is a frank composition of glass and steel framework serving as background for propaganda in the form of silhouetted lettering and photomurals.”²²³ Yet, rather than just a backdrop for propaganda, the Spanish Pavilion’s architecture constituted a tool for display. It framed the works of art within, and its space calculatedly guided visitors through an argument constructed with art.

Despite these limited early reviews, the Spanish Pavilion would gain an important status in architecture history with time. Initially, it benefitted from the great attention that Picasso’s *Guernica* garnered. In 1944, Giedion argued that only in the case of *Guernica* had artists been allowed to participate in a “community task” in the essay “The Need for a New Monumentality,” published in the book *New Architecture and City Planning: A Symposium*, edited by the architect and art historian Paul Zucker.²²⁴ The architect Paul L. Wiener also mentioned the Spanish Pavilion in another essay of this book.²²⁵ In addition, Sert was invited

²²² Ibid., 160.

²²³ Hamlin, “Paris 1937,” 27.

²²⁴ Sigfried Giedion, “The Need for a New Monumentality,” in *New Architecture and City Planning, a Symposium*, ed. Paul Zucker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), 557; Paul Zucker was a German émigré who had to escape from the Nazis because he was a Jew. In 1938, he began lecturing at the Cooper Union in New York. He was interested in architectural space as a theoretical concept and also wrote extensively on adult education in the arts. “Dictionary of Art Historians,” accessed August 27, 2015, <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/zuckerp.htm>.

²²⁵ In “Future World’s Fairs,” Wiener asserted that along with the Finnish Pavilion and the Czechoslovakian Pavilion, the Spanish Pavilion was one of the few examples of significant architecture or of “true invention.” Paul Zucker, ed., *New Architecture and City Planning: A Symposium* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), 117.

to talk in a symposium on *Guernica* at MoMA in 1947.²²⁶ A few years later, architect Paul Damaz featured the Spanish Pavilion and explained Sert's ideas on the integration of the arts in his book *Art in European Architecture* (1956). Although the great architectural quality of the Spanish Pavilion warranted the attention it got during the postwar period, perhaps it also had to do with Sert's prominent position in the architecture world: He was not only a close friend of Giedion, one of the most influential architecture critics and historians of modern architecture, but also the president of CIAM from 1947 to 1956, partner in Town Planning Associates (TPA), a firm that developed urbanistic projects all over Latin America from 1941 to 1956, and dean of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University from 1953 to 1969. In the 1980s, whole books were written on the Spanish Pavilion and its art; one of these was Alix Trueba's catalogue for the exhibition "Pabellón Español. Exposición Internacional de París 1937," which took place at the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid from June 25, 1987 to September 15, 1987.²²⁷

As a visitor to the 1937 fair upon your approach to the Spanish Pavilion, you would have immediately sensed the symbiotic relationship that existed between art and architecture in this building. Most scholars who have studied the Spanish Pavilion have noted this relationship. Art historian Jordana Mendelson argues that the pavilion was designed by Sert and Lacasa to function as a "kiosk or platform for the complex interweaving of architecture, photography, and the popular arts."²²⁸ Mendelson claims that although the pavilion is perhaps best known for Picasso's *Guernica*, the political narratives presented in it were built upon a

²²⁶ Museum of Modern Art (New York), ed., *Symposium on "Guernica"* (New York: Master Reporting Co., 1947).

²²⁷ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*; Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*; Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*.

²²⁸ Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 3.

foundation that went beyond “the singular iconicity” of a single work of art by forging relationships among different media, themes, and artistic styles.²²⁹ Martín Martín emphasizes that that one of the pavilion’s most important aspects was that it was conceived as a synthesis of the arts; the pavilion achieved an “optimal” result because there was committed collaboration and understanding on the part of all artists, who shared the same vision.²³⁰ For this to happen, Sert’s museum experience was invaluable, as well as his relationship with the artists that participated in the pavilion.²³¹ Freedberg argues that of all the experiences of artistic integration at the fair, the Spanish Pavilion was the most successful.²³² Architectural historian Joan Ockman argues that the Spanish Pavilion is one of the buildings that best exemplified the desired connection between an abstract modern architecture and contemporary painting and sculpture; it demonstrated the spiritual affinity and aesthetic counterpoint that existed between them.²³³

As you approached from the gardens of the Trocadéro, you would have been lured from afar to approach the pavilion by its novel and colorful architecture, covered with photographic murals, a vertical metal structure that held the word “*España*” and three flags high up above the building, and Alberto Sánchez’s iconic sculpture *El Pueblo Español tiene un Camino que Conduce a una Estrella* (The Spanish People have a Path that Leads to a Star) (1937) (fig. 26). You might have stopped to examine the mural-sized photographic panels that were embedded in the building envelope and to read the texts that accompanied

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 68.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 65.

²³³ Joan Ockman, “The War Years in America: New York, New Monumentality,” in *Sert: Arquitecto en Nueva York*, ed. Xavier Costa, Guido Hartray, and Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Actar Coac Assn Of Catalan Arc, 1997), 30.

them. Most of these had a clear propagandistic function; they contained legends that narrated the achievements of the Republic and the progress of its war efforts.²³⁴ This “gigantic mural magazine,” as Freedberg described it, was continuously updated to inform the viewer of the events unfolding in Spain.²³⁵ It was the work of Josep Renau, a graphic designer from Valencia who at the time was Spain’s General Director of Fine Arts, and his assistants.²³⁶ Mendelson argues that these photographic works, along with the photomurals that Renau and his assistants executed for the interior exhibitions constituted the greatest “visual mass” of the pavilion and were extremely important in guiding the visitors’ interpretations of the Republic’s politics.²³⁷ She calls attention to the close partnership of architecture and photography in the pavilion and explains that Sert and Renau’s experiences before the civil war set the stage for this to happen.²³⁸

Alberto’s sculpture, *El Pueblo Español tiene un Camino que Conduce a una Estrella*, signaled the entry point of the pavilion. This sculpture, executed in monochrome cement, measured approximately 41 feet in height and was slightly taller than the building. The spine of this work was an undulating figure that decreased its width as it strove towards the sky, holding a six-pointed star high up in what appeared to be a closed fist. This spine had an indeterminate biomorphic feel; it could evoke the forms of the female body in its undulating

²³⁴ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 284.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 12.

²³⁷ Ibid., 14.

²³⁸ Mendelson explains that Sert’s experience in GATPAC, which placed an emphasis on the didactic use of visual material through its magazine *AC*, was put to use in his design of the pavilion; the architect’s open plan provided an “ideal stage” for the dynamic use of photographic images within and upon the architectural space. In addition, Renau’s previous engagement with print culture as a form of political activism informed his work in the pavilion. He had worked as editor of the politicized literary magazine *Nueva Cultura* and was an important contributor to other magazines, among them *Octubre*, *Orto*, and *Estudios*. For these periodicals he intensely used photomontage as a tool to convey his political thoughts; he conceived the whole *Nueva Cultura* as a multi-page serialized photomontage driven by his caustic evaluations of the Republic. Ibid., 16–19.

curves, but as others have noted, it could also recall plantlike forms such as a branch-free cactus, or even an entire landscape. A lighter-colored band or “path” wound around this central spine, reaching the star in the top. The figure had a dove sitting on a protuberance or armless shoulder. The entire composition sat on a pedestal that used to be a working windmill wheel. Alberto himself painted the sculpture with oil paint in earth tones and applied a gelatin coating to protect the paint; he also painted the winding path white to highlight it.²³⁹

Freedberg argues that although Alberto made some concessions for the sake of intelligibility — the handling of motifs like the bird and the star — his sculpture was characteristic of his recent highly abstract, quasi-surrealist work; the scholar rightly describes this sculpture as “an abstract rendering of a vertical landscape.”²⁴⁰ There were lots of symbolic elements in this work, and scholars who have studied it have concentrated on interpreting their meaning. For Freedberg, the sculpture was a symbolic expression of the Spanish people’s aspirations toward liberty, and at the same time, an affirmation of their indomitability, which would lead them to the attainment of those aspirations.²⁴¹ The star was supposed to represent the affirmation of the Spanish people’s capacity to endure; however, many interpreted it as the star of the Communist party, which actually pleased Alberto.²⁴² The path was a metaphor for the Spanish struggle.²⁴³ For Alix Trueba, the work was a metaphor of the resilience of the Spanish people. Alberto was inspired by his native

²³⁹ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 292–93.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 290.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 285.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 291.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 347.

landscape, but instead of representing inert rocky masses, he chose to represent something that was alive: the cactus is perhaps the vegetal that looks the most similar to a stone and is apparently dry, but it is alive and full of water. It is also resistant to attack as it has thorns, and survives in the most adverse conditions.²⁴⁴ For Martín Martín, the meaning of this work is best understood in the context of the pavilion, with the photographic panels in the background, and its title gives us a clue: the sculpture meant that through collective effort and labor, peace and victory will be attained, that the Spanish people are the makers of their own destiny. Alberto symbolized peace with the dove, victory with the star, and labor with the granite millwheel that was brought for this purpose from Segovia; the latter had personal connotations as well, since Alberto was also a bread baker.²⁴⁵ Thus, although *El Pueblo Español* was undeniably avant-garde, it had some recognizable elements that made it very accessible to the public. One proof of this is that there were almost no expressions of discontent against it, not even from the far left.²⁴⁶

The selection of Alberto to participate in the pavilion had not been arbitrary: he was the son of a working family, and his philosophy was Marxist.²⁴⁷ His political engagement and allegiance to the Republic had been clearly established by his political activities and pro-Republican drawings.²⁴⁸ As early as late 1936 or early 1937, he was requested to execute a sculpture for the pavilion.²⁴⁹ His relationship with Lacasa — his friend and future brother-in-

²⁴⁴ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 88–89.

²⁴⁵ There was a reference to Alberto's background in Miró's poem cited at the beginning of this chapter. Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 80.

²⁴⁶ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 293.

²⁴⁷ Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 75–76.

²⁴⁸ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 286.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

law — might have had something to do with this commission; however, the artist had also established a reputation as one of Spain's leading sculptors of the younger generation.²⁵⁰ In addition, Alberto had a great motivation to make a monumental work. Alix Trueba explains that he had hoped to execute such work for a long time; before the civil war, he had created *Monumento a los Pájaros*, *Escultura de Horizonte*, and *Monumento a los Niños*, among others, all unrealized and destroyed by bombings in his Madrid studio.²⁵¹ Excited with the opportunity to finally realize his dream, Alberto left for Paris from Valencia, where he lived, with some drawings he'd completed in 1931 for an unrealized monument.²⁵² Although different from the pavilion sculpture, much more elongated and stylized, these drawings' monumental vertical trails show some resemblance to the final work.²⁵³

If you had approached the pavilion from the opposite direction, still from the main axis of the fair, perhaps you would have noticed Picasso's sculpture *Tête de Femme au Chignon* (Head of a Woman) (1931) (figs. 23 & 27). This big sculpture, which measured more than 4 feet in height, was installed in a very visible spot on a pedestal right next to the exterior stairway that led visitors from the second-floor exhibition directly to the exterior.²⁵⁴ It depicted a monumental head of a woman with almond-shaped eyes, parted lips, and intentional physical deformations: a very long neck, a protuberant forehead and nose, and voluminous hair. Although many scholarly investigations on the pavilion have focused on Picasso's *Guernica*, Alix Trueba emphasizes that the artist's presence was "total" in the

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 286–87.

²⁵¹ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 88.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 316.

project; his participation went beyond the execution of a single work of art as an accessory to the pavilion.²⁵⁵ *Tête de Femme au Chignon* was one among five sculptures from Picasso's Boisgeloup period that he exhibited to the public for the first time in the Spanish Pavilion.²⁵⁶ Besides these works of sculpture, Picasso created the poem and etchings *Sueño y Mentira de Franco*, which, as has been already explained, was exhibited and sold in the pavilion in the form of originals and a series of postcard prints.²⁵⁷ At the time, Picasso was considered one of the stars of the avant-garde, and his presence in the project was considered essential and requested by the Spanish authorities since the inception of the project.²⁵⁸ As the premier of Spain declared in 1937, the presence of the *Guernica* in the pavilion would signify a great victory in terms of propaganda.²⁵⁹

With the exception of *Bañista* (Bather) (1931), made in bronze, the other four Boisgeloup sculptures were expressly cast in cement for the Spanish Pavilion from the original plaster works.²⁶⁰ Besides *Tête de Femme au Chignon*, these were *Tête de Femme aux Yeux Globuleux* (Head of a Woman with Googly Eyes) (1931), *Buste de Femme* (Female Bust) (1931), and *La Porteuse d'Offrande* (The Carrier of an Offering, frequently referred to as *Femme au Vase*) (1933). *Bañista*, *Tête de Femme aux Yeux Globuleux*, and *Buste de Femme* were exhibited in Plastic Arts exhibition in the third floor of the pavilion. *La*

²⁵⁵ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 99.

²⁵⁶ Alix Trueba explains that there has been much confusion in scholarship regarding the exact number of works that Picasso exhibited in the Spanish Pavilion. She clarifies the titles and number of works in her book. *Ibid.*, 103, 115.

²⁵⁷ These plates were subdivided in nine etchings, each one done in vignettes. Alix Trueba describes the poem as a “verbal vomit” against Franco. *Ibid.*, 103–05.

²⁵⁸ Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 93.

²⁵⁹ In Negrín's words, “*La presencia del mural pintado por Picasso equivale en cuanto a propaganda para la República a una victoria militar en el frente.*” Negrín quoted in: *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁶⁰ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 103.

Porteuse, which was more than seven feet high and represented the figure of a woman holding a vase, was exhibited outside in front of the patio façade on the south side of the building, next to the Polish pavilion.²⁶¹ The avant-garde style of this work elicited some negative criticisms. At the time of the fair, the Polish commissioner repeatedly voiced objections to this sculpture, requesting its removal, since he did not want the public to think that this was a Polish work.²⁶²

Many authors consider that the Boisgeloup sculptures were completely private and autobiographical works that reflect the artist's obsession and delight with his new mistress Marie-Thérèse Walter.²⁶³ Apparently, Picasso's great interest in sculpture around this time derived from his relationship with Walter; the artist rendered her rounded, athletic, and full of vitality in these works.²⁶⁴ Yet, this does not clarify their presence in the Spanish Pavilion. By examining the context in which these works were exhibited, other meanings that these works conjured up come to light. Freedberg claims that Picasso had been reluctant to exhibit these sculptures but that he gave Sert freedom to select a few pieces during a visit to his studio most likely because he was moved by the Republican cause.²⁶⁵ However, curator Alix Trueba convincingly argues that the selection of these works was a calculated move by Picasso.²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 324.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 323.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 328; In 1930, the artist had gotten a castle in Boisgeloup, a small town to the north of Paris so that he could have a bigger studio and work without spatial restrictions on his greatest interest at the time, sculpture. This period coincided with his relationship with Walter. Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 119.

²⁶⁴ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 119.

²⁶⁵ According to Freedberg, Sert would have selected *Tête de Femme au Chignon* and *La Porteuse d'Offrande* because of their monumental size and because they were interesting as unknown, unfamiliar aspects of Picasso's work. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 319, 325.

²⁶⁶ Alix Trueba explains that long before this visit, the plans of the building show notations for two works of sculpture by Picasso. Also, there are documents that prove that the government had commissioned the cement casts specifically for the pavilion. Therefore, the inclusion of these sculptures could not have been a

Picasso's Boisgeloup sculptures, especially *La Porteuse d'Offrande* and *Bañista*, also bear relation to his interest in ancient Iberian symbols and idols of fertility.²⁶⁷ She concludes that these works, with which the artist liberated his "Iberian roots," had a great symbolic meaning for him.²⁶⁸ Another interesting connection that Alix Trueba makes is that the pavilion's Boisgeloup heads appear to be subsequent transformations of a first portrait sculpture of Walter, which he treated almost like a classical Greek sculpture.²⁶⁹ During his Boisgeloup period, Picasso had also done a series of engravings that show similar heads topped with ivy-leaf crowns; interestingly, one of his *Sueño y Mentira de Franco* etchings also showed this motif, depicting a terrifying caricature of Franco toppling a head with these characteristics with a pickaxe. Thus, it appears that for Picasso, the Boisgeloup heads could have symbolized the Spanish Republic.²⁷⁰ Perhaps Picasso decided to include these sculptures because in the context of the Spanish Pavilion, they would have recalled the origins of Spanish culture and even symbolized the Republic that was in danger.

After deciding to start climbing the entry stairway, tilted towards the main fair axis to receive you, you would have stopped to contemplate Julio González's *La Montserrat* (ca. 1936-37), positioned to the left side of the entry threshold (fig. 28). Executed in wrought and welded iron, *La Montserrat* was a life-size representation of maternity. The peasant woman is represented standing resiliently, with a proud but serene expression, as she holds a cloaked child against her breast with her left arm, and a sickle in her right hand. She looks like she is

last-minute decision by either Picasso or Sert. Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 102–03.

²⁶⁷ For example, the ancient figures exhibit a rough texture and unfinished appearance, as well as mutilations as the result of aging; all these elements are clearly defined in *La Porteuse d'Offrande*. Ibid., 120.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 123.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

ready to face whatever life brings before her with her sickle, a tool for labor — and also a symbol of Communism — that might also be used for defense.

González had explored the theme of maternity since the early 1900s and the theme of the female peasant in the 1920s and 1930s; also in the 1930s he began to explore the theme of the Catalan female peasant clearly defined as *Montserrat*.²⁷¹ This sculpture too had a strong symbolic nature. For Freedberg, its status as symbol derives from its proud stance, its robust physical form and imposing size, and the association of its title and imagery with *Nuestra Señora de Montserrat*, a mid-12th century statue of the Virgin and Child housed in the Benedictine abbey on the top of Barcelona's mountain of the same name.²⁷² She argues that given that the artist was adamantly anti-clerical, he probably meant the figure as a kind of secular icon, a modern-day protectress of Barcelona.²⁷³ Although there is disagreement in scholarship regarding the exact nature of the commission and the exact date of its execution, the fact remains that the work's subject derives from the artist's acute concern for the political events that were seriously hurting his cherished land and people.²⁷⁴ Not surprisingly, the art critic Vicente Aguilera Cerni described *La Montserrat* in 1973 as a "monument," the greatest that modern times have dedicated to the pain of the people, to its courage, and its proud firmness.²⁷⁵

²⁷¹ Ibid., 91.

²⁷² Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 311–12.

²⁷³ Ibid., 312.

²⁷⁴ Freedberg, based on an interview with the artist's daughter, argues that González started the sculpture around 1934–35 and finished it in 1936, and that he selected it afterwards for the pavilion. Ibid., 295–97, 305; Alix Trueba disagrees, arguing that it was especially done for the pavilion in 1937. Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 91.

²⁷⁵ In the critics words, the sculpture was: "*el mas grandioso monumento que los tiempos modernos han dedicado al dolor del pueblo, a su coraje, a su arrogante firmeza.*" Vicente Aguilera Cerni quoted in: Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 90.

At the time, González was one of Spain's most prominent contemporary sculptors, and José Gaos, the Commissary General of the Spanish Pavilion, communicated to him the organizers' desire to count with his work on April 10, 1937.²⁷⁶ Like Picasso's *Tête de Femme au Chignon*, *La Montserrat* was a monumental portrait of a female figure that somewhat recalled the Spanish land and culture; both works carried with them great symbolic content. They stood very close to each other, so they might have compelled the viewer to make such connections. Interestingly, it was González who had taught Picasso the welding technique.²⁷⁷ As Alix Trueba claims, these artists might have influenced each other's work around this period; around the time that Picasso began to focus on sculpture, he had renewed his friendship with González and they worked together for a while.²⁷⁸ However, it appears that Picasso tried to convince González to install *Mujer ante el Espejo* in the pavilion instead of *La Montserrat*, because it was more abstract, more to his liking.²⁷⁹ González's work was typically more abstract; yet it appears that he felt that in order to reach the masses a more realist style would be more appropriate.²⁸⁰ González himself had his reservations about his decision; but in the end Gaos convinced him to keep *La Montserrat* in the pavilion.²⁸¹ In a letter, Gaos explained to González that his work was highly appreciated by the general public; he asserted that *La Montserrat*, a "powerful, intelligible, and current," work, was so

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 87–88.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 88.

²⁷⁸ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 119.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 92.

²⁸⁰ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 314.

²⁸¹ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 92.

successful that they had decided to reproduce it in the brochure about the pavilion that they sold to the public.²⁸²

As you ascended the wide entry stairway and passed through the pavilion's open portico, you would have immediately encountered a juxtaposition of two of the most impressive accomplishments of modern art: Calder's *Mercury Fountain* (1937), centered with respect to the entry portico and the patio beyond, and Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) on the right, almost covering the entire short side of the three-story building (fig. 29). The location for Calder's fountain was predetermined; in contrast, Picasso selected the location for his mural at the site in consultation with the architects.²⁸³ Picasso asked about colors and materials, and Sert showed him the size and position of the wall, which he studied really carefully; in Sert's words, the *Guernica* "was very specially designed for that space, taking the space, light, and other conditions very carefully into consideration."²⁸⁴ A completely harmonic space for the contemplation of these works of art was desired: a bothersome column that was in front of the *Guernica* was removed.²⁸⁵

Calder, an American, would not have been able to participate in this exciting project if it wasn't for his close relationship with the Spanish avant-garde in Paris and for Sert's intervention. The artist, whose artistic formation took place almost entirely in Paris in the late 1920s and early 1930s, kept coming back and forth between Paris and New York during

²⁸² In a letter dated September 14, 1937 Gaos wrote: "*Votre Maternité est un des grands succès du Pavillon, à tel point que nous l'avons spécialement reproduite afin qu'elle figure dans la brochure que nous éditons sur le Pavillon et pour la vente au public; et ce succès se comprend parfaitement. Il s'agit d'une œuvre puissante, intelligible pour tous et tellement actuelle.*" Letter reproduced in: Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 298–99.

²⁸³ Ibid., 67.

²⁸⁴ Peter, *The Oral History*, 252; Picasso occupied almost the entire height of the wall but decided to take 10' out of its 35 ½' width in order to keep certain proportions. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 611–12.

²⁸⁵ As marked in building plan; see Fig. 7a in: Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, n.p.

these decades.²⁸⁶ In Paris, he made lasting friendships with Léger, Duchamp, Miró, Masson, Arp, and Mondrian, all of whom influenced him greatly and encouraged his experimentation with abstract moving forms.²⁸⁷ With Léger, he shared a fascination with machinery and a fondness for Paris cafés.²⁸⁸ Calder's friendship with Miró, beginning around 1928, was significant in the development of his career; Calder began to assimilate some of Miró's forms and ideas.²⁸⁹ In part influenced by Miró and the surrealists, he began to look for new non-mechanical methods to activate his mobiles.²⁹⁰ Calder met Sert for the first time in 1933, during one of his *Circus* shows at the architect Paul Nelson's house in Paris.²⁹¹ Sert recalled how this avant-garde community met frequently in the city: "I saw Sandy, Joan Miró and other mutual friends frequently in the Café de Flore, or the Select in Montparnasse. On Sundays we often went to visit Jean Arp and Nelly van Doesburg in Meudon-Val-Fleury, and had long walks and talks in the Forêt de Meudon."²⁹² In 1937, the Calders had taken up a temporary residence in Paris.²⁹³ One Sunday, Calder decided to accompany Miró and Sert to the construction site of the pavilion to see in what kind of space Miró was going to work on.²⁹⁴ Calder recalled this visit in 1938:

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 490.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 491.

²⁸⁸ Alexander Calder, Jean Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder's Universe* (New York: Viking Press in cooperation with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1976), 20–21.

²⁸⁹ In 1930, Calder took a studio in Paris and his frequent *Circus* performances brought him into contact with Léger, Kiesler, and Theo van Doesburg; that same year, he was invited to form part of the Abstraction-Création group. Ibid., 330–31; Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 491.

²⁹⁰ In Paris, Calder had started creating his well-known *stabiles* and around 1931–32 he made his first hand or motor-driven *mobiles*. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 492.

²⁹¹ Calder, Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder's Universe*, 27–28.

²⁹² Ibid., 28.

²⁹³ Ibid., 332.

²⁹⁴ Second Statement by Calder concerning his activities in the Spanish Pavilion (1938), reproduced in: Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 792–95.

There was little more than a few girders and columns to indicate where the wall would eventually be. But there was a winding ramp, as means of entrance to the upper floors, and also a flight of stairs, out in space, as an exit, and these presented many spots which I felt might well be embellished by something of my own — a ‘MOBILE’... I proposed this to Sert, but although he likes my work very well, he refused, for I wasn’t Spanish. So I thought I wasn’t to have any part in the exposition — though I really hadn’t even hoped to, until that moment.²⁹⁵

At the planning stage of the pavilion, Sert had been asked to install a mercury fountain in the middle of the open space in front of the *Guernica*. There were strong political reasons for commissioning this work: The intention of the government was to call attention to the mercury mines of Almadén in the Spanish southwest, the object of rebel attacks and a resource to which Germany desired access.²⁹⁶ However, when Sert saw the photographs of the fountain in the middle of May, just days away from the inauguration of the fair, he strongly disliked it.²⁹⁷ In Sert’s words, “...when I saw the fountain I was horrified. It was a most uninventive little design with an odd sort of fake stone. It was very ugly and you couldn’t even see the mercury. I knew Alexander Calder very well and I thought he would be the best man to do that kind of work.”²⁹⁸ Sert felt that this fountain, which had been built for the Exposición Ibero-americana held in Seville in 1929 and looked like those found in the public squares of Spain, would not go well with the contemporary character of the pavilion and its art.²⁹⁹ Sert complained before the pavilion organizers and asserted that no Spanish artist could do a work of the quality he desired: “...we could not possibly place such a fountain in front of Picasso’s *Guernica*, whereupon Gaos asked me to find a Spanish artist to

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 792.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 792–93; Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 96.

²⁹⁷ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 473.

²⁹⁸ Peter, *The Oral History*, 253.

²⁹⁹ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 473.

produce a new design. I told him I knew of no one in Spain who could meet those requirements, but that a remarkable American sculptor could produce something striking and unique.”³⁰⁰ Thus, Sert called Calder and asked him to create a mercury fountain for the Spanish Pavilion.

Upon approaching the fountain, its apparent formal complexity and dynamic movement would have deceived you; its basic composition was actually simple (fig. 30). Calder adapted his design to the preexisting circular reservoir, which measured about 7.2 feet.³⁰¹ The mercury began its motion in a vertical spout placed at the center of the circular basin, from about 3.2 feet of height. Two parallel curved rods bridged the basin; they served as support for three irregularly shaped, warped plates that received the flowing mercury. These plates were placed at different heights, but were close enough so that the mercury spilled gently from one to the other, forming lagoons, and continuing its slow voyage towards the center of the basin. There was a mobile element that increased the composition’s height and enlivened it even more: a vertical rod hung from the vertical spout whose lower end widened into a triangular plate. This rod held an even finer rod in its upper end; the finer rod held a red disc on one end and the word *Almadén*, written in fine copper wire, on the other. As it hit the triangular plate at the bottom, the spilling mercury triggered a continuous movement that described an “8” shape. You would have been awed by the spectacle of the shiny mercury flowing against Calder’s matte black surfaces. In the artist’s words, pitch would “give a colour which is the greatest possible contrast to the shining metallic

³⁰⁰ Sert’s words in Calder, Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder’s Universe*, 28.

³⁰¹ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 97.

mercury...”³⁰² The artist had at once solved a practical problem, since pitch was one among few materials that could resist the material’s corrosive effects, and an aesthetic problem.

The fountain proved to be a great success among artists, critics, and the general public. A number of fellow artists were also amused and fascinated by Calder’s fountain, among them Picasso and Léger, who came to see it once it was installed.³⁰³ This work of art was a spectacular attraction, a great fit with the fair context. As Freedberg points out, the public treated the fountain “somewhat irreverently as a giant mechanical toy,” to Calder’s immense pleasure.³⁰⁴ People threw coins at the fountain to see how they would behave on the surface of mercury. Calder thought that the fountain’s success had a lot to do with “the curious quality of the mercury, whose density induced people to throw coins upon its surface...”³⁰⁵ Calder was evidently proud of the popular success of his work: “It became the favorite pastime of onlookers to throw coins at the surface of the mercury and see them float... Some American journalists came through and dubbed me, ‘Calderón de la Fuente.’ But Lacasa, an architect and public relations man for the pavilion, claimed it was I who had thought it up.”³⁰⁶ One fair reviewer, who mistakenly thought that Lacasa and Sert had designed the fountain, described the pleasure that its viewing brought: “...The architects of the Spanish Pavilion, L. Lacasa and José Luis Sert, therefore designed a fountain, a simple basin, on the center of which a strange construction of black iron, graceful and precise like a great insect, allowed the mercury to flow slowly, to gather, to disperse and at times to roll in

³⁰² Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 794–95.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 487–88.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 483.

³⁰⁵ Transcript of the report submitted by the Spanish Republic at the close of the 1937 World’s Fair for inclusion in the French Commissioner General’s eleven-tome account of the exhibition; translated by Catherine B. Freedberg, pp. 717–26; *Ibid.*, 795.

³⁰⁶ Calder’s recollections of the creation of the mercury fountain, as quoted in: *Ibid.*, 798.

melting pearls, to play perpetually with itself, to the delight of the public witnessing for the first time the delicate spectacle of mercury moving in a fountain.”³⁰⁷ Even Gaos, who was reluctant to accept Calder’s participation at the beginning, praised how the spilling mercury contrasted with the black, rough surfaces of the fountain and asserted that the fountain was one of the most popular successes, not only of the pavilion, but of the entire exposition.³⁰⁸ Still, despite its spectacular qualities, the fountain, like the other works in the pavilion, also carried with it a serious political message: Spain’s resources had to be protected.

The black surfaces and abstract forms of the fountain and the movement of the shiny mercury established an aesthetic dialogue with Picasso’s *Guernica* (figs. 29 & 31). Realized in tones ranging from black and white, the painting resonated both with Calder’s work and with the pavilion’s architecture. However, the playful character and the more optimistic thematic content of the fountain, which spoke of an abundance of resources that had to be protected, must have drastically intensified the effect of the poignant, somber mural, which spoke of an irreversible loss. On a dark background that suggested a story unfolding in dark times, eight figures occupied almost the entire pictorial space, crowding each other and forming a single mass with their limbs extended and their contorted positions. The impression of chaos evoked by this frenzied mass of human and animal was exacerbated by the disintegration of their forms in cubist planes. As if reading a book, from left to right you would have first heard the desperate cry of the woman that held a dead infant in her arms. Right behind her, standing as if frozen in shock, there was a bull that did not know where to

³⁰⁷ André Beucler, quoted in: *Ibid.*, 485, 513.

³⁰⁸ In Gaos’ words: “*La fuente está compuesta por unas valeras de hierro embreado al soplete, sobre cuya superficie negra y rugosa el mercurio resbala en un contraste realmente admirable. Es uno de los mayores éxitos populares, no de nuestro pabellón, sino de la exposición entera.*” Letter from Gaos to Prat, dated July 21, 1937; quoted in: Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 99.

direct its gaze. Below the woman and the bull lay a fallen man with a broken sword in his hand, screaming in anguish. A frantic horse that had been slashed trampled the fallen man. Above the horse, there was a lamp that resembled an eerie eye overlooking everything and emitting rays — perhaps in reference to divine rage — or indifference? To the right of the horse, a kneeling woman looked up to the sky and to this eye in disbelief, her arms open in a supplicating pose. Above her, an outsider — perhaps an allusion to the international community — opened a window to illuminate the scene with a torch and discover, with great sadness, that a tragedy had occurred. Finally, a man on the right gesticulated in agony as the flames of a building fire consumed him. As Freedberg, has noted, the painting's black and white palette not only underscored the "feeling of explosive congestion, of physical as well as psychic fragmentation," it also effectively conveyed the idea of holocaust, of the charring and calcification caused by fire.³⁰⁹

What Picasso chose to depict here was a localized event, the massacre that resulted from the rebel forces' aerial bombing of the small Basque town of Guernica on April 26, 1937. This attack shocked the world because it was the first cold-blooded, systematic destruction of a town that had no strategic importance: it was a farming town located 30 kilometers away from the front.³¹⁰ Although Franco's Nationalist forces denied involvement, as did the Germans, it is now known that Germany had regarded Guernica as a testing ground for their terror bombing tactics.³¹¹ Picasso, who had committed to produce the mural for the Spanish Pavilion back in January, had not started to work on it despite several visits to the

³⁰⁹ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 622.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 618.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

site and despite discussing the commission with the architects and the pavilion organizers.³¹² Sert recalled that when he, Max Aub, and Luis Aragon went to his studio to ask him to paint a mural for the pavilion, he immediately accepted; when he showed them the plates for *Sueño y Mentira de Franco* and read his poem, Sert got a sense of what kind of work he was going to do: "...in reading the text of *Sueño y Mentira de Franco*, I could foresee what Picasso was going to do when he painted Guernica. He read it with such extraordinary enthusiasm and force and violence that you could see that he would finally produce a picture of the type he did."³¹³ Yet time passed by, and no one was really sure that Picasso would honor his commitment.³¹⁴ It was the bombing of Guernica that jolted him into action. He realized the first sketch 6 days after the event; after doing several sketches, he started painting the mural on May 11, and finished it in late June.³¹⁵

With this work, Picasso may have also intended to convey to a wide audience a universal meaning: According to a 1937 souvenir postcard printed by the Spanish government, the artist had "wished to express in this work the disintegration of the world under the impact of the horrors of war."³¹⁶ Like the Spanish officials, Picasso also tried to involve the international community in the political events unfolding in Spain; he perhaps wished to call attention to the dangerous climate that was developing in Europe that could lead to greater destruction. The French surrealist poet and art critic Michel Leiris instantly sensed this message: he wrote in a special issue of *Cahiers d'Art* in 1937 that "Picasso is

³¹² Museum of Modern Art (New York), *Symposium on "Guernica,"* 6–7.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Peter, *The Oral History*, 252.

³¹⁵ Picasso realized more than 45 sketches for *Guernica*; the creative process shows 7 phases. Dora Maar photographed the work during its evolution. Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 127.

³¹⁶ Statement in the postcard as reproduced in: Museum of Modern Art (New York), *Symposium on "Guernica,"* 2.

sending us our death announcement: everything we love is about to die.”³¹⁷ Freedberg argues that Picasso universalized the painting’s subject by offering not an exact record of what happened but an allegory.³¹⁸ He eliminated all but the most generalized references to the actual event and used an abstracting language: the enemy is not even present in the painting, which is something that conveys “the single most chilling fact of modern warfare: victims and enemies alike are unknowing and unknown.”³¹⁹ Thus, for Freedberg, the painting became a memorial to the innocent dead and a manifesto against the brutality of modern warfare.³²⁰ Not all scholars agree with this interpretation. Alix Trueba argues that like all other works in the pavilion, Picasso’s mural was specifically about the Spanish war. She resists the idea that the painting represented just the generic atrocity of war: Picasso was a Spaniard, Guernica was a Spanish city, and the war was a Spanish war.³²¹ Yet, in the context of the Spanish Pavilion and the World’s Fair, where an international conflict loomed large over everyone’s heads, the painting surely offered viewers the possibility of a wide range of interpretations; certainly the painting appeared to denounce both a national and an international issue.

Despite the somber nature of *Guernica*, Picasso might have also been trying to convey a clear if guarded optimism in Spain’s future.³²² In a 1947 MoMA Symposium on the mural, Sert emphasized that the pavilion organizers had noted a strong relationship between

³¹⁷ Leiris quoted in: Peer, *France on Display*, 47.

³¹⁸ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 620.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 621.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 622.

³²¹ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 109–14.

³²² Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 625.

the painting and Paul Éluard's poem *Victoire de Guernica*. The last lines of Éluard's poem were:

Real men for whom despair
Feeds the devouring fire of hope
Let us open together the last bud of the future

Pariahs
Death earth and the vileness of our enemies
Have the monotonous color of our night
The day will be ours³²³

This poem expressed rage against the enemy but at the same time, hope for the future; it reminded the Spaniards that dark times would pass, and that with their resilience they could turn darkness into a bright future. Sert explained that Éluard was a daily visitor to Picasso's studio while he was painting the mural, suggesting that artist and poet influenced each other; and asserted that there was an intense relationship between poem and mural:

I think there is a lot of the poem in the picture and a lot of the picture in the poem... it is very important to note that ...the poem was called *La Victoire de Guernica*, because many people take the picture as being simply a representation of the bombardment of Guernica. It is something more than that. In the picture there is a lot of the victory of Guernica. There is a lot of the revenge of Guernica, a lot of what can happen afterwards as the result of bombardment, as a result of this mass killing of people.³²⁴

Sert explained that this relationship was so evident that he and other pavilion organizers reproduced the poem in the Basque section of the popular arts exhibition in the third floor. In this section they also installed a photomontage juxtaposing images of the town of Guernica burning and its tree, which symbolized liberty for the Basques (fig. 32).³²⁵ If some doubts

³²³ Ibid., 628.

³²⁴ Museum of Modern Art (New York), *Symposium on "Guernica,"* 8–9.

³²⁵ Ibid.

remained to the visitor about the meaning of Picasso's *Guernica*, reading Éluard's poem and viewing this picture would have made its connotations specific.

Like Alberto had done with *El Pueblo*, Picasso did not utilize language that approximated abstraction in *Guernica* but recognizable figures and forms that carried symbolic content. The art critic Herbert Read found the mural's symbolism very clear:

It has been said that this painting is obscure, that it cannot appeal to the soldier of the republic, to the man in the street, to the Communist in his cell. But actually its elements are clear and openly symbolical. The light of day and night reveals a sense of horror and destruction. The eviscerated horse, the writhing bodies of men and women, betray the passage of the infuriated bull, who turns triumphantly in the background, tense with lust and stupid power; whilst from the window, Truth, whose features are the tragic mask in all its classical purity, extends her lamp over the carnage.³²⁶

However, as the MoMA symposium discussions illustrated, the different interpretations of the exact meaning of this work were as countless at the time as they are today.³²⁷ The artist utilized symbolic language in order to reach the audience: in his own words, "The mural is for the definite expression and solution of a problem and that is why I used symbolism... In that [*Guernica*] there is a deliberate appeal to the people, a deliberate sense of propaganda."³²⁸ Perhaps it was Picasso's use of recognizable forms that made curator Francis Henry Taylor describe this work as a "Victorian mural."³²⁹ Yet, the mural's style was far

³²⁶ Ibid., 11.

³²⁷ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 632.

³²⁸ Ibid., 624.

³²⁹ Taylor said: "...what we cannot forgive is the banality of overstatement, or the projection of irrelevancies into the foreground with the stamp of creative originality. The romantically Victorian mural of the Spanish Civil War, *Guernica*, by Picasso, is a case in point... Brilliant as the painting may be, Picasso, too, has failed to evoke the heroism of *Guernica* itself. He has only substituted Gertrude Stein for Florence Nightingale." Museum of Modern Art (New York), *Symposium on "Guernica,"* 3.

from conventional; despite its recognizable forms, the political left attacked *Guernica* because they considered it obscure and not sufficiently accessible for the public.³³⁰

Although it might be true that the complex meaning of the work might have only been completely understood by the initiated, as journalist Elizabeth McCausland suggested in 1937, even visitors who were not well versed in modern art appeared to make general sense out of it.³³¹ A few years later, Sert recalled the reactions of the average visitor before an avant-garde work as complex as the *Guernica*: “It was very curious to observe in the months that followed ...the reaction of the people. The people came there, they looked at this thing [*Guernica*] and they didn’t understand it. The majority didn’t understand what it meant. But they felt there was something in it. They did not laugh at the *Guernica*. They just looked at it in silence. I watched them pass by.”³³² One viewer described how this work produced in him an anxiety he had never experienced before: “*m’abasourdissait, me pétrifiat d’une anxiété dont je n’avais aucune expérience directe.*”³³³ Amédée Ozenfant narrated in a 1937 article how after seeing the *Guernica*, one visitor told her child: “*Je ne comprends pas ce que ça représente, mais ça me fait tout drôle. C’est drôle: ça me fait tout à fait comme si on me coupait en morceaux. Viens, va ! la guerre c’est terrible... pauvre Espagne.*”³³⁴ This viewer declared that even though she did not understand what the painting meant, she felt “funny” about it. She concluded that war was terrible, and expressed her deep sympathy for “poor

³³⁰ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 602.

³³¹ McCausland called *Guernica* a “great painting” but added in her piece “What Picasso wanted was to cry out in words no one could fail to understand... Instead, he spoke, albeit honestly and poignantly, to those who by historical circumstance also had come to use a language unintelligible to popular ears.” McCausland quoted in: Museum of Modern Art (New York), *Symposium on “Guernica,”* 5.

³³² Ibid., 9–10.

³³³ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 639.

³³⁴ Ozenfant quoted in: Ibid.

Spain.” The meaning that these viewers extracted from this mural was probably clarified by its title, which recalled the well-known recent massacre, but also by the context where it was displayed: you saw Alberto’s path to victory, you saw the *Guernica*, you examined Miró’s mural showing a catalan peasant defending himself with a sickle, you read Eluard’s poem, and then saw a photograph of the city burning — and got an acute sense of what the artists were trying to convey — the effect of the displays and works of art in the pavilion was cumulative.³³⁵

In spite of *Guernica*’s effectiveness in moving people, its avant-garde style caused heated discussions among pavilion organizers and staff regarding the adequacy of this work of art as a representation of the Spanish nation; the discussions focused on the painting’s accessibility for the public. Leftist factions inside the pavilion proposed its removal and replacement with a realist work.³³⁶ Perhaps because of this controversy an unidentified speaker tried to justify the decision to commission the mural from Picasso during a reception for the construction workers of the pavilion shortly before its inauguration; he tried to sell to his audience the idea that despite its avant-garde style, Picasso’s work was actually realist in nature because it represented a painfully real event.³³⁷ In the end, Sert and the pavilion

³³⁵ The meaning of the word “Guernica” was known to every household that read newspapers. In addition, the organizers of the pavilion had also set up a commemorative exhibit located in the Basque section in the 3rd floor. This exhibition contained Paul Eluard’s poem “La Victoire de Guernica.” Ibid., 617, 625–27; The exhibit also contained a picture of Guernica burning and of the tree of Guernica which represented to the Basque people the symbol of liberty. Museum of Modern Art (New York), *Symposium on “Guernica,”* 8–9.

³³⁶ Sert explained that the leftist faction argued that the mural’s hermetic style and symbolism would be incomprehensible to the proletariat, and demanded that it be replaced with a realist work that showed dead children and ruins. It appears that this controversy, which was successfully muffled, started from the beginning, even as Picasso’s collaboration was announced. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 147, 632–36.

³³⁷ This speaker said: “Entering, at the right, there leaps into view the great painting of Picasso. It will be spoken of for a long time. Picasso has represented here the tragedy of Guernica. It is possible that this art be accused of being too abstract or difficult for a pavilion like ours which seeks to be above and before all a popular manifestation. It is not the moment to justify ourselves, but I am certain that with a little good will everybody will perceive the rage, the desperation and the terrible protest that this canvas signifies. Our time is

organizers prevailed; the mural was kept; and the controversy muffled for the sake of an appearance of unity.³³⁸ Like Le Corbusier's pavilion and Delauney's murals, *Guernica* too had to be defended.

The line that separated propaganda from fine arts was very thin at the pavilion. When you turned your view away from the *Guernica*, you would have not failed to notice a large photograph of the Spanish poet, playwright, and theater director Federico García Lorca, who had been executed by Nationalist forces at the beginning of the civil war, behind a sales desk located along the opposite wall from the mural. This sales desk offered an assortment of printed materials: brochures of the pavilion, books and pamphlets devoted to the war effort, to contemporary Spanish literature, or to the advertisement of Republican cultural achievements.³³⁹ Browsing through this material, your comprehension of the *Guernica* and the other works you had seen so far would have been somewhat altered or amplified.

After reviewing this material, you might have walked outside to the pavilion's patio. In this space, bathed with the sunlight that filtered through the patio's large tree and retractable awning, you would have been able to sample some of the popular culture of Spain. Film and live shows run constantly on the stage at the back; most of these were filmed documentaries on current events in Spain and concerts of folk songs and popular dances.³⁴⁰

that of realism, but each country perceives the real in a certain way. Spanish realism does not represent only the real but also the unreal because, for Spain in general, it has always been impossible to separate what exists from what is imagined... If the picture of Picasso has any effect it is that it is too real, too terribly true, atrociously true." Ibid., 785–86.

³³⁸ Juan Larrea, who was present at the time and was one of the painting's staunchest advocates, explained that the mural was allowed to remain because of the practical consideration that, in view of Picasso's international fame, the work had a "magnificent propaganda value," and also for the fear of the scandal that its removal would cause. Ibid., 635.

³³⁹ Ibid., 424.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 423–24, 723.

Among the films shown was Luis Buñuel's 33-minute documentary *España 1936* (1937).³⁴¹ In addition, there were live demonstrations of the making of folk arts and crafts, which complemented the exhibits of such objects upstairs.³⁴² You would probably have stopped at the bar by the stage, where Spanish food and drinks were served.

Standing in the patio, you would have seen the exterior monumental ramp that invited you to climb up to the pavilion's third floor and begin your visit to the exhibitions inside following a predetermined direction of circulation. You were supposed to start upstairs and descend to the second level using an interior stairway. This strategy was adopted in order to avoid confusion and crowding and more importantly, to insure that visitors saw exhibits in the sequence desired by the organizers.³⁴³ In the interior spaces of the third and second floors, there were high partitions that divided the exhibition halls longitudinally, defining clearly the pattern of circulation.³⁴⁴ Walking up the ramp, you would have surrounded Francisco Pérez Mateo's life-sized sculpture *Bañista*. The General Direction of Fine Arts in Spain had a special motivation to showcase the work of this artist as well as that of Emiliano Barral: these two realist sculptors had died at the Madrid front in November, 1936. This exhibition was meant as a memorial for them; Negrín, the Spanish Premier and Barral's personal friend, and Renau, who was in charge of all the installations in the third and second floors, decided to honor these artists in the pavilion, highlighting their deaths.³⁴⁵ That is why they exhibited a few portrait heads by these artists in the Plastic Arts exhibition located in the

³⁴¹ Ibid., 449.

³⁴² Ibid., 447.

³⁴³ Ibid., 426.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 425.

³⁴⁵ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 51.

third floor.³⁴⁶ You would have immediately understood the significance of their presence here as you read the accompanying texts on the walls.

Pérez Mateo and Barral's works were displayed in the permanent section of the Plastic Arts exhibition, among a selection of "current paintings and sculptures by well known masters and by the younger generation," according to the official report of the Spanish Pavilion.³⁴⁷ The Plastic Arts section occupied half of the third floor plan and was the first in the order of the planned visit.³⁴⁸ *Los Aviones Negros*, a realist painting by Horacio Ferrer that depicted the bombing of a civilian town was also exhibited here; this work had been commissioned specifically for the pavilion.³⁴⁹ Alix Trueba explains that this painting became one of the most famous of the Spanish Pavilion, garnering the attention of all who entered the room, and was located in a hierarchical position since it was the first thing that everyone saw.³⁵⁰ Among these non-avant-garde works, Picasso's *Bañista*, *Tête de Femme aux Yeux Globuleux*, and *Buste de Femme* were exhibited. Also in this floor there was a section where works of art were exhibited on a temporary basis. It contained paintings, posters, and drawings that concerned current events in Spain or belonged to subcategories such as contemporary Catalan and Basque painting or the Spanish School of Paris.³⁵¹ There was a section of drawing and engravings in which there were works in varied styles by de Souto,

³⁴⁶ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 429, 432.

³⁴⁷ Transcript of the report submitted by the Spanish Republic at the close of the 1937 World's Fair for inclusion in the French Commissioner General's eleven-tome account of the exhibition; translated by Catherine B. Freedberg, pp. 717-26; *Ibid.*, 721.

³⁴⁸ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 53.

³⁴⁹ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 436.

³⁵⁰ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 58-59.

³⁵¹ Transcript of the report submitted by the Spanish Republic at the close of the 1937 World's Fair for inclusion in the French Commissioner General's eleven-tome account of the exhibition; translated by Catherine B. Freedberg, pp. 717-26; Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 721.

Miguel Prieto, Víctor Cortezo, Eduardo Vicente, Ramón Puyol, Rodríguez Luna, and Francisco Mateos.³⁵² In addition, there was an important exhibition of 15 paintings by the well-known Madrid expressionist José Gutiérrez Solana, who also lived in Paris and was invited by the Parisian Spanish leadership to participate; one of his works, *Untitled*, also depicted the aftermath of an aerial bombing.³⁵³

As Alix Trueba explains, the intention of the Spanish Commissar and the General Direction of Fine Arts of Valencia and Madrid had been to achieve the widest possible participation of artists in the pavilion, and at the same time to maintain a high quality of works.³⁵⁴ In the end, the exhibition ended up mingling works of very different styles and levels of quality, since there was no unity in the criteria for selection given the great quantity of people and institutions involved in the selective process. The character of the works varied depending on who selected them: the avant-garde-inclined Spanish leadership in Paris or the more conservative General Direction of Fine Arts in Valencia or the CNT-FAI (a Spanish confederation of anarcho-syndicalist labor unions). For Alix Trueba, what unified all these works was of course the single theme of the civil war.³⁵⁵

In the third floor there was the Popular Arts section, which intended to give “an idea of the character of the Spanish people in its life and art.”³⁵⁶ This exhibition, which relied

³⁵² Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 61.

³⁵³ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 436; Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 49.

³⁵⁴ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 48.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ Transcript of the report submitted by the Spanish Republic at the close of the 1937 World's Fair for inclusion in the French Commissioner General's eleven-tome account of the exhibition; translated by Catherine B. Freedberg, pp. 717-26; Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 722; The Popular Arts exhibition was so interesting that the Musée de l'Homme of Paris requested, once the exposition closed, a loan of the complete collection of

heavily on the photomurals designed by Renau and his assistants, displayed products of the popular arts classified according to their region of origin; these included regional costumes, fabrics, and laces displayed on mannequins, pottery, glassmaking, and all sorts of usable objects.³⁵⁷ The installation of these exhibits was a modern work of art in itself. The mannequins, by an unidentified designer, were according to Alix Trueba a “perfect example of modernity”: Their faces were mask-like, realized with minimal gestures, with cubic and flat features, the lines of their noses and hair traced with fine wire.³⁵⁸ Also, Alberto stayed to work on the installation of the Popular Arts exhibition; he created an incredibly original group of wood shelves that through their curvilinear forms and perforations integrated seamlessly with the works of pottery they supported (fig. 33).³⁵⁹ In addition, as Mendelson argues, Renau planned the pavilion’s photomurals as if they were a film; he directed the rhythm of black and white in space through a juxtaposition of images.³⁶⁰ Renau had adopted the Soviet filmmaker Vsevolod I. Pudovkin’s theory of cinematographic montage, which stipulated that a meaningless image, according to what it has at its side, acquires a new meaning.³⁶¹ He came to Paris already with “thematic-visual nodules” already realized in photomontages and sketches; these constituted a “filmic guide” in which the texts constituted the strings of the sequences and “filmations” were replaced by photo-negatives, already

ceramics and costumes, loan that was granted and with which the museum organized an important exhibition in 1938. Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 138.

³⁵⁷ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 722; Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 128.

³⁵⁸ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 722; Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 128.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

³⁶⁰ Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 23.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

selected for enlargement.³⁶² For this “filmic guide,” Renau requested a wealth of images of rural Spain.³⁶³ In addition, it was he who also was in charge of collecting the folkloric material for the exhibition, ceramics and costumes.³⁶⁴ He framed these actual objects with his large photomurals, giving them context (fig. 33). For example, there was a large photomural of the interior of a rural home with ceramics, woven chairs, and baskets that framed actual pieces of pottery, basketry, and woodwork; Mendelson explains that the physical presence of the objects reinforced the photographic evidence.³⁶⁵ Thus, the whole installation was choreographed as film or a play would have been.

In this exhibition, Renau also implicitly merged the popular art displays with political propaganda; this connection was stronger in a series of photomurals dedicated to the government’s protection of Spain’s artistic patrimony.³⁶⁶ Mendelson explains that in his central photomural on the evacuation of the works of art from the Museo del Prado in Madrid, Renau depicted El Greco’s *Trinity* being lifted out of flames caused by enemy fighter planes, while two arms reached up toward Madrid’s skyline (fig. 34). A stenciled truck indicated that art was being taken to safety to the inexpugnable Serranos towers of Valencia. For Mendelson, this photomontage not only conveyed the protection of art by the government; it also emphasized its religious tolerance, since *Trinity* was a sacred painting;

³⁶² Ibid., 23.

³⁶³ The Museo del Pueblo sent four albums with high-quality photographs by Ortiz de Echagüe. Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 129.

³⁶⁴ Mendelson, *The Spanish Pavilion Paris, 1937*, 24–25.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 28.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 29.

this way, the photomontage would serve to appease the international community, which was suspicious of religious persecution under the Republic.³⁶⁷

Once you were finished absorbing all the art and its political messages in the third floor, you would arrive to the only stairway that would bring you down to the second floor. Miró's *Pagés Catalá en Revolta* (*Catalan Peasant in Revolt*, also known as *El Segador* or *The Reaper*) (1937) (fig. 35), brightly illuminated by a skylight above, would lead your way. His gigantic figure occupied almost the height of two floors, 18 feet, since the mural ran from the first landing of the stairway on the second floor to the third floor ceiling. The Reaper's prominent head was the focus of the composition; he was shown in profile, with just one eye directing an angry gaze towards an unseen enemy. It might have seemed that he was shouting something, with his mouth wide open and his teeth out. In the absence of a complete body, the long neck that supported his head appeared to spring from the earth, as did the arm that held a sickle, the symbol of farm labor and communism. His other arm and hand was directed towards the sky, with its fingers open to grab the blue star that floated above. Perhaps this star was somehow related to the one on *El Pueblo Español*. Behind him, an explosion of bubbles or clouds evoked an apocalyptic vision.

Miró himself selected the wall in which he would execute his mural, a highly visible large wall that accompanied the visitor in his descent through the interior stairway.³⁶⁸ Although we do not know the exact colors of this mural, since it was dismantled and lost after the pavilion closed, we know from Freedberg and Martín Martín's reconstruction that the peasant's figure was completely painted in red, black, and white, the colors that

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 29–30; Renau had been charged with the difficult task of safeguarding Spain's artistic treasures before arriving to Paris. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 131.

³⁶⁸ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 95.

dominated in the pavilion. This was not surprising, since Miró had decided to paint in situ, motivated by a desire to achieve the closest possible relationship with the rest of the ensemble; by working there, he could experience the “space and spirit” of the pavilion’s architecture and its exhibits (fig. 36).³⁶⁹ The pavilion’s architecture was black, gray, red, and white: several of its walls were painted white, one of the walls of the façade to the right was painted brownish-red, the patio awning was white, the stones of its base were gray, its metallic structure was painted white or brownish-red. The *Guernica*, like Renau’s photomurals, ranged in tones between black and white; the *Mercury Fountain* spilled the silvery mercury over black plates and had a vibrantly red disc; *El Pueblo Español*’s monochrome cement was painted in brownish-red and earthy tones and its winding path, white; Picasso’s Boisgeloup sculptures were done in white cement; and *La Montserrat* had a grayish patina. For Martín Martín, this color palette was not only a visual pleasure: it clearly referred to war and the color of the political left.³⁷⁰ Yet in Miró’s mural, the black-red-and-white figure of the peasant stood out against the bright yellows, blues, greens, and whites of the swirling background.

Miró was one of the first artists invited to participate in the pavilion.³⁷¹ Miró had arrived to Paris almost a year earlier, in 1936, after fleeing from Spain; it appears that the events in his nation affected him deeply: his *Pagés* was only the second painting he could execute after the creative blockage he suffered.³⁷² His mural was, like the other works in the pavilion, profoundly ideological and symbolic. Miró declared, “Of course I intended it as a

³⁶⁹ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 533.

³⁷⁰ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 45–46.

³⁷¹ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 526.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 548, 588.

protest... The Catalan peasant is a symbol of the strong, the independent, the resistant. The sickle is not a communist symbol. It is the reaper's symbol, the tool of his work, and, when his freedom is threatened, his weapon."³⁷³ Perhaps Miró was trying to distance himself from the communist party at this time. The artist told Martín Martín that he picked this character because the *pagés* with the sickle was a great symbol in Catalonia; a character that throws his deepest roots in the land, coming to life with it.³⁷⁴ Freedberg notes that Miró's peasant was recognizable by the red woolen cap or *barettina* and by the sickle.³⁷⁵ Since the 1600s, the authentic leaders and guardians of Catalonia's separatist movement had been the peasants, who loved freedom.³⁷⁶ Like the peasant that could use his work tool, the sickle, to defend himself, Miró regarded his work, a painting, as an effective weapon against political threat. For Freedberg, Miró also wanted to convey the peasant's helplessness, as he was "assailed and tormented on all sides" by the "malevolent celestial bodies" that crowded him and "bruised" his head, forcing it into "painful contortions."³⁷⁷ She considered that his flaccid, shriveled arms, which looked like they lack physical strength, also conveyed helplessness.³⁷⁸ This was his way of suggesting to the international audience that the Catalan peasant, although strong, urgently needed their help.

³⁷³ These remarks were elicited from Miró during an interview conducted by Aline B. Saarinen and published in *Times*, Section 2, May 24, 1959, p. 17; quoted in: *Ibid.*, 553, 589.

³⁷⁴ In Miró's words, "*Escogí este personaje, con una estrella azul proyectándose en la superficie, porque el payés, con una hoz es un gran símbolo en Cataluña, personaje que echa sus raíces más profundas en la tierra, materializándose con ella.*" Miró quoted in: Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 173.

³⁷⁵ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 541; This cap looks like the bonnet rouge that French revolutionaries wore in the 1700s. The Phrygian-style cap had its origins in Ancient Asia Minor but in early modern France it came to symbolize liberty. "Phrygian Cap," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed August 27, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/art/Phrygian-cap>.

³⁷⁶ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 543.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 548.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

The sense of urgency of the *Pagés'* plea might have also been emphasized by Miró's technique, not only the painting's contorted lines and shapes. The artist executed the work in situ during an impressively short period of time: two weeks, probably during the first half of June.³⁷⁹ Miró himself narrated the partially spontaneous character of his creative process, explaining that he had painted directly on the wall, standing on scaffolding, and that he had previously done a few light sketches to "vaguely know" what he would confront; however, the execution of this work was "direct and brutal."³⁸⁰ Miró chose to paint directly on the wall's *celotex* panels, which greatly attracted him because of their rough texture and color.³⁸¹ This caused the granular appearance of the paint surface and the blurring of edges in his circles of color, as the art critic Jacques Dupin described in 1938: "As Miró had so often done before, he let himself guided by the nature of his medium, leaving the composition board panel uncoated, to serve as his ground. The texture is that of fine crushed straw, with the consistency of blotting paper or felt, and it seems to call for a very free graphism, vaporous spots of color in mists or halos, as well as for delicate blendings of color."³⁸² This technique might have inspired a sense of passion and frenzy on the viewer. In addition, by painting directly on the rough surfaces of the pavilion's walls instead of painting on a canvas and then installing the work like Picasso did, Miró's mural had an enhanced physical, organic relationship with the pavilion's architecture.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 528.

³⁸⁰ In Miró's words, "...*pinté directamente subido en unos andamios en la misma sala del edificio, hice previamente unos ligeros croquis para saber vagamente a lo que debía atenerme, pero como le he dicho, la ejecución de ésta obra fue directa y brutal.*" Miró quoted in: Martín Martín, *El Pabellón Español*, 173.

³⁸¹ Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español*, 95.

³⁸² Dupin, Jacques, *Miró's Life and Work*, New York, 1962, p. 298 Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 530–31.

After this aesthetic climax, you would have arrived to the second floor, where visitors found a didactic exhibition that informed you of Spain's national resources and the activities of its people. This section documented the efforts of the Spanish government: the Catalan schools; its Pedagogical Missions, which attempted to make the classic arts of Spain known to the entire peninsula in the form of a traveling museum, theater, and small circulating libraries with phonographic and radio equipment; the University City of Madrid; the mercury mines of Almadén; Spanish agriculture; and a complete documentation of Catalonia.³⁸³ These displays consisted primarily of large photographs and labeled photomontage, again by Renau and his assistants. A great emphasis was placed on the illustration of the effects of the war on the public and private activities of the Spanish people.³⁸⁴ Upon finishing your tour, you would have arrived to an exit door that led you directly outside to an exterior stairway. On your way out, you would have still encountered some propagandistic photomurals mounted on the vertical metal structure to which this stairway was attached on the main façade of the building. As memories of specific aspects of your visit began to fade, you would still remember the highlights of your aesthetic encounters and the great collective message that this group of people wanted to transmit.

If it had not been for the progressive leaders in Paris, such as Araquistain, who had a marked preference for avant-garde art, the resulting pavilion would have been very different.³⁸⁵ The architects and artists of the pavilion who were in Paris enjoyed an unusual freedom to work because the Spanish government was unable to monitor the pavilion more

³⁸³ Transcript of the report submitted by the Spanish Republic at the close of the 1937 World's Fair for inclusion in the French Commissioner General's eleven-tome account of the exhibition; translated by Catherine B. Freedberg, pp. 717-26; *Ibid.*, 722-23.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 444.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

closely because of the war. Araquistain, Gaos, Sert, and Aub were able to contain the protests of a contingent of the far left who argued vehemently for works of greater popular accessibility and who advocated for the adoption of a social realism similar to that of the totalitarian pavilions.³⁸⁶ Although there were lots of realist works of art in the Plastic Arts section and a wealth of propagandistic photographic works throughout the pavilion, the dominant feel in the pavilion was modern. The pavilion's architecture was unapologetically avant-garde, and the pavilion leadership reserved the most significant and visible spots for avant-garde art. These avant-garde works were the pivots around which the rest of the exhibition revolved; along with the architecture, they guided the visitor's movements and thoughts as she toured through a monumental representation of a nation's culture and aspirations.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 145–46.

Chapter 2

The Artistic Avant-garde and the Invention of the New Monumentality

The American art of the 1940s and 1950s is still frequently regarded as a reaction against and an emphatic break from the heavily politicized, socially oriented integrationist art that developed both in Europe and the US during the 1930s, which most of the time took the form of social realism, regionalism, or streamlined classicism. However, this point of view ignores the fact that some of the modern art produced in the US in the late 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s emerged as an outgrowth of the integrationist art of the 1930s. The canon, as established by the influential critic Clement Greenberg, immortalized the notion of modern art as a move away from politics, figuration, symbolism, and representation. Yet, contrary to what Greenberg argued in 1939, Picasso, Joan Miró and the rest of the avant-garde did not detach themselves from society to dedicate their work exclusively to solving formal problems.¹ Avant-garde art never was the pure, completely detached, and individualistic “art for art’s sake” that Greenberg described. Picasso, who had become interested in creating monuments in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and who was still revered by the younger avant-garde generation, painted for the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World’s Fair a politically driven mural that would be seen by a large international audience — *Guernica*. So did Miró: *Pagés Catalá en Revolta*. In fact, shortly after painting his mural, Miró declared that he wanted to go beyond easel painting in order to come closer to the public.²

¹ Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” (1939) in: Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 7.

² Picasso designed monumental sculptures for public settings during the late 1920s and early 30s. He envisioned monuments for the seaside at Cannes. He also created three studies for a monument to his friend and champion Guillaume Apollinaire; but all three were rejected. Catherine Blanton Freedberg, *The Spanish*

A few members of the avant-garde, among them Picasso, Miró, Stuart Davis, Alexander Calder, Fernand Léger, Hans Hoffman, Isamu Noguchi, and others who had witnessed or participated directly in the integrationist, socially oriented projects of the 1930s, attempted to continue with this tradition during the late 1940s and 1950s, both in Europe and in the US — however recasting it as a new aesthetic. What these artists reacted against was the overtly literal, propagandistic figurative styles of the 1930s; not the idea that art had to be socially — or even politically — engaged. They were convinced that avant-garde art too had a social purpose; that it had the responsibility to help shape modern life. But in order to achieve this goal, modern art had to reach the masses — something that was not happening effectively in this period: avant-garde art was encapsulated in modern art museums, a few progressive art galleries, and the living rooms of a few highly educated elites.

In the context of the integrationist practices of the Federal Art Project (FAP) and world's fairs, where art played an important role in the shaping of collective consciousness, it is not strange that a few avant-garde members concluded that the best way to connect with the masses was to place their art in the public realm so that it could become a fundamental component of the urban environment. The avant-garde's fight for the presence of modern art in the public spaces of American cities would culminate with the integrationist projects of the 1950s and the proliferation of modern public art in the 1960s.³ This battle, which started in the 1930s with the participation of several avant-garde artists in the FAP, would gain great

Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), 319; Miró wrote that he sought a larger studio "...to try, insofar as possible, to get beyond easel painting, which in my opinion sets itself a narrow aim, and to come closer, in terms of painting, to the human masses of whom I have never ceased thinking." Miró quoted in: Ibid., 575.

³ Art historian Harriet Senie argues that it was essentially the modern architects' insistence on the need for the integration of the arts that triggered the wave of public sculpture in America in the late 1960s. Harriet Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation, and Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), vii.

momentum in the late 1940s and 1950s thanks to Léger's intervention. Léger constituted an important link between the art and architecture worlds. He enabled the emergence of a discourse that would be extremely influential in the architecture world and that would have significant repercussions in the art world: the New Monumentality. Léger passionately argued in the 1940s that avant-garde art had to fulfill an important political and social role by becoming architecture's partner in constructing the public monuments of the future: art had to express and help spread the values of a newly reformed, democratic, and modern society.

Léger's idea was clearly articulated in the interdisciplinary manifesto "Nine Points on Monumentality" (1943), which he co-authored with José Luis Sert, the architect of the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris fair, and the influential architectural historian Sigfried Giedion. After working on their respective integrationist projects at the 1937 Paris fair, Léger and Sert met again in New York City during the war years. There, they frequently participated in multidisciplinary discussions with other members of the American and European avant-garde and intelligentsia. Giedion, Léger, and Sert, who became very close during this time, most likely shared their experiences and their common frustration with the seemingly endless rejection of avant-garde proposals for important public projects. Out of their shared frustration and multidisciplinary conversations, a multidisciplinary manifesto emerged. With "Nine Points," they formally connected for the first time the idea of the integration of the arts to the idea of modern monumentality, arguing that the integration of the arts was a necessary step towards the achievement of this important public task. This manifesto, which represents a turning point in architectural history, has rarely been discussed in art history despite the fact that it affected the development of modern art in significant — though perhaps not readily apparent — ways. With a renewed interest in the integration of

the arts, architects increasingly sought to collaborate with artists and include modern art in their monumental buildings; likewise, renowned modern artists enthusiastically seized the unprecedented opportunity to materialize their vision of a socially relevant avant-garde art.

The 1937 Spanish Pavilion: A Model to Follow

The Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair was a life-changing experience for Sert and the artists that participated in its creation. As I have argued in Chapter 1, the pavilion was the first successful incarnation of modern monumentality. It practically destroyed Lewis Mumford's argument of the "Death of the Monument" (1937) at its inception. This modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* compellingly challenged the prevalent idea that modern art and architecture were incapable of generating moving monumental expression. In conjunction with the other successful experiences of integration of the modern arts at the 1937 fair, the Spanish Pavilion fed Léger and Sert's idea that the integrationist approach presented a solution to the common problem they faced: the artistic and architectural avant-garde's banishment from the most emblematic public commissions of their time and the consequential isolation of their work from society. As I have also argued in Chapter 1, the situation for avant-garde artists and architects interested in working in the public realm looked very grim both in Europe and in the US in the late 1930s. The avant-garde had been expelled from many countries in Europe. In the US, artists had been allowed to participate in public projects in a very limited measure through the FAP and world's fair assignments; however, these opportunities had been very few and far apart and had been realized in relatively minor or ephemeral projects. Certainly, these commissions would not leave a significant or permanent imprint on the city and on collective consciousness.

Giedion, Léger, and Sert considered this situation untenable, especially when the conventional art and architecture styles that the US and other Western democratic governments favored had been coopted by fascism and Nazism. That classicizing art and architecture styles had been co-opted by Nazism and fascism had become patently evident at the 1937 Paris fair, as the Italian, Russian, and German pavilions demonstrated (figs. 10 & 18). These pavilions' styles were very similar to the one preferred by the US government in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as demonstrated by the art and architecture of complexes such as the Federal Triangle in Washington D.C. (1926-1947). Giedion, Léger, and Sert felt that once World War II was won, a new kind of monumentality would replace the retrograde buildings and art that had been populating urban environments on both sides of the Atlantic; in the postwar, such monuments could no longer serve to represent Western democratic ideals (fig. 37). In a radical critique of the early modern *tabula rasa* attitude towards history, Giedion, Léger, and Sert based their approach to monumentality on examples of the past like ancient temples or more recent *Gesamtkunstwerks* where art had had an important role as the most effective communicator of a society's values and aspirations. They thought that these models certainly could be translated to a modern language, as exemplified by the 1937 Spanish Pavilion.

New York City: a Fertile Ground for the Idea of the New Monumentality

It is not by chance that the New Monumentality theory began in New York. This city provided a fertile ground for the idea that art had an important role to play in society as an integral part of the human environment. As I explained in the Introduction to this thesis, in the US the massive FAP and the theoretical debates of the 1930s had fueled the thought that

the fine arts were inextricably linked to the formation of national identity and to issues of collective representation.⁴ In addition, in New York, the cultural capital of the nation, the influential Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the FAP had enthusiastically adopted the concept that modern art should be an integral part of life and help shape it, an idea that had been promoted by the influential thinkers John Dewey and Mumford.

The FAP, which was still running in the year that “Nine Points” was written, had been populating urban spaces and public buildings such as schools, libraries, and hospitals all across the US with monumental works of art that sought to represent the ideals and values of the modern American society (fig. 38). Holger Cahill, the leader of the FAP, had been strongly influenced by Dewey.⁵ In the Foreword to *Art for the Millions*, a book meant to be published as an FAP report in 1939,⁶ Cahill argued: “Our society today does not yet afford a life in which art is intimately connected with everyday vocations. Our democracy has not yet become the life of ‘free enriching communion’ of which John Dewey speaks. But we hold to that idea as the pattern of a program for our society, and we are beginning to translate it into

⁴ During this decade, there had been widespread debates on what constituted American art, as well as cries for a genuinely American artistic expression and desires to link democracy to the arts. As art historian Joan Saab explains, in this period defining the arts had become a means for defining national identity. A. Joan Saab, *For the Millions: American Art and Culture between the Wars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 8–9.

⁵ Greta Berman, *The Lost Years: Mural Painting in New York City under the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, 1935-1943* (New York: Garland Pub., 1978), 17; Although both Cahill, the director of the FAP, and Barr, the director of MoMA, were profoundly influenced by Dewey's desire to integrate art and life, the models they created to redefine art and disseminate it to the masses took different forms throughout the decade. For an excellent account on this subject, see: Saab, *For the Millions*, 12–13.

⁶ The Washington Office of the FAP conceived this book in 1936 as a national report in order to establish a favorable public image and counter charges of “boondoggling.” The exhibition “New Horizons in American Art” at MoMA that same year had the same objective. Although this book was ready for publication in 1939, it was never published. Francis V. O'Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1973), 13–14.

action.”⁷ Cahill’s words demonstrate that the FAP program leaders intended to weave art into all aspects of everyday American life, including the built environment.

New York provided a unique opportunity for avant-garde artists interested in placing their work in public space through the FAP. In comparison to the program in other American cities, the New York FAP was much more open to employing avant-garde artists. Although most of the FAP’s visible commission-specific works were executed in social realist or regionalist styles, New York was the exception to the rule. In the city, an impressive 20 percent of FAP murals were abstract, semi-abstract, or surrealist.⁸ This unusual occurrence might be explained by the greater exposure to avant-garde art that artists and patrons of New York enjoyed and also by Burgoyne Diller’s management of the city’s Mural Division; Diller was an abstract painter who worked incessantly for the acceptance of modern art and actually reached out to recruit modern artists to paint murals.⁹ A few members of the avant-garde, such as de Kooning — who was actually influenced by Léger during one of these public commissions¹⁰ — as well as Davis and Arshile Gorky, eagerly participated in FAP projects in the New York area during the 1930s.

In New York, prominent art historians also promoted the idea of a social modern art. Meyer Schapiro, an art history professor at Columbia University, expressed the conviction

⁷ Cahill, “American Resources in the Arts,” Foreword to *Art for the Millions* (1939), reprinted in: *Ibid.*, 33–49.

⁸ Berman, *The Lost Years*, 136.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 137–38.

¹⁰ De Kooning worked under Léger’s supervision for a FAP project, a series of murals for the French Line Shipping Company in New York. De Kooning was impressed with Léger’s “direct approach to painting.” He considered that Léger worked like a “sign painter... He made lots of sketches, threw them around on the floor, and picked one out. The one he picked always clicked... It was a very direct way of painting. There was no mystery on how he did it. Yet, when you saw it finished, you wondered why it worked so terrifically.” Willem de Kooning, John Elderfield, and Lauren Mahony, *De Kooning: A Retrospective* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2011), 68–70.

that art was inextricably linked to the social, to human life in two essays: “The Social Bases of Art” (1936) and “The Nature of Abstract Art” (1937).¹¹ In “The Social Bases,” Schapiro argued that art was always intimately tied to the life of modern society and sought to debunk the myth that modern art was a detached, individualistic, completely free enterprise.¹² In “The Nature of Abstract Art,” he expanded on this idea, referring specifically to abstract art.¹³ Although these essays were somewhat forgotten in art history, they most likely reached the New York avant-garde at the time.¹⁴ The first essay was read at and published as the proceedings of the First American Artists’ Congress against War and Fascism held in New York in February 1936, where Schapiro spoke amongst Mumford, Davis, Rockwell Kent, and George Biddle, and other speakers, and where 360 delegates from all over the country listened.¹⁵ The second essay appeared in *Marxist Quarterly*, a magazine published by a group

¹¹ Art historian Francis Francina argues that with these essays, Schapiro was reacting to Barr’s explanation of the history of modern art in the MoMA exhibition catalogue *Cubism and Abstract Art* (1936). According to Francina, Barr saw art as essentially explainable in terms of certain formal interests; his model was taken up and informed much of the subsequent histories and explanations of modern art. Francis Francina, *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 7–9. However, Barr’s activities at MoMA, where he fought incessantly to integrate art with life, demonstrate that he was not at all unconcerned with art and its social context.

¹² Schapiro wrote: “...the apparent isolation of the modern artist from practical activities, the discrepancy between his archaic, individual handicraft and the collective, mechanical character of most modern production, do not necessarily mean that he is outside society or that his work is unaffected by social and economic changes. The social aspect of his art has been further obscured by two things, the insistently personal character of the modern painter’s work and his preoccupation with formal problems alone... But if we examine attentively the objects a modern artist paints and the psychological attitudes evident in the choice of these objects and their forms, we will see how intimately his art is tied to the life of modern society.” Meyer Schapiro, “The Social Bases of Art,” *Social Realism: Art as a Weapon*, 1973 1936, 120–21.

¹³ Schapiro asserted: “To say that abstract painting is simply a reaction against the exhausted imitation of nature, or that it is the discovery of an absolute or pure field of form is to overlook the positive character of the art, its underlying energies and sources of movement... It bears within itself at almost every point the mark of the changing material and psychological conditions surrounding modern culture.” Meyer Schapiro, “Nature of Abstract Art,” *Marxist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (January 1937): 90–91.

¹⁴ Thomas Crow, “Modern and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts,” in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, by Francis Francina (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 240.

¹⁵ T Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 19; See note 13 in: Crow, “Modern and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts,” 260.

of Trotskyite intellectuals at Columbia University (that included Schapiro) who promoted the idea that abstraction had to be employed as a critical language and that the artist needed to work independently from political parties and totalitarian ideologies.¹⁶ As art historian Serge Guilbaut argues, Schapiro's thinking liberated many American painters who were tired of their role as "propaganda illustrators" by demolishing the "illusory independence" of the abstract artist and at the same time by undermining the criticism by some factions of the left that abstract art was the "product of an ivory tower" and bore no relation to society.¹⁷ Schapiro's essays are relevant to the New Monumentality because they gave voice to modern artists, like Stuart Davis, who were interested in creating works of art for public projects. They reinforced these artists' idea that modern art was no less social than social realism or regionalism and therefore deserved its place in public architecture and the city.

Léger: A Key Link Between the Idea of Collective Art and Modern Monumentality

Léger's role in the formulation of the New Monumentality theory was crucial: he was the link in the chain that tied the art world notion that avant-garde art was social in nature and could shape modern life with the concept of modern monumentality, which was becoming a pressing issue in architecture in the early 1940s. As I explained in Chapter 1, Léger had been interested in the social role of art since the 1920s and had increasingly sought to apply his ideas in monumental murals that integrated with architecture, which he did not realize fully until the 1937 Paris fair.

¹⁶ Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea*, 24–25.

¹⁷ At this time, many artists who embraced the leftist philosophy rejected the notion of "pure" art; yet, they also felt discouraged by the aesthetics preferred by the left and saw in Schapiro's ideas a way out of this conundrum. Schapiro's argument presupposed that abstract art was rooted in the social fabric, making it possible for many left-wing artists to work in this style without feeling guilty. *Ibid.*, 22–26.

Léger gravitated naturally towards architects and architecture because of the nature of his work. During the 1930s, both Mumford and the French-American modern architect Paul Nelson — who practiced his profession in Paris after the 1920s and was Léger's acquaintance — noted that Léger's work had an "architectural" or "spatial" quality and that it was socially relevant. In his review of Léger's touring exhibition "Fernand Léger: Painting and Drawing" at MoMA (September 30 to October 24, 1935), Mumford proposed that the most interesting quality of Léger's painting was that it fulfilled an "architectural function" and concluded: "If Le Corbusier is more of a painter than Léger, it is equally true that the latter is a sounder architect than Le Corbusier."¹⁸ Mumford astutely sensed the affinity of Léger's painting with architecture and its social role as the expression of collectivity, as well as the relationship between Léger and Le Corbusier's work: they both transgressed the boundaries of each other's professions. Similarly, Nelson found that there was a "spatial" quality in Léger's paintings that "commanded the space around them even more than murals... there is a temptation to look at the surrounding space rather than the wall... A painting of Léger no longer wants a wall to hang on — it demands a room... Léger is making true architecture necessary..."¹⁹ With these words, Nelson suggested that Léger's art called for a modern architecture that could stand up to his challenge. More importantly, the architect

¹⁸ Despite his criticism of Léger's style, Mumford asserted that his work was interesting because the artist had an "honest architectural intention. He has sought to give a painting the strength and impersonality of a good communal expression like a building... helping the eye of the architect and the ordinary spectator to look upon pure line, volume, and color as the essential ingredients of an architectural composition." Lewis Mumford, "The Art Galleries. Léger and the Machine," *The New Yorker* (New York), October 19, 1935, reprinted in: Lewis Mumford, *Mumford on Modern Art in the 1930s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); The other venues for Léger's touring exhibition were The Art Institute of Chicago, the Milwaukee Art Institute, and the Renaissance Society. Carolyn Lanchner, "Fernand Léger: American Connections," in *Fernand Léger*, by Fernand Léger et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 40–41.

¹⁹ Nelson quoted in: Lanchner, "Fernand Léger," 44.

felt that Léger made “space come alive” through his art; and that the more space came alive, the more it became “socially relevant.”²⁰

Léger’s exposure to the integrationist Dutch movement De Stijl and his close association with the architect and painter Le Corbusier during the mid-1920s and 1930s have been noted in scholarship as possible influences in the development of his integrationist position.²¹ Yet, the artist’s idea of a socially relevant or “collective” art — a term that he had used in his lecture at the CIAM 4 congress in 1933 — might have been also greatly inspired by the American FAP during the 1930s.²² Léger travelled to the US three times during this decade; during all three trips he either examined closely integrationist art by others or participated directly in the design of FAP projects. It is also interesting to note that two of these trips took place before his pivotal experience with artistic integration at the 1937 Paris fair — perhaps Léger had in mind the American experience when he painted his 1937 fair murals. During his first visit to the US in the early fall of 1931, Léger visited the murals by José Clemente Orozco and Thomas Hart Benton at the New School for Social Research; in addition, it appears that he sketched ideas for a mural project at the recently opened River Club.²³ Art historian Carolyn Lanchner argues that in the fall of 1934, when James Johnson Sweeney invited Léger to come to the US for a one-man show at the Renaissance Society in

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Fernand Léger, *Functions of Painting* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), xxvi; Judi Freeman, “Léger, Fernand,” *Grove Art Online*, n.d.

²² Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 94. For an explanation of Léger’s ideas in this talk refer to Chapter 1.

²³ This first visit lasted seven weeks, during which he attended an exhibition of his work at the John Becker Gallery in New York and a screening of his film *Ballet Mécanique* at the Arts Club of Chicago. Apparently Léger had developed a relationship with the Austrian-born architect and sculptor Frederick Kiesler, who acted as his guide to New York during this first visit. Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 36–37, 41, 47; Léger’s visit to Benton and Orozco’s murals and his alleged work for a mural at the River Club was reported in *The New York Times*. Fernand Léger et al., *Fernand Léger: The Later Years* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1987), 45.

Chicago,²⁴ Léger was very excited to come because he thought that in the US his chances to execute large mural paintings and to engage in large collaborative projects were greater than in France; Léger wanted to materialize his dream of creating public mural paintings that would bring modern art to a wider audience.²⁵ During his five-month stay in the US, which lasted from October 4, 1935 to March 7, 1936, Léger renewed old friendships while trying to find remunerative work, especially in mural painting.²⁶ He was in frequent contact with important art and architectural world people: Sweeney, who at the time was a “friend” of MoMA, his old friend Alexander Calder, and Frederick Kiesler, an Austrian-born architect and sculptor who had immigrated to the US in 1926 and had acted as his guide to New York during his first visit.²⁷

Léger’s associations might have helped him to secure participation in a couple of FAP projects; however, in the end these projects fell apart and he was not able to apply his idea of a modern collective art during his second trip to the US. Diller, the head of New York’s FAP Mural Division, recalled how “Fernand Léger wanted to paint — above all to have a mural in America”; however, no one wanted to hire him.²⁸ Although a group of artists led by Davis demanded the government hire Léger, the Mural Division determined that it could not employ him because he was foreign.²⁹ However, Diller and the FAP leadership thought that it would be a good idea to use him because of his name; so they decided that

²⁴ This invitation resulted in the touring exhibition “Fernand Léger: Painting and Drawing,” which had MoMA as its first venue from September 30 to October 24, 1935.

²⁵ Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 37–40, 45–46.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 41, 44, 47.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 36, 44; “James Johnson Sweeney - Dictionary of Art Historians,” accessed September 3, 2015, <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/sweeneyj.htm>.

²⁸ “Poverty, Politics and Artists: 1930-1945. The Artist Speaks: Part V,” *Art in America* 53, no. 4 (September 1965): 99.

²⁹ Berman, *The Lost Years*, 42; “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 99.

Léger lead a team of American artists to execute a group of murals.³⁰ A committee of the WPA that included Sweeney authorized this project.³¹ Léger ended up collaborating with a group of young US-based artists in early 1936: Harry Bowden, Byron Browne, Mercedes Carles, Willem de Kooning — who would later become one of the leading figures of Abstract Expressionism — and George McNeil (figs. 39 & 40).³² Apparently, Léger did considerable work on the project; he came to the Mural Division's studio to work with these artists and also worked a lot in his own studio. Someone suggested that the vast mural could be sited in the pier of the French Line Shipping Company in New York Harbor.³³ Diller and Léger took the presentation sketches to the French Line's director.³⁴ Diller recalled how he introduced Léger and the director said: “‘I know that man,’ and started off in a tirade in French... [He] practically told him: ‘You worker, you communist.’ Léger was terrifically indignant about the thing... so we picked up and walked out. That was the end of the project.”³⁵ Art historian Simon Willmoth offers a plausible hypothesis for the director's strong reaction against Léger's persona: the artist had made derisive comments about the French Line's steamship *Normandie's* interior decoration during a lecture he gave at MoMA on the occasion of the touring exhibition “Fernand Léger: Painting and Drawing,” which had

³⁰ Diller explained that Léger would be in charge of establishing a theme and the other artists would create variations on that theme. Of the project, he asserted: “It might make a very interesting project. It was exciting for all of us to do it, and dealing with Léger was a very great pleasure.” “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 99.

³¹ Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 46.

³² “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 99; Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 46.

³³ “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 99; Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 46.

³⁴ Two extant gouaches show that the project was based on Franco-American and nautical themes; the abstract compositions include national flags, ship names, and amoeboid forms that related to the enlargements of plankton exhibited at the Museum of Natural History in New York. Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 46.

³⁵ “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 99.

been organized by the Renaissance Society in Chicago and had MoMA as its first venue from September 30 to October 24, 1935.³⁶

During this lecture, entitled “The New Realism,” Léger openly challenged before an elite and avant-garde audience the idea of a detached, elitist modern art. He criticized the French for the disappointing interior decoration of the *Normandie*, which for the artist was “...a retrograde conception which belongs somewhere between the taste of the eighteenth century and the taste of 1900.”³⁷ Instead, Léger extolled Radio City Hall at Rockefeller Center as “the true expression of modern America... America knows how to make things luxurious while making them simple. And it is a social luxuriousness, luxury through which crowds circulate.”³⁸ Perhaps Léger was thinking of *Men Without Women* (1932), a mural that Davis had executed for Radio City, when he articulated these words (fig. 41). With his lecture, he challenged the notion of a detached modern art and advocated for avant-garde art with a social purpose: art that expressed the values of modernity and at the same time created an enhanced environment for the masses to enjoy — an environment that would be open to all. His great interest in Radio City would resurface during his third trip to the US in 1938-39, when he would actively seek to place his work in this project. He clearly saw a stark contrast between the exciting modern architecture that he saw in New York — skyscrapers and Radio City — to the tired classicist styles of art and architecture that were favored by the French government. Despite his failure to secure commissions, his examination of the

³⁶ Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 46; The other venues were The Art Institute of Chicago, the Milwaukee Art Institute, and the Renaissance Society. Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 40–41.

³⁷ Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 113.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

progressive architecture of the city motivated Léger to conclude that the possibility of having modern art in the public realm was much greater in the US than anywhere else in Europe.

Although the French Line project never materialized, it was an exciting and influential experience for both Léger and the young US-based artists that collaborated with him, especially de Kooning. Léger was deeply moved by his involvement in this collaborative mural project, writing: “The French Line project is done. I found some young collaborators [who weren’t] bad at all — a tremendous excitement — it was touching and intensely felt.”³⁹ Lanchner suggests that this collaboration possibly produced a lasting influence on de Kooning, whose late works exhibit formal aspects of Léger’s work.⁴⁰ But besides inspiring a few formal elements in de Kooning’s work, the French Line experience might have motivated this artist to pursue another monumental, integrationist project: the mural he would execute for the exterior of the Hall of Pharmacy at the 1939-40 New York World’s Fair (fig. 42).⁴¹

Léger got involved in another FAP project during his second trip to New York: he participated in the early stages of a mural scheme for William Lescaze’s Williamsburg Housing Project.⁴² Léger valued his involvement in this project even more than the French Line project, since it was a low-cost housing development with 5,000 tenants that, in the artist’s words, afforded a great opportunity to “establish a connection between the collective masses and the art of their time.”⁴³ However, he did not get to paint any murals there; this

³⁹ Léger quoted from a letter dated March 9, 1936 in: Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 46.

⁴⁰ Ibid.; “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 99.

⁴¹ De Kooning’s participation at the 1939-40 New York fair is described further in this chapter.

⁴² Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 46.

⁴³ Ibid.

project was developed after he had left for France. Yet, several avant-garde artists got to paint murals in this project in 1936 and 1937: Davis, Francis Criss, and Balcomb Greene, among others.⁴⁴ It is likely that directly or indirectly, Léger exercised some degree of influence in these artists as well.

Léger's discourse also reached art historians in the US at the time. Lanchner suggests that Schapiro's ideas on the social nature and role of art might have received some influence from Léger. Léger and Schapiro had met and had come to like each other during Léger's second visit to the US; it is very likely that they discussed their common concerns about the social role of art.⁴⁵ During this trip, the artist shared with Schapiro his enthusiasm for a mural he had painted in the summer of 1935 for *La Salle de la Culture Physique* in the French Pavilion of the Brussels International Exhibition; and also discussed with him the difficulty in securing commissions for murals and the importance of returning to the figure in these projects.⁴⁶ Lanchner suggests that some of Léger's ideas might have percolated into Schapiro's essay "The Nature of Abstract Art," which he wrote in 1937, the year after Léger left for France.⁴⁷

MoMA: A Promoter of the Integration of the Arts

Another important player in the emergence of the New Monumentality discourse in New York was the Museum of Modern Art. Under Barr's leadership, MoMA applied and

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Lanchner, "Fernand Léger," 41, 47.

⁴⁶ In Schapiro's words, "He regretted that people who knew how to make figures were incapable of constructing a picture and that people who could construct a picture would not paint figures... but if there were people who could do both then it would be a stimulus to mural painting." Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 45–46.

⁴⁷ Lanchner observes that Schapiro concluded this essay with one of Le Corbusier's slogans: "Architecture or Revolution!" Le Corbusier was one of Léger's close friends. Lanchner, "Fernand Léger," 47.

promoted the concept that modern art had to be integrated with aspects of everyday life and help shape it through exhibitions such as “Useful Objects Under \$10” (1938-43). It ardently promoted the integration of the other fine and applied arts with architecture. Partially influenced by his 1927 trip to the Bauhaus, the German school that aimed to bring architecture and the visual and applied arts into one unity, Barr had envisioned a museum dedicated not just to painting and sculpture but also to less-acknowledged contemporary art forms like photography, architecture, design, and film.⁴⁸ Under Barr, MoMA developed an integrationist philosophy. For example, in 1932, the museum put on the show “Murals by American Painters and Photographers” (May 3 – 31), which illustrated the growing interest in American artistic expression and art forms that could fulfill important public functions along with architecture. As I explained in the Introduction to this thesis, MoMA also aimed to actively promote these practices among modern artists.⁴⁹ MoMA became a patron of art by commissioning mural designs from 65 artists specifically for this show; and also attempted to persuade modern architects to let avant-garde artists paint murals in their buildings.⁵⁰ Although most of the mural studies exhibited were realized in social realist or regionalist styles, there were a few avant-garde murals by O’Keeffe and Davis (fig. 5). Evidently, the idea was to demonstrate that modern artists were as capable as conventional artists of working in this medium — and that they were eager to do so.

⁴⁸ Museum of Modern Art (New York), “MoMA Starts: An 80th Anniversary Exhibition,” accessed August 8, 2015, <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2009/momastarts/>.

⁴⁹ In the catalogue, the committee declared that they wanted to “encourage American artists to study the possibilities of this medium of artistic expression.” Museum of Modern Art (New York), *American Art of the 20’s and 30’s* (New York: Published for the Museum of Modern Art by Arno Press, 1969), 5.

⁵⁰ In the catalogue, Lincoln Kirstein, the director of the exhibition, assigned the responsibility for the future of American mural painting to avant-garde architects, who, according to him, had often been reluctant to accept this medium. *Ibid.*, 7–8.

MoMA kept promoting integrationist, monumental art through the 1930s. In 1936, it held the show “New Horizons in American Art” (September 14 – October 12), a comprehensive exhibition of the work done under the Federal Art project during its first year of activity.⁵¹ In the catalogue to the exhibition, Cahill emphasized the important socio-cultural, monumental role of FAP murals: “Mural painting is not a studio art; by its very nature it is social. In its great periods it has always been associated with the expression of social meanings, the experience, history, ideas and beliefs of a community. There is no question here that the work here presented clearly indicates an orientation in this direction.”⁵² Interestingly, Cahill’s words foreshadowed Giedion, Léger, and Sert’s conception of modern monumentality as an expression of collective thinking and feeling.

In addition, in 1938 MoMA hosted an important exhibition that highlighted the multidisciplinary work of the Bauhaus School, in which avant-garde artists such as Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, László Moholy-Nagy, and Josef Albers had taught alongside modern architects before the Nazis shut down the school in 1933. This significant exhibition, entitled “The Bauhaus 1919-1928” took place from December 7, 1938 to January 30, 1939. Through the display of nearly 700 objects in wood, metal, canvas and paint, textiles, paper, glass, and “other substances” MoMA intended to exemplify “the entire philosophy and practice of the remarkable school in Germany, now closed, that has had such a great influence on modern art and modern design.”⁵³ In a press release, MoMA highlighted the union of the arts at the Bauhaus by quoting the German architect Walter Gropius’ declarations of 1919, when he founded the school: “The complete building is the final aim of

⁵¹ Museum of Modern Art (New York), “Press Release,” June 15, 1936.

⁵² Cahill quoted in: Berman, *The Lost Years*, 56.

⁵³ MoMA press release dated December 2, 1938.

the visual arts... Architects, painters and sculptors must recognize anew the composite character of the building as an entity.”⁵⁴ The exhibition catalogue also emphasized the synthetic goal of the Bauhaus curriculum as restated in 1923 by Gropius: “...a new and powerful working correlation of all the processes of creation... Architecture unites in a collective task all creative workers, from the simple artisan to the supreme artist.”⁵⁵ With these words, Gropius had assigned a great responsibility to architects, who were to become the orchestrators of this modern artistic unity. The exhibition catalogue provided many examples of artistic integration, including photographs of Josef Albers’ stained glass window for the Sommerfeld House in Berlin (1922) and several murals and reliefs in the Weimar Bauhaus by its wall-painting workshop.

With the Bauhaus exhibition, MoMA also suggested that the integration of the arts was important because it was a way to address the social problem of the artist’s role in society — an idea most likely inspired by the FAP project. MoMA positioned the Bauhaus as an exemplary institution that helped to integrate artists into modern economy.⁵⁶ In addition, in the preface to the exhibition catalogue, Barr emphasized the important legacy of the integration of the arts as related to the integration of art and modern life that the Bauhaus educational program had left.⁵⁷ He also argued that in schools of design, the “purely creative and disinterested” artist should work side by side “as a spiritual counterpoint” to the practical

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Herbert Bayer, Ise Gropius, and Walter Gropius, *Bauhaus 1919-1928* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1990), 28.

⁵⁶ The MoMA press release dated December 2, 1938 stated: “...the Bauhaus bridged the gap between the so-called ‘fine arts’ and industry. It also began to solve the problem of fitting the artist to take his place in the machine age.”

⁵⁷ Barr wrote: “...the school of design should, as the Bauhaus did, bring together the various arts of painting, architecture, theater, photography, weaving, typography, etc., into a modern synthesis which disregards conventional distinctions between the ‘fine’ and ‘applied’ arts...” Bayer, Gropius, and Gropius, *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, 7.

technician for the benefit of the student.⁵⁸ Evidently, the idea of the integration of the modern artist into society was considered a critical issue in this period, and the participation of artists in the construction of the human environment was regarded as a solution to this problem.

MoMA's Bauhaus exhibition was generally well received by press art critics, which demonstrates a general consensus among the intelligentsia about the validity of the integrationist approach to art and architecture. In two articles in the *New York Times* the art critic Edward Alden Jewell asserted that the Bauhaus' work was extremely interesting, as were the contents of the exhibition, although he criticized its "chaotic" installation.⁵⁹ Similarly, in the *New York Times* Jane Cobb emphasized the importance of this exhibition: "everyone ought to look at it, not from anti-Nazi sentiments, but because the Bauhaus idea is felt in so many fields of modern life... Every time you sit in one of those tubular metal chairs you are acknowledging its importance."⁶⁰ The rapid spread of Bauhaus ideas in the US also demonstrates that there was a great interest in the integrationist approach at the time.⁶¹ This interest was fueled by the presence of several ex-Bauhaus teachers in American schools. These teachers, who had fled from the Nazis, had begun introducing Bauhaus methods in the US: Albers at the Black Mountain College in North Carolina in 1933; Moholy-Nagy at the

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Edward Alden Jewell, "Decade of the Bauhaus: Museum of Modern Art Opens Exhibition Dealing with Institution's Activities by the French," *New York Times*, December 11, 1938; Edward Alden Jewell, "Reception Opens Bauhaus Display: German Movement Has Wide Variety of Creative Work at Modern Art Museum," *New York Times*, December 7, 1938.

⁶⁰ Jane Cobb, "Living and Leisure," *New York Times*, December 25, 1938.

⁶¹ Besides exhibitions in other parts of the nation, the Bauhaus had been represented in New York in the Machine Age exhibition in 1927 and at the John Becker Gallery from January to February 1931. Other exhibitions in the US were: an exhibition of modern painters and typography at Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts in 1928; an exhibition at the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art, Cambridge, from December 1930 to January 1931 (under the direction of Lincoln Kirstein, who was the director of the murals exhibition at MoMA in 1932); and at the Arts Club of Chicago in March, 1931. Bayer, Gropius, and Gropius, *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, 205.

New Bauhaus in Chicago in 1937; Gropius and Marcel Breuer at the Department of Architecture at Harvard University in 1937; and Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig Hilbersheimer, and Walter Peterhans at the Armour Institute (later Illinois Institute of Technology) in Chicago in 1938.⁶²

Despite MoMA and the intelligentsia's acknowledgment of the importance of the integrationist approach to art and architecture, avant-garde artists and architects faced a significant challenge with the public FAP commissions: their work was almost always uncoordinated. Frederick Kiesler, an architect, theoretician, furniture and stage designer, who had been a member of De Stijl group in the early 1920s, noted this problem in 1935. In a letter to Cahill, he wrote: "Murals and sculptural work are now being introduced in strange surroundings where they were never intended to be and as yet there is certainly not one example of an entirely modern conceived whole!"⁶³ In fact, most WPA muralists had to produce works for buildings that have been already completed without having any contact with their architects; as a result, some of them chose to ignore the architecture completely, some did their best to fit their work to it, and others painted portable mural panels without knowing where their work would be installed.⁶⁴ This situation motivated Kiesler to suggest to Cahill the creation of a "sort of exhibition building" where a "spirit of organic co-ordination of architecture, painting, sculpture and industrial service design" could be displayed.⁶⁵ In his suggestion to Cahill, Kiesler was most likely thinking of an American version of the Bauhaus.

⁶² In addition, former Bauhaus students were teachers at the Laboratory School of Industrial Design in New York and at the Southern California School of Design. *Ibid.*, 215.

⁶³ Kiesler quoted from letter to Holger Cahill, dated October 30, 1935, in: Berman, *The Lost Years*, 42.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

MoMA's Bauhaus exhibition also highlighted the relationship between art and politics; it helped to cast modern art as a victim of a totalitarian regime and implied its association with democratic ideals. In the press release for the exhibition, the museum emphasized that the National Socialists had closed the Bauhaus in 1933.⁶⁶ In the exhibition catalogue, Barr declared: "American Bauhaus students began to return; and they were followed, after the revolution of 1933, by Bauhaus and ex-Bauhaus masters who suffered from the new government's illusion that modern furniture, flat-roofed architecture and abstract painting were degenerate or Bolshevistic."⁶⁷ One could read between his lines that modern art, under attack from this autocratic government, had been welcomed by the democratic US. The press quickly took on this message and chose to highlight this issue as well: the headline for a *New York Times* article read "Nazi-banned Art Exhibited Here" and the subheading read: "Institution had Wide Influence on Modern Design Until it Displeased Hitler Regime."⁶⁸ In her *New York Times* article, Cobb quoted a "daunted but determined woman" who said after a first glance, "I don't expect to *enjoy* it, exactly, but if Hitler has banned it I think we *ought* to look at it."⁶⁹ The casting of modern art and architecture as victims of Nazism and their unstated linkage to democratic ideals ended up being beneficial to the avant-garde, since some people would at least try to see their work with more sympathetic eyes. It would also feed the argument that modern art and architecture were more appropriate than conventional art and architecture to represent the modern and democratic American society in the public monuments of the postwar.

⁶⁶ MoMA press release dated December 2, 1938.

⁶⁷ Bayer, Gropius, and Gropius, *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, 6.

⁶⁸ "Nazi-Banned Art Is Exhibited Here: Museum of Modern Art Honors Bauhaus, Famous School, by Showing Examples of Work," *New York Times*, December 4, 1938.

⁶⁹ Cobb, "Living and Leisure."

Borne Out of Frustration: The New Monumentality Discourse

The New Monumentality discourse was borne out of the artistic and architectural avant-garde's frustration with the continued isolation of their work from the public. Despite the promotion of integrationist modern art by MoMA and a few FAP leaders, architectural and artistic avant-garde works for public buildings and spaces were not always well received by patrons and the public, not even in the New York area. For example, Gorky's murals for the Newark Airport (1935-37) had been a matter of public controversy (fig. 8).⁷⁰ Diller recalled how even their initial acceptance by the Art Commission of the City of Newark had been problematic:

...I deliberately presented it [one of Gorky's sketches] as decoration so they wouldn't quibble about art. But one of them, probably brighter than the rest, said, 'Well, that's abstract art, isn't it?' That unleashed the devil. They started, of course, a tirade of questions and cross-questions and accusations and statements about modern art. Beatrice Windsor, who is socially and economically their equal, shamed them into accepting it.⁷¹

At this time, avant-garde art frequently generated this kind of response; otherwise, Diller would not have felt the necessity to pass it off as "decoration." Without the cultured Windsor's intervention, Gorky's murals would have never been executed.

Despite the fact that Gorky had attempted to make his abstract murals more accessible to the public by incorporating recognizable objects such as airscrews, a wheel, or wings, local people protested when Gorky was nearing their completion; had it not been for the counter protests organized by Davis and the New York FAP to defend the murals, their

⁷⁰ Arshile Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective* (Philadelphia; New Haven: Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2009), 89.

⁷¹ "Poverty, Politics and Artists," 99.

final approval would have been denied.⁷² Art historian Jody Patterson argues that Gorky's nod to realism in these works was probably related to his idea that murals constitute a social art that must appeal to broad audiences.⁷³ Nevertheless, Gorky's victory was short-lived; the murals were either painted over or destroyed during alterations of the building during the 1940s, and only two survived under layers of paint.⁷⁴ This case is a testament to the great challenges that avant-garde artists working in the public realm faced. Gorky's airport murals, along with his work of the 1930s, were also forgotten in art history: They were considered a "low point" in his career; only his 1940s work, dominated by surrealist aspects, was critically acclaimed and Gorky was positioned as an "umbilical cord" between European Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism.⁷⁵

In addition, avant-garde artists who attempted to place their work in the public realm might have also felt appalled by the criticisms they received from the press. For example, Jewell gave a bad review to all the abstract murals included in an exhibition held at the Federal Art Gallery in 57th Street in 1938. This show included work produced by WPA artists in the New York region, displayed through enlarged photographs of murals already installed in projects such as the Administration Building on Ellis Island, the City Home on Welfare Island, the House of Detention in Greenwich Village, and the Newark Airport, as well as

⁷² In his essay for *Art for the Millions*, Gorky described how he had "dissected" the airplane into its constituent part and, with the resulting recognizable "symbols," he had attempted to convey to the public a "new vision of our time" without resorting to the ubiquitous realistic styles: "These symbols, these forms, I have used in paralyzing disproportions in order to impress upon the spectator the miraculous new vision of our time." Gorky, "My Murals for the Newark Airport: An Interpretation" (1939), reproduced in: O'Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions*, 72–73; Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky*, 83, 89.

⁷³ Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky*, 75, 82–84; in fact, Gorky was convinced that one of mural painting's most important functions was to "educate" the public on a "far-too-little-popularized art." O'Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions*, 73.

⁷⁴ Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky*, 89.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

color sketches and panels for other planned projects.⁷⁶ Jewell called into question the appropriateness of Davis' *Swing Landscape* (1937), an abstract mural that he had painted for the Williamsburg housing project (fig. 43):⁷⁷ "...in the very act of entering the long main gallery... already you are there... you are there — at any rate in the sense that this well-oiled huge crochet, this non-objective inebriant, cancels everything else within range."⁷⁸ For Jewell, abstract artists had not yet found their way in this medium; they were simply trying to enlarge their easel designs when the nature of the mural required a different approach: "amorphous shapes" or "kidney-shaped blobs" were not appropriate elements to compose murals.⁷⁹ Jewell implied that murals had to mean something for people and that abstract art — which so many avant-garde artists were experimenting with — was incapable of communicating.

The rejection of avant-garde styles for public projects by critics, patrons, and the public might have originated in the widespread feeling that a work of art whose content was beyond the comprehension of the average person could not serve "the cause of the people."⁸⁰ As art historian Francis V. O'Connor explains, pure abstraction and overt personal expressiveness were in disagreement with the dominant notion that only what is useful could be considered beautiful.⁸¹ In fact, what dominated American artistic production in the late

⁷⁶ Edward Alden Jewell, "Commentary on Murals: Exhibition at the Federal Art Gallery Presents WPA New York Region Survey," *New York Times*, May 29, 1938.

⁷⁷ The FAP originally commissioned this work for the Williamsburg Housing Project in Brooklyn, New York. However, the mural was instead sold through the Federal Art Gallery in New York, ending up at the Indiana University Art Museum. "Indiana University Art Museum: Picturing America," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.indiana.edu/~iuam/online_modules/picturing_america/resources.php?info=9.

⁷⁸ Jewell, "Commentary on Murals."

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ O'Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions*, 23.

⁸¹ Ibid.

1930s was not abstraction, expressionism, or surrealism, but what Davis disparagingly called “American-history-in-costume” or “domestic naturalism” in his essay for the FAP report *Art for the Millions* (completed in 1939, but never published).⁸² This might explain the emergence of supposedly more easily graspable styles such as “social-surrealism,” a lesser-known socially oriented movement represented by Walter Quirt, Louis Guglielmi, and James Guy, who attempted to use surrealist devices such as the “dreamscape” to broaden the scope and impact of their social commentary.⁸³ The great pressure that avant-garde artists must have felt at this time probably led to some compromises. For example, Guglielmi, who worked for the FAP and whose easel paintings for the project are among his most famous works, explained in his essay for *Art for the Millions* that he had been motivated to think about the “American Scene” and had turned from an initial “honest translation” of the French painters, in particular the Surrealists, to “a more literal and objective representation” of the life that surrounded him.⁸⁴

Even among the FAP ranks there were many who were wary of introducing avant-garde art in public spaces and buildings. For example, Diller recalled how there was a strong prejudice against one of the most significant avant-garde styles at the time: “I was very interested in abstract painting. They [FAP leaders] felt that there was no place for it at the time because they felt the project should be a popular program and while they didn’t attempt

⁸² Ibid. In his essay “Abstract Painting Today,” 1939, Davis complained that after the initial genuine effort to incorporate and understand the new forms and meanings introduced in the Armory Show of 1913, the progressive spirit waned and “cowardice” in the form of “amiable self-satisfaction” had crept back in the “cultural picture.” He strongly criticized the subject matter depicted in most of the art of the time: “Domestic naturalism, the chicken yard, the pussy cat, the farmer’s wife, the artist’s model, Route 16A, natural beauties of the hometown, etc., became the order of the day in painting.” Davis’ full essay was reprinted in O’Connor, *Art for the Millions*, 121-27.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Guglielmi, “After the Locusts” (1939); Ibid., 113.

to invalidate or question the validity of the work, abstract art had no place because you did have a great problem of building up public sympathy and understanding.”⁸⁵ It appears that the FAP leadership expected — and dreaded — the controversy that would ensue every time they decided to commission site-specific work from an avant-garde artist.

Sometimes avant-garde artists were completely excluded from the FAP, as it happened with Noguchi, who despite his repeated efforts was rejected by the WAP in 1936.⁸⁶ Noguchi, who was impressed by the Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco, whom he had met in 1931, had become increasingly interested in creating “socially relevant” public sculpture in the early 1930s.⁸⁷ When he created *Monument to the Plough*, a *Monument to Ben Franklin* and *Play Mountain* (all in 1933), Noguchi was trying to “...find a way of sculpture that was humanly meaningful without being realistic, at once abstract and socially relevant” (fig. 7).⁸⁸ With these works, Noguchi attempted to “go beyond what I considered the entrapment of modern art and its isolation.”⁸⁹ Thus, like Léger, Gorky, and Davis, he wanted to end the isolation of modern art from the public. Yet, all these works remained unrealized.

It was the avant-gardeness of Noguchi’s art that precluded its inclusion in the human environment. Noguchi’s visionary integrationist approach to monumentality in the early 1930s was ahead of its time in formal terms: *Monument to the Plough* and *Play Mountain* foreshadowed the earthworks of the late 1960s and 1970s. Ironically, his conceptual

⁸⁵ “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 96.

⁸⁶ Hayden Herrera, *Listening to Stone: The Art and Life of Isamu Noguchi* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 156.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 125, 134.

⁸⁸ Isamu Noguchi, *Isamu Noguchi, a Sculptor’s World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), 21.

⁸⁹ Isamu Noguchi and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Isamu Noguchi: The Sculpture of Spaces* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980), 13.

approach completely belonged in the US of the 1930s, where the idea that modern art had to be useful and had to integrate with life was so prevalent. As art historian Hayden Herrera explains, with his early 1930s proposals for giant works of public sculpture, Noguchi intended to make sculpture an integral part of lived experience: he wanted to shape human space.⁹⁰ Noguchi made efforts to create abstract art that was meaningful to the masses. *Plough* fulfilled clear symbolical functions: the artist alluded to the story about the steel plow proposed by Jefferson and Franklin that had “finally broken the Western plains.”⁹¹ It was a giant striated earthwork that had the shape of a triangular pyramid; on top, Noguchi placed a plow, the symbol of agriculture. Herrera argues that this work was in great part inspired by the artist’s desire to connect with the American heritage.⁹² *Play Mountain* was somewhat different; instead of engaging the symbolic like *Plough*, it was a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk* where the limits between art, architecture and landscape became blurred in the service of the public. He conceived it as a public park, a playground for children, where they could climb the mountain and ride down a water chute; sled in the winter and swim in the summer in its pool. In the evenings, people could have listened to music there, since Noguchi included a bandstand for concerts.⁹³ *Monument to Ben Franklin* was instead a vertical metal structure that looked like a modern version of an obelisk (fig. 44). The structure was tied to the ground with steel cables forming a virtual pyramid around it. Noguchi again used recognizable symbols here to represent Franklin’s discovery: at the bottom, he placed a key; above it, an

⁹⁰ Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 134; Noguchi’s closeness to architecture might have had something to do with the close relationship that he developed with the architect, designer, and inventor Buckminster Fuller. Noguchi had become close to Fuller after they met in 1929. Grace Glueck, “The Architect and the Sculptor: A Friendship of Ideas,” *The New York Times*, May 19, 2006, sec. Arts / Art & Design, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/19/arts/design/19nogu.html>.

⁹¹ Noguchi and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Isamu Noguchi: The Sculpture*, 13.

⁹² Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 135.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 136.

upward bolt of lightning; and on top, a kite.⁹⁴ His use of representational imagery is not surprising since he was also responding to the bases of a 1933 competition that invited sculptors to produce works “emblematical of the history of America.”⁹⁵

None of Noguchi’s proposals, which could have constituted the earliest and most exciting examples of modern monuments in the US, were built at the time.⁹⁶ This was most likely a great disappointment for the artist. After he joined the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), the first of the federal art projects, in 1934, he presented *Monument to the Plough* and *Monument to Ben Franklin*, but both were rejected categorically.⁹⁷ Moreover, when he presented *Play Mountain* in the spring, he was thrown off the PWAP because of the avant-garde nature of his work.⁹⁸ In addition, Noguchi took the model to Robert Moses, the New York City Department of Parks Commissioner, and in the artist’s words, he was “met with thorough sarcasm.”⁹⁹ Early in 1935, the artist tried to join the FAP but he was rejected once more.¹⁰⁰ Disillusioned and frustrated with the WPA, but undeterred in his intentions to produce art with a social purpose, Noguchi decided to travel to Mexico, where he worked for the Mexican government creating the relief mural *History Mexico* (1935-36) for a hall of a

⁹⁴ For Herrera, this structure, which recalled the telegraph towers that were beginning to appear in the American landscape, revealed Noguchi’s admiration for modern engineering feats. Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 36.

⁹⁶ Although the model for *Monument to Ben Franklin* was exhibited in 1934 in Philadelphia, the monument did not get built until 1984. Ibid., 137.

⁹⁷ A PWAP official noted that the Washington office “turned their thumbs down... so hard they almost broke their thumbnails.” Ibid., 140.

⁹⁸ Noguchi was told that he would be reinstated if he would be “willing to undertake work of a more purely sculptural character.” Ibid.

⁹⁹ Noguchi, *Isamu Noguchi, a Sculptor’s World*, 22.

¹⁰⁰ The official reason for his rejection was that he made a good living as a portraitist. Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 146–47.

market in a working-class neighborhood under Diego Rivera's supervision (fig. 45).¹⁰¹ In this work Noguchi employed leftist imagery and symbols. Clearly, after his disappointing experiences in the US, he felt the need to compromise his aesthetic position and compose a modernized social realist style. Upon his return to the US in 1936, Noguchi published the article "What's the Matter with Sculpture?" in *Art Front*, in which he advocated for public art, for art that was useful, a part of life.¹⁰² Even though Noguchi was never admitted in the FAP, he agreed with the project's goals and the prevalent views of the time about the integration of modern art and life. In 1938, Noguchi finally succeeded in getting a commission to execute a mural relief for the exterior of the Associated Press Building in Rockefeller Center by winning a national competition.¹⁰³ The result, *News* (1938-40), was extremely innovative in its materiality — the artist worked in stainless steel — however, its style was, like that of the Mexican mural, a nod to social realism (fig. 46).¹⁰⁴ Once more, an important competition had called for symbolic imagery.¹⁰⁵ Despite these aesthetic compromises, Noguchi would continue his quest to shape the urban environment — and modern life — with avant-garde art throughout his entire career, creating many proposals for

¹⁰¹ Herrera explains that Rivera gave Noguchi permission to participate because his proposal included the standard leftist symbolism. Although years later Noguchi would look back on this mural as being propagandistic, at the time working alongside friends on a public mural that expressed shared political values was for him uplifting. *Ibid.*, 148–50.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 149; In this article, Noguchi argued: "In conclusion, it is my opinion that sculptors as well as painters should not forever be concerned with pure art or meaningful art, but should inject their knowledge of form and matter into the everyday usable designs of industry and commerce." Isamu Noguchi, Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, and Bruce Altshuler, *Isamu Noguchi: Essays and Conversations* (New York: H.N. Abrams in association with the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, 1994), 19.

¹⁰³ Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 162.

¹⁰⁴ The sculptor would later say that the work's models were "hangovers" from what he called his social realist propagandistic mural in Mexico. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ The competition called for a relief panel with imagery symbolic of the American press. *Ibid.*

monumental works of public sculpture, memorials, and monuments.¹⁰⁶ Two of these were for integrationist projects that derived directly from the New Monumentality discourse: the *United Nations Playground* (1952, unrealized) and his sculptural landscapes for the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (1956-58).¹⁰⁷

The frequent rejection of the avant-garde by private patrons and the government during the 1930s and early 1940s did not stop other modern artists from trying to insert their work in public spaces and buildings. Davis, an abstract artist, was one of the most outspoken advocates for the inclusion of modern art in the public environment; a mission that he would continue through his work in the 1950s.¹⁰⁸ In his essay for *Art for the Millions*, he strongly criticized what he considered the “cultural monopoly” in the US that had been promoted by museums trustees and staff, art critics, dealers, and art publications who wanted to “play safe.”¹⁰⁹ Davis claimed that abstract art had been a powerful force that had influenced the modeling of most tangible and intangible aspects of the human environment; as such, it

¹⁰⁶ For example, in 1941 he would design *Contoured Playground*, a sculptural landscape that obviously derived from his early *Play Mountain* of 1933; and in 1947, *Sculpture to be Seen from Mars*, a 10-mile long earthwork that may have been intended as a memorial for his father or for mankind. Ibid., 167, 240; In addition, in 1945, Noguchi collaborated with architect Edward Durell Stone for a competition to create Jefferson Memorial Park, in St. Louis, Missouri. Between 1961 and 1966, he embarked in a long collaboration with renowned architect Louis Kahn, with whom he designed five proposals for a true modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* that clearly derived from his early experiments of the 1930s: Riverside Drive Playground in New York City. However, Robert Moses turned down Kahn and Noguchi’s project each time. Isamu Noguchi and Ana María Torres, *Isamu Noguchi: A Study of Space* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2000), 57, 136–47.

¹⁰⁷ I discuss these projects in the Conclusion of this thesis.

¹⁰⁸ In 1955 Davis painted the mural *Allée* for Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa. He declared “The character of this composition was initiated in consideration of its moral function. It is seen not only as a painting, but as a wall integrant in the Color-Space simplicity of Eero Saarinen’s architectural interior.” In 1956, he also made a study for a mural for Conference Room 3 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. In 1957, he painted *Combination Concrete* for the lobby of the Heinz Company Research Building in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. National Collection of Fine Arts (US), *Stuart Davis Memorial Exhibition, 1894-1964* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1965), 44, 47.

¹⁰⁹ O’Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions*, 122.

deserved its place in modern society.¹¹⁰ Like other surrealist or abstract artists who participated in WPA projects, Davis sought to justify what others viewed as “anti-social behavior” and to articulate the social role of avant-garde art.¹¹¹ In addition, he was very invested in the idea that there had to be a “people’s art” and that art and democracy had to be linked.¹¹² For him, this meant making art more widely available: “the fight of democracy is a fight for more art, not less.”¹¹³ Davis applied these ideas directly in his work. He submitted his *New York Mural* study to the 1932 MoMA exhibition and got to execute a few semi-abstract murals, all in New York: *Men Without Women* (1932) for the Men’s Lounge of the Music Hall in the Rockefeller Center; *Swing Landscape* (1937), the colorful and vibrant abstract composition for the Williamsburg housing project that art historian H. H. Arnason described as an “abstract jazz symphony” that translated “the American scene into abstract color harmonies and dissonances”¹¹⁴; the WNYC mural for Studio B at the New York City’s Municipal Broadcasting Studio (1939), commissioned by the FAP along with other murals by the modern painters Louis Schanker, John von Wicht, and Byron Brown; and the *History of Communications* (1939) for the Hall of Communications at the New York World’s Fair of 1939-40 (figs. 41 & 43).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ “Abstract art has been and is now a direct progressive social force... In addition to its effect on the design of clothes, autos, architecture, magazine and advertising layout, five and ten cent store utensils, and all industrial products, abstract art in its mural, easel and graphic forms has given concrete artistic formulation to the new lights, speeds, and spaces which are uniquely real in our time... Radio, for example, is the very essence of abstraction.” Davis, “Abstract Painting Today” (1939), reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 126.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹² Saab, *For the Millions*, 24.

¹¹³ Davis quoted from a journal entry dated 1937 in: *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ National Collection of Fine Arts (US), *Stuart Davis Memorial Exhibition, 1894-1964*, 27, 32.

¹¹⁵ Eleanor Bittermann, *Art in Modern Architecture* (New York: Reinhold, 1952), 33–34; Berman, *The Lost Years*, 144; National Collection of Fine Arts (US), *Stuart Davis Memorial Exhibition, 1894-1964*, 50–51.

The dedication ceremony of the Municipal Broadcasting Studio murals — which took place on August 2, 1939 and was broadcast — is interesting because it provides an insight on the arguments that avant-garde architects and artists employed to defend and rationalize the importance of the presence of their work in the public realm. The architect Eugene Schoen applauded the FAP for placing before the general public works of art that before then had only be accessible to the elite.¹¹⁶ Prefiguring the arguments contained in “Nine Points,” Schoen also pleaded for the collaboration of architects, the muralists, and sculptors: “The time has come when architects and sculptors and painters should recognize that they are each one arm of one and the same aesthetic idealism; they should express in a unified way the things they feel in common. ...An integral whole is the acme of perfection.”¹¹⁷ Schoen’s words illustrate the feeling that existed among many members of the architectural and artistic avant-garde: that their work expressed the values of modern society, and that it made no sense to have modern buildings with “classical and reactionary decorations” and “old-fashioned buildings” with modern decorations.¹¹⁸ During this ceremony, Davis also spoke; like Barr had done in the Bauhaus exhibition, he also invoked politics as a reason to accept and employ modern art in public buildings: “I say it is a crucial cultural importance when a city institution like the Municipal Broadcasting Company comes forward in sponsorship of abstract art... one of Hitler's first acts was to outlaw abstract art.”¹¹⁹ By mentioning Hitler, Davis suggested that accepting modern art in the public buildings of the time amounted to a significant political affirmation of democracy and freedom.

¹¹⁶ *Dedication of WNYC Studio Murals*, accessed September 6, 2015, http://www.wnyc.org/story/dedication-of-wnyc-studio-murals/?utm_source=sharedUrl&utm_medium=metatag&utm_campaign=sharedUrl.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

The sculptor David Smith also felt the need to defend modern art and in particular the presence of sculpture in architecture and the urban environment. In his essay for *Art for the Millions*, the artist pointed out the important relationship that he believed existed between architecture and sculpture: “The function of sculpture in our democratic society depends primarily on its relation to architecture. Not because it is a lesser art, but by the nature of its function and sponsorship. Its purpose here is usually to lend aesthetic identity to the building’s function, either with the mechanics carried on inside, or to complement the atmosphere created by its exterior.”¹²⁰ Smith suggested that sculpture was an indispensable element in architecture, since it could communicate the purpose and nature of a building and thus guide people about their activities. He considered that sculpture had primarily a social purpose: the “free-creative,” meaning sculpture that was conceived independently for purely aesthetic reasons, was only a secondary use of sculpture.¹²¹ He advocated for the integration of modern architecture and sculpture — in particular, abstract sculpture — arguing that they were kindred spirits that represented their period.¹²²

Interestingly, Smith also prefigured some of the arguments discussed by the proponents of the New Monumentality theory. He set past models of artistic integration as examples: “Neolithic, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and medieval architecture all utilized the arts of their time. Vital modern architects will find it necessary to maintain this same cultural

¹²⁰ Smith, “Modern Sculpture and Society” (1939), reproduced in: O’Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions*, 90.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² In his essay, Smith wrote: “Modern building cannot disregard sculpture anymore than it can disregard mechanics. The sculptural point of view popularly known as abstract is progressive and definitely one of its age. It is closely related to modern building and designing, and is reflected in virtually every present-day object. It is the art of today and an important contemporary force.” Ibid., 92.

concept.”¹²³ However, these past models would have to be reimagined in modern terms. Like Gropius at the Bauhaus, Smith assigned the responsibility for modern artistic integration to architects. In addition, like Giedion, he decried the lack of modern art in public buildings.¹²⁴ He blamed economic interests for the elimination of sculpture from contemporary architecture; and emphasized that it was the government’s responsibility to ensure that the public monuments of the future preserved the nation’s contemporary culture by integrating modern art into them.¹²⁵

Meanwhile, in the period between his second and third trips to the US (1936-38), Léger too had to keep defending his aesthetic position against attacks in France, even despite his fame. As I explained in Chapter 1, he was allowed to execute several murals at the 1937 Paris fair; however, disappointingly none of these were in buildings destined to become permanent monuments in the city. In addition, Léger became the center of heated debates among the leftist ruling party about what kind of art could best communicate to the working class. He and some other members of the party argued that the public had the right to enjoy modern art, while others maintained that art for the masses had to be representational and intellectually scaled down.¹²⁶ Although at this time Léger wanted to align his work to the ruling Front Populaire, he refused to yield to the party’s social realism, which triggered

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ An explanation of Giedion’s viewpoints on the subject is provided later in this chapter.

¹²⁵ In his essay, Smith asserted: “Commercial disregard of culture has usually obliged the architect to build on the real-estate manipulator’s theory of short life. For this reason sculpture which has been included in the architect’s original specifications has often been eliminated. There is no need for government building... to build on the theory of scarcity. To use the nation’s talent and maintain its culture creates a fiscal asset as great as or greater than the building itself.” O’Connor and Federal Art Project, *Art for the Millions*, 92.

¹²⁶ Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 44, 47; In 1936, Léger participated in the debates on “The Dispute over Realism” at the Maison de la Culture, with Aragon and Le Corbusier. Léger, *Functions of Painting*, xxxiii.

attacks from a few party members.¹²⁷ Léger fired back with an essay that was published in New York in 1937: “The New Realism Goes On.” In this essay he called those who thought that the public could not understand modern art elitist: “This is an insult to these men of a new world... They are told that *le moderne* is not for us; it is for the rich, a specialized art, a bourgeois art, an art that is false from the bottom up.”¹²⁸ He argued that to deprive the masses of modern art and architecture would do a great disservice to them.¹²⁹ Thus Léger reaffirmed what he had declared in his MoMA lecture of 1935: that the public had the right to an enhanced environment and to enjoy the pleasures of viewing modern art. Although Léger shared Greenberg’s concern about the increasing commodification of culture and the fact that modern art had to compete with the “the daily allurements of the movies, the radio, large scale photography and advertising,” the solution he presented was opposite to the critic’s.¹³⁰ Instead of proposing the detachment of avant-garde art from society, Léger intended to fight back the commodification of culture by bringing art out to the public realm and adjust it to the needs of the masses.

Léger’s renewed activity in the US during the late 1930s might have exacerbated both his desire for executing monumental works of art in public space and his frustration with his

¹²⁷ Matthew Affron, “Léger’s Modernism: Subjects and Objects,” in *Fernand Léger*, by Fernand Léger et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art : Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 122, 139–40.

¹²⁸ This essay was published in *Art Front. Léger, Functions of Painting*, 115.

¹²⁹ Léger asked: “And is this class of mankind to be excluded, then, from those joys and satisfactions which the modern artwork can give? Are the people to be refused ‘their chance’ of rising to a higher plastic level, when they themselves every day are inventing a new language that is wholly new? That is inexcusable. They have the right to demand that the time’s revolution be carried out, and that they in their turn be permitted to enter the domain of the beautiful, which has always been closed to them up to now.” *Ibid.*, 118.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 117; Art historian Thomas Crow explains that Greenberg saw the commodification of culture as the negation of the real thing, that is, the rich and symbolic dimension of collective life in earlier times. He saw beneath the apparent variety and allure of the modern urban spectacle only the “ruthless and perverse” laws of capital, and posited modern art as a direct response to that condition. Crow, “Modern and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts,” 242.

aborted projects. After participating in the 1937 Paris fair, Léger travelled once more to the US, arriving to New York in September 1938 and staying until March 1939.¹³¹ Léger's influence in the US at this time was greater than ever before: he began to spread his ideas in American academia. He delivered eight lectures on "the interaction of color and architecture" at Yale in 1938.¹³² He also continued to strengthen the relationships that he had with other members of the American avant-garde and intelligentsia (fig. 47).¹³³

In New York, he attempted once more to apply his idea of the New Realism in public murals. He made studies for a mural for Radio City that was never executed: a cinematic "moving mural" projected on a marble wall (ca. 1939-40) (fig. 48). The seven surviving gouaches for this project show the Statue of Liberty and New York Harbor, the only elements identifiable with the city that Léger ever painted.¹³⁴ The architect of Radio City, Wallace K. Harrison, recommended Léger to Nelson Rockefeller and pushed for his mural; however, he lost to an art committee appointed by Nelson's conservative father John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in February 1939.¹³⁵ This must have been a great disappointment for Léger; as I have argued earlier in this Chapter, he had been very enthusiastic about the possibility of participating in a project that was a true expression of a modern society.¹³⁶ Working in such a site would have

¹³¹ Lanchner, "Fernand Léger," 49, 51.

¹³² Ibid., 49.

¹³³ In November 1938, Léger met many of his old acquaintances in a large Calder exhibition at the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Gallery in Springfield, Massachusetts, where he delivered an informal talk on the exhibit among Sweeney, Giedion, Calder, and others. Ibid., 50–51; Alexander Calder, Jean Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder's Universe* (New York: Viking Press in cooperation with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1976), 307.

¹³⁴ Lanchner, "Fernand Léger," 49.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 48–49.

¹³⁶ Léger's great enthusiasm for this project was also demonstrated by his request to his friend Le Corbusier. Before obtaining the commission, Léger had asked him in a letter to write to Harrison on his behalf and ask him if there would be any opportunities to "place some kind of decorations in it [Radio City]." Ibid., 48.

afforded him an opportunity to help construct what he probably considered an authentic modern monument.

Despite this setback, Léger realized a few murals during this trip. Thanks to Harrison, Léger received a commission to paint murals on site at Nelson Rockefeller's 5th Avenue apartment in New York.¹³⁷ Yet, since this project was not in the public realm, it most likely did not satisfy his ambition. In addition, he designed a public mural for an exterior wall of The City of Light, Consolidated Edison's pavilion at the 1939-40 World's Fair in New York, also designed by his friend Harrison (fig. 49).¹³⁸ Art historian Simon Willmoth explains that this mural was comparable in size and theme to *Les Transport des Forces*, which Léger had painted for the 1937 Paris fair.¹³⁹ However, the Consolidated Edison mural might not have satisfied him fully either because even though he designed it, he did not get to paint it in person and he never saw the result except through photographs. He completed the sketches for the mural before returning to France in early March 1939; but since the building was under construction at the time, some workers painted it after Léger left.¹⁴⁰ After judging the

¹³⁷ Columbia University Libraries Archival Collections, "Wallace K. Harrison Architectural Drawings and Papers, 1913-1986 (bulk 1930-1980)," accessed October 1, 2015, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/archival/collections/ldpd_3460617/; Lanchner, "Fernand Léger," 49; Léger painted in situ a series of murals adorning the walls of a circular staircase and a decorative wall piece that surmounted a fireplace in the sitting room, situated across from Matisse's mural *La Poésie* (1938). "Fernand Léger (1881-1955) | Grande Nature Morte | Impressionist & Modern Art Auction | 1930s, Paintings | Christie's," accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/fernand-leger-grande-nature-morte-5790382-details.aspx>.

¹³⁸ This commission, like the other public mural that he would later execute in the US, the 1952 United Nations installation, came about through Harrison. Besides the mural in Rockefeller's apartment, the only other private mural that he painted in the US was for Harrison's own dining room in his house in Long Island. Lanchner, "Fernand Léger," 48-49.

¹³⁹ The Consolidated Edison mural also contained elements that were related to the generation and use of electrical power: derricks, turbines, a power station, pylons, and light bulbs. The mural also shows an early American mechanism for harnessing electrical power: a kite and a key. Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 47.

¹⁴⁰ "Fernand Léger."

photographs, the artist declared this work successful.¹⁴¹ However, as Willmoth observes, the photographs of the mural show significant differences with Léger's sketches.¹⁴² Therefore, despite the artist's words, this work most likely did not correspond to his vision and probably did not satisfy him fully. In addition, Léger knew that, like his 1937 Paris fair murals, this mural would also be destroyed after the fair closed. In fact, the Consolidated Edison mural is only known from a black and white photograph and a few extant sketches and gouaches.

The 1939-40 New York World's Fair: An Unsatisfactory Opportunity

The New York World's Fair of 1939-40 (April 30, 1939 – October 31, 1940) presented an infrequent and exciting opportunity to avant-garde artists interested in creating monumental public works. For example, Davis painted his mural for the Hall of Communications and Noguchi created a fountain for the Ford Motor Company pavilion.¹⁴³ Because of its great visibility, popularity, and cultural significance, many artists must have regarded participation in the 1939-40 New York fair as a very exciting opportunity. Like its 1937 French predecessor, the 1939-40 New York fair happened during a period of great political tension and uncertainty; Americans, who had not yet climbed out of the deep economic recession, witnessed the start of World War II across the Atlantic in September 1939. Historian Robert Rydell explains that, like they had done with the other American

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Willmoth notes that there is a significant difference between the studies for the mural and the executed mural; the studies show fields of unbounded color that enliven the composition in order to "Activate the surface of the wall." Instead, the photograph of the mural shows that these fields were transformed into rectangular blocks. In addition, the name Consolidated Edison appears on the mural and not in the studies. Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 47.

¹⁴³ Noguchi presented Edsel Ford and the Ford designer Walter D. Teague with a model of his fountain design for the building, and he won the job. Herrera explains that just like his close friend Gorky, who had built his airport composition out of abstracted airplane parts, Noguchi created an abstraction based on automobile parts: a wheel, chassis, and engine block. Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 161–62.

interwar fairs, businessmen, politicians, and intellectuals designed the 1939-40 New York fair to offer the public the prospect of salvation: they aimed to restore popular confidence in the nation's economic and political system and in the ability of government, business, scientific, and intellectual leaders to lead the country out of the depression.¹⁴⁴ Like other interwar fairs, the 1939-40 New York fair received a large attendance and became a cultural icon for the nation's hopes and future.¹⁴⁵

As in the 1937 Paris fair, art and architecture were assigned an extremely important role in the 1939-40 New York fair: they were supposed to become the builders of a "national projection" of the US. For example, the fair, which tried to sell the "World of Tomorrow" and at the same time attempted to provide a significant measure of cultural continuity, featured a monumental ensemble at its core that constituted a metaphor of the young nation: standing on the Court of Peace, James Earle Fraser's realistic 60-foot statue of George Washington gazed towards the futuristic abstractions of the *Trylon* and the *Perisphere* at the fair's Theme Center, designed by Harrison (fig. 50).¹⁴⁶ This metaphor meant to convey the message that the nation stood on 150 years of democratic development and was prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow.¹⁴⁷ Thus, like in the 1937 Paris fair, careful attention was placed on the ideological messages that art and architecture could convey to the masses.

¹⁴⁴ Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 6, 9. The other American interwar fairs were the 1933-34 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, the 1935-36 San Diego California Pacific Exposition, the 1936 Dallas Texas Centennial Exposition, and the 1937 Cleveland Great Lakes and International Exposition.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴⁶ Harrison also designed the Consolidated Edison building, the Electric Utilities Exhibit, and the Electrified Farm. Columbia University Libraries Archival Collections, "Wallace K. Harrison Architectural Drawings and Papers, 1913-1986 (bulk 1930-1980)"; Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 9, 131.

¹⁴⁷ As a fair press release explained, with the placement of Washington with his back on "years of progress" and "his eyes on the future," the "philosophical suggestion" was that "with 150 years of successful democratic government, founded by Washington and the men of his generation, behind the nation of today,

The idea that art had an important role to play in public space and that it had to be integrated with life was so dominant at the time that the whole 1939-40 New York fair was conceived by its planners as a work of art on its own right. Perhaps inspired by the 1925 and 1937 Paris fairs, Walter Dorwin Teague, one of the great industrial designers of the time, along with Henry Dreyfus, Raymond Loewy, and Norman Bel Geddes declared that the 1939-40 New York fair was a “modern art form.”¹⁴⁸ They designed its layout and organization to demonstrate that the “entire man-made world was art... Every man who plans the shape and color of an object...whether it is a painting, statue, sewing machine, house, bridge, or locomotive — is an artist.”¹⁴⁹ They attempted to aestheticize everything in the fair, including useful objects — perhaps also following the example set by MoMA.¹⁵⁰ In addition, countless sculptures and murals populated the fair’s promenades and building walls. Cahill described the fair as “an expression of the contemporary arts.”¹⁵¹ He also cited the work of architects, engineers, mural painters and architectural sculptors, as well as the use of color, light, daily programs, spectacles, pageants, and dramatic and musical events, to illustrate how

America can face the World of Tomorrow, represented by the huge, modernistic and unorthodox structures of the *Perisphere* and the *Trylon*, with the same cool assurance that the first president exhibits in his massive sculpture.” Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 131.

¹⁴⁸ Saab, *For the Millions*, 132.

¹⁴⁹ Teague quoted in: *Ibid.*, 133–34.

¹⁵⁰ In fact, in their original plan, the fair planners did not contemplate a pavilion exclusively dedicated to the display of art as it had been done in the past; instead, they attempted to aestheticize everything in the fair. However, the absence of a dedicated space to display art triggered criticisms; there were many who felt that world’s fairs should include traditional art exhibits, and articles and editorials concerning this issue proliferated in the press. Many artists considered that they were being left out from what they considered a public event, and demanded repeatedly some degree of representation in its planning. After the continued public outrage and pressure from groups such as the American Artists’ Congress, the fair planners decided to include two separate pavilions dedicated to art: the Masterpieces of Art Building, privately funded, which followed the tradition of displaying works of art by foreign artists; and the Contemporary Arts Building, which was funded by the federal government and was organized by Cahill and A. Conger Goodyear, then president of MoMA. According to Saab, the Contemporary Arts building was a final attempt to save the FAP; as this project was being dismantled, Cahill and Goodyear displayed hundreds of paintings produced by the FAP participants in this building. *Ibid.*, 131, 135–42.

¹⁵¹ Cahill quoted from *American Art Today* (1939), in: *Ibid.*, 132–33.

“the Fair as a whole is a vast mosaic of our present day culture which everywhere shows the skill and talent of the artist.”¹⁵² His words appear to describe a truly modern popular *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The artists and architects that wanted to participate in the 1939-40 fair likely felt that their work there would be significant because it would provide a panorama of the American art world, help to express the values of modern American society, and contribute to build national consciousness at such a difficult time.

Despite their high hopes and expectations, the avant-garde was disappointed with the New York fair results. Noguchi had envisioned a greater involvement at the fair. He had applied as an independent artist to produce sculpture for the fair’s public areas, but the selection committee rejected him. He had worked on a major sculpture for the façade of a Model Community Center designed by the Architects, Painters, and Sculptors Collaborative, but this center never materialized.¹⁵³ Also, Noguchi was not very happy with the outcome of his fountain, which constituted an aesthetic compromise. He described it as “an engine with chassis rampant!” and declared that the only virtue of this work had been that it taught him how to use magnesite.¹⁵⁴ As with Leger’s aesthetic compromises, Noguchi too had trouble negotiating his avant-garde sensibilities in the public realm.

Calder designed a spectacular water fountain for the 1939-40 fair that was never executed. After his participation in the 1937 Paris fair, the artist had been increasingly preoccupied with the creation of monumental public sculpture.¹⁵⁵ Worried about the events in

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ “Visions of Tomorrow: Art and Commerce at the 1939 New York World’s Fair | The Noguchi Museum,” accessed September 7, 2015, <http://noguchi.org/programs/public/visions-tomorrow-art-and-commerce-1939-new-york-worlds-fair>.

¹⁵⁴ Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 162.

¹⁵⁵ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 801.

Europe, Calder had returned to the US in spring 1938, where he continued to experiment with large-scale sheet-metal sculpture.¹⁵⁶ Art historian Catherine B. Freedberg argues that, like many of the other artists who worked in the 1937 Spanish Pavilion — including Miró, Picasso, González, and Alberto — Calder longed for opportunities that would allow him to execute large scale objects; yet, like the others, he had to content himself with drawings and models of such projects.¹⁵⁷ He had great difficulties selling his large pieces at this time.¹⁵⁸ Although Calder, as well as Miró and Picasso, would eventually be commissioned to execute important large-scale public works, this did not happen for several years.¹⁵⁹ On his own initiative, Calder designed models for two large-scale motorized mobiles for the 1930-40 fair; however he could not get any patron to sponsor them.¹⁶⁰ Calder did get a commission from the Consolidated Edison Company for the pool in front of its pavilion.¹⁶¹ In this commission, he played with the architectural idea of a fountain, perhaps inspired by the water fountains he had seen at the 1937 Paris fair. He created an “aquatic ballet” that featured 14 water jets that reached up to 50 feet in height.¹⁶² However, this project, which would have

¹⁵⁶ Calder, Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder's Universe*, 332.

¹⁵⁷ Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 800.

¹⁵⁸ In his 1938 Springfield, Massachusetts show he had sold nothing despite the presence of Léger, Sweeney, Giedion, and other distinguished guests at its opening. Calder continued having trouble selling his works in the following years; when in the 1940s he was asked about the prices of *stabiles*, he answered: “The big ones are seven hundred dollars, but we’ll take any reasonable offer.” Calder, Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder's Universe*, 307.

¹⁵⁹ Freedberg explains that of these artists, it was Calder who got called the most for important public commissions; of 52 commissions given to Calder by public or private individuals or institutions for sculptures between 1937 and 1970, no fewer than 49 were for large-scale, public pieces. Along with the increasing number of commissions offered to Calder came a proportionate increase in the scale of his sculptures. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 801, 804.

¹⁶⁰ One of these models would get built in Stockholm in the fall of 1959. Measuring 30 feet in height, the original scale intended, *Four Elements* was the largest and most ambitious motorized sculpture that Calder had ever executed. *Ibid.*, 806–07.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 804–05.

¹⁶² Calder, Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder's Universe*, 185–86.

constituted a monumental water mobile, was abandoned at the last minute because the company feared that visitors would sue them for getting splashed on.¹⁶³

Despite the exciting occurrences in the New York art and architecture world at the time, most of the art and architecture at the 1939-40 fair was not avant-garde but conventional. 1939 was a momentous year for the New York avant-garde. New venues for the display of modern art opened and the work of European avant-garde masters such as Piet Mondrian was celebrated in important exhibitions.¹⁶⁴ On May 10, MoMA opened its new permanent home in the International-Style building by Goodwin and Stone at West 53rd Street; and on June 1, the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (later Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum) opened at 24 East 54th Street.¹⁶⁵ Yet, most of the integrationist art of the fair's pavilions and public spaces was conventional.¹⁶⁶

Even artists who would later become leading figures of Abstract Expressionism during the 1940s created murals for the fair that were somewhat conventional. Philip Guston, who had studied at the Los Angeles Otis Art Institute along with Jackson Pollock in 1930, executed with his assistants a giant realist mural on the façade of the WPA building entitled

¹⁶³ This project was finally realized 15 years later when Calder proposed this same ballet to architect Eero Saarinen for his General Motors Technical Center at Warren, Michigan. Calder declared later, when speaking of the General Motors project: "lines of water can be monumental too." Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 804–05.

¹⁶⁴ The Museum of Living Art mounted Piet Mondrian's first American solo exhibition. Kooning, Elderfield, and Mahony, *De Kooning*, 80–81.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ For example, Paulanship installed at the end of Constitution Mall the enormous sundial *Time and the Fates of Man*, a streamlined classicist sculpture that depicted characters of Greek mythology. These characters were the Fates, daughters of the goddess necessity under the Tree of Life while the god Apollo looked under the guise of a crow. Bill Cotter, *The 1939-1940 New York World's Fair* (Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 21; Manship, whose work was highly praised at the time and who received many commissions for public monuments and architectural sculpture, was well known for his fountain sculpture *Prometheus* (1933–38), which serves as the focal point of Rockefeller Plaza. Janet Marstine, "Manship, Paul," *Grove Art Online*, n.d.

Maintaining America's Skills (fig. 51).¹⁶⁷ Another interesting case of aesthetic compromise was that of de Kooning's mural for the 1939-40 New York fair's Hall of Pharmacy, which was more conventional in comparison to the frankly abstract murals that he had designed for two WPA projects shortly before: the French Line and the Williamsburg housing projects (both unrealized) (fig. 40).¹⁶⁸ After he failed to see these murals realized, de Kooning received a commission in 1937 to design a ninety-foot section for the three-part mural *Medicine* on the façade of the Hall of Pharmacy (fig. 42).¹⁶⁹ Curiously, for this commission de Kooning proposed a figurative modern mural. His narrative depicted a seated mother bringing her child to a physician in a trusting attitude; their simplified human figures floated on a flat background, unified by an array of abstract geometric shapes. The reasons why de Kooning chose to execute the mural in a more conventional style are unknown. Perhaps he felt that he needed to unify his work with the other sections of the mural; perhaps a narrative scene was requested; perhaps he thought that a more accessible style was called for in this context; or perhaps he believed that by employing a more accessible style he would not risk the termination of his commission. No explanation for this stylistic difference is offered in a

¹⁶⁷ Guston had started working in the FAP mural division under Diller after he moved to New York in 1935. He worked there until 1940. He executed other public murals at the Queensbridge Housing Project (1940) in New York and at the Social Security Building (1942) in Washington, DC. Robin Plummer, "Guston, Philip," ed. Hugh Brigstocke, *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*, n.d.; At this stage, Guston was attempting to integrate the modeled architectural space of Renaissance art with the contracted, reassembled space of Cubism. Christopher Brookeman, "Guston, Philip," *Grove Art Online*, n.d.; The fair mural, like his other works in the period, owed much to the Mexican muralist movement, with which he had become familiar during his 1934-35 trip to Mexico. "Poverty, Politics and Artists," 105.

¹⁶⁸ De Kooning's French Line mural (1936) was a tripartite composition made up by interlocking abstract irregular forms on a flat light background (Fig. D) and his Williamsburg mural recalled two Picasso paintings that he likely saw at the Valentine Gallery and at MoMA in 1935 and 1936. The design of several abstract murals for the Williamsburg Housing Project was due to Diller's involvement in the project. Kooning, Elderfield, and Mahony, *De Kooning*, 57, 68-70.

¹⁶⁹ The other sections were designed by Michael Loew and Stuyvesant van Veen. De Kooning made a sketch for the mural, which professional sign painters translated to full size. *Ibid.*, 56, 80.

retrospective book of his work, which just mentions the fair mural in passing as if it were completely irrelevant or an embarrassment.¹⁷⁰

The 1939-40 New York fair caused an equivalent disappointment to the architectural avant-garde. With a few exceptions such as Sven Markelius's Swedish Pavilion or Oscar Niemeyer's Brazilian Pavilion, there were few buildings that would have captivated the avant-garde at the fair. The fair architecture was dominated by what is known as the "streamlined" style — a style that, with its rounded edges and flat surfaces, attempted to suggest the futuristic vitality, movement, and change of modernity, but which MoMA derisively characterized as "pseudo-modern."¹⁷¹ Overall, there was a noticeable absence of avant-garde art and architecture at the 1939-40 fair. There was not a repeat of the successful, avant-garde *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the 1937 Spanish Pavilion.

Forgotten in Art History: Greenberg's Attempts to Depoliticize and Decontaminate Avant-Garde Art

As I have argued earlier in this Chapter, in the late 1930s many avant-garde artists were trying very hard to materialize their vision of an integrationist, socially oriented public modern art. In addition, MoMA and a few art galleries were also promoting the idea that

¹⁷⁰ Kooning, Elderfield, and Mahony, *De Kooning*.

¹⁷¹ John McAndrew, who had succeeded Philip Johnson as director of the architecture and industrial design department at MoMA in 1937, explicitly outlined the differences between "modern" and "modernistic" or "pseudo-modern" in MoMA publications for visitors to the upcoming fair. He emphasized that streamlining had been designed as an aerodynamic strategy for use in the design of boats, planes, trains and racecars to improve speed. However, he explained, everyone was carelessly using streamlining and restyling almost everything with no real purpose. McAndrew attempted to warn the public against what he considered a misuse of modernistic decoration and re-stressed the importance of linking form with function in machine-made goods. The dominance of the modernistic style and the "indiscriminate streamlining" prompted the criticism of MoMA staff, who labeled these designs "pseudo-modern" and considered them empty formalisms that had no relation with actual modernity. Saab, *For the Millions*, 134, 147–48.

avant-garde art should integrate with life and be politically engaged. Yet, in 1939 the influential Greenberg started his lifelong efforts to depoliticize and decontaminate avant-garde art by detaching it from mass culture — and consequently from the general public — perhaps in reaction to what he might have seen all over the city in FAP projects and at the 1939-40 New York fair. As a result of Greenberg's persuasive discourse, the modern integrationist projects of this period and those who followed them in the postwar period were forgotten in art history.

In 1939, the same year that Greenberg wrote “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” the work of Picasso, who had played such an important role at the 1937 Spanish Pavilion, was featured prominently in art galleries and museums. The Perls gallery mounted the exhibition “Picasso before 1910” and on May 5, the Valentine Gallery opened the “Masterpiece Guernica by Pablo Picasso together with Drawings and Studies” exhibition, the first appearance of *Guernica* in the US, and an event that attracted 2,000 visitors.¹⁷² The Spanish Pavilion for the 1939-40 New York fair was supposed to be built around the display of *Guernica*; however, since the pavilion was cancelled because of the political events in Spain, the painting was instead exhibited at this gallery in an event arranged by the American Artists Congress to raise funds for Spanish refugees.¹⁷³ In addition, on November 15 MoMA opened the exhibition “Picasso: Forty Years of his Art.”¹⁷⁴ This “staggering” show, as de Kooning described it, displayed 362 oils, watercolors, drawings, prints, and other objects by Picasso

¹⁷² Kooning, Elderfield, and Mahony, *De Kooning*, 80–81.

¹⁷³ Joan Ockman, “The War Years in America: New York, New Monumentality,” in *Sert: Arquitecto en Nueva York*, ed. Xavier Costa, Guido Hartray, and Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Actar Coac Assn Of Catalan Arc, 1997), 22.

¹⁷⁴ Kooning, Elderfield, and Mahony, *De Kooning*, 80–81.

and included *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907), which the museum had just purchased.¹⁷⁵ It also displayed *Guernica* as its centerpiece along with 59 studies for it (fig. 52).¹⁷⁶ Many members of the avant-garde who did not have the opportunity to see *Guernica* in its original context at the 1937 Paris fair would have seen it in New York in 1939. MoMA hoped to lure even the uninitiated by writing a press release declaring Picasso “the most famous living artist... already a legend.”¹⁷⁷ Many artists were greatly impressed by the mural. There was a symposium on *Guernica* and Gorky spoke in it.¹⁷⁸ Elaine De Kooning recalled how she and the de Kooning were “...stunned — really bowled over — by *Guernica*... Bill and I just stood before it — in awe, in wonder, and in a kind of terror. We didn’t talk for a long time.”¹⁷⁹ The great emphasis that the art institutions gave to Picasso’s work and in particular to *Guernica* during this year is telling of their intentions. In the context of war, the message that these institutions were sending to the public — and to artists — was that art had an important political function to fulfill.

Yet, in “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” Greenberg began to write a story of modern art that ignored the significant presence of socially oriented, politically charged, integrationist avant-garde art like *Guernica* — which was being exhibited virtually next door. Perhaps it was the bombardment of conservative regionalist, social realist, and nostalgic classicizing styles in the city and at the fair, launched by both the WPA and private patrons, which led Greenberg to react so strongly against the ideas of “art for the millions,” the integration of art and life,

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. MoMA Press Release dated November 2, 1939.

¹⁷⁶ According to a MoMA press release dated November 11, 1939.

¹⁷⁷ MoMA press release dated November 2, 1939.

¹⁷⁸ Kooning, Elderfield, and Mahony, *De Kooning*, 80–81.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

and art as a tool for the spread of ideology. In “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” he passionately championed abstract or “non-objective” art, and lauded avant-garde artists such as Picasso for their alleged disinterest in any issues outside of pure form and color: “Picasso, Braque, Mondrian, Miró, Kandinsky, Brancusi, even Klee, Matisse and Cézanne derive their chief inspiration from the medium they work in. The excitement of their art seems to lie most of all in its pure preoccupation with the invention and arrangement of spaces, surfaces, shapes, colors, etc., to the exclusion of whatever is not necessarily implicated in these factors.”¹⁸⁰ Greenberg thus chose to ignore the politically charged narratives of *Guernica* and the fact that Picasso had never intended to dedicate his work exclusively to solving formal problems. In fact, during a telephonic address to the Second American Artist’s Congress in December 1937 the artist had declared: “...I have always believed, and still believe, that artists who live and work from spiritual values cannot and should not remain indifferent to a conflict in which the highest values of humanity and civilization are at stake.”¹⁸¹ Nonetheless, Greenberg argued that the avant-garde — Picasso included — had inevitably detached itself from the ignorant masses and their earthly concerns and logically ran towards non-representational art, which belonged to a higher level of existence:

...once the avant-garde had succeeded in ‘detaching’ itself from society, it proceeded to turn around and repudiate revolutionary as well as bourgeois politics... Hence it developed that the true and most important function of the avant-garde was not to ‘experiment,’ but to find a path along which it would be possible to keep culture *moving* in the midst of ideological confusion and violence. ... ‘Art for art’s sake’ and ‘pure poetry’ appear, and subject matter or content becomes something to be avoided like the plague.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” (1939) in: Greenberg, *Art and Culture*, 7.

¹⁸¹ Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (University of Chicago Press, 1985), 26.

¹⁸² Greenberg, *Art and Culture*, 5.

Thus, the modern art that Greenberg championed was supposedly completely unconcerned with any kind of subject matter. In addition, the critic's elitist dismissal of the general public as a suitable audience for modern art led him to try to keep the avant-garde away from the corrupted taste of the general public, who would always prefer "kitsch" to "superior culture."¹⁸³ Although he did not specify what other kind of art he considered kitsch besides Russian Social Realism and folk art, perhaps he was alluding to the populist and blatantly ideological art forms of the 1930s like the Mexican murals or the FAP murals — or perhaps the art that populated the 1939-40 fair. As art historian Joan Saab explains, Greenberg's formalist model posed postwar American art as a move away from the art of the 1930s, which came to be considered by the network of critics, curators, and collectors as just "a foil" for the postwar "triumph" of Abstract Expressionism.¹⁸⁴ Yet, this point of view failed to consider the fact that at that time some avant-garde artists were reacting only to the style of this integrationist art of the 1930s, not to the idea that modern art had to detach itself from the masses or from political and social engagement. These artists were actually trying to continue with the integrationist tradition, however recasting it in a new aesthetic.

Moreover, while eschewing politics, Greenberg's argument had deep political implications.¹⁸⁵ As Guilbaut argues, in "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" Greenberg made kitsch the target; and since kitsch was associated with totalitarian powers, he gave artists the illusion

¹⁸³ "Superior culture is one of the most artificial of all human creations, and the peasant finds no 'natural' urgency within himself that will drive him toward Picasso in spite of all difficulties. In the end the peasant will go back to kitsch when he feels like looking at pictures, for he can enjoy kitsch without effort..." He concluded: "all talk of art for the masses" is "nothing but demagoguery." Ibid., 18.

¹⁸⁴ Saab, *For the Millions*, 14.

¹⁸⁵ Guilbaut explains that "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" was an important element in what he calls the "de-Marxization of the American intelligentsia," a process that began around 1936. For more information see Guilbaut's account of the relationship between avant-garde art and politics during this period in: Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea*, 17–47.

that by fighting through art against mass culture they were fighting against these odious regimes. Guilbaut also explains that Greenberg's position led to an emphatic break with the political approach of the Depression.¹⁸⁶ With his argument, Greenberg helped to cement the idea that modern art was "apolitical" and free from the dominion of politics and tyrants like Hitler and Stalin, who, as demonstrated by their respective pavilions at the 1937 Paris fair, had turned art into propaganda through the exploitation of populist styles. Yet, as Guilbaut explains, the apolitical nature of the avant-garde was just an illusion because the decision to work in abstract styles in order to counteract these forces was also political in essence.¹⁸⁷ In sum, the employment of avant-garde art in great public projects was as linked to politics as the employment of more conventional styles.

In addition, Greenberg argued against the integration of the arts, which might also explain the exclusion of integrationist art practices in the canon. In his 1940 essay "Towards a Newer Laocoon," Greenberg went a step further in his quest to extricate art from the contaminating aspects of everyday life and mass culture.¹⁸⁸ He argued for purity of the medium and against the "confusion" of the arts.¹⁸⁹ Given this thinking, it would have been

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 37.

¹⁸⁷ Guilbaut argues that by preserving their sense of social commitment while eschewing the art of propaganda and illustration, abstract expressionist artists engaged in a "political apolitism." Ibid., 2.

¹⁸⁸ In "Towards a Newer Laocoon" (1940) Greenberg declared: "...it is not so easy to reject the purist's assertion that the best of contemporary plastic art is abstract." In addition, he cemented Barr's idea that the development of abstract art obeyed a historical logic, that the path towards abstraction had been inevitable: "...there is nothing in the nature of abstract art which compels it to be so. The imperative comes from history, from the age in conjunction with a particular moment reached in a particular tradition of art." Frascina, *Pollock and after*, 35, 45.

¹⁸⁹ Greenberg wrote: "Guiding themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, by a notion of purity derived from the example of music, the avant-garde arts have in the last fifty years achieved a 'purity' and a radical de-limitation of their fields of activity for which there is no previous example in the history of culture. The arts lie safe now, each within its 'legitimate' boundaries, and free-trade has been replaced by autarchy. Purity in art consists on the acceptance, willing acceptance, of the limitations of the medium of the specific art." Ibid., 42.

very difficult for Greenberg to accept as legitimate any kind of integrationist art dependent on exterior factors such as the consideration of its effect on architectural space and the human environment or its capacity to speak to the masses in a language they could understand. According to art historian Francis Frascina, these two essays by Greenberg were the basis for the development of the critical theory that he refined in his 1961 essay “Modernist Painting,” in which he further explained his “art for art’s sake” and “modern specialization” concepts; by 1961, Greenberg’s paradigm had become well-entrenched and dominant in art history, overshadowing Schapiro’s ideas.¹⁹⁰ It is not surprising then that the canon left out much avant-garde art that engaged in integrationist practices. Even when these works were taken into account, art historians tended to concentrate on their formal aspects or, even worse, on iconographical aspects isolated from their original architectural context. *Guernica* for example was analyzed for several decades as if it were a freestanding work of art and not a mural that formed part of a larger discourse constructed by several other works of art and architecture.

Modern: The Right Styles to Represent Democratic Nations

World War II, which officially began on September 1, 1939, made it even more difficult to draw the line between art and politics, something that probably upset Greenberg. The FAP project was gradually abandoned.¹⁹¹ However, many artists continued to work for the government by helping with the war efforts after December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed the American fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Some of the artists employed by the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 11–12.

¹⁹¹ In 1940 and 1941, the American government held the “Buy American Art Week,” a program that aimed to shift public to private patronage at a time when WPA support was waning. Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea*, 55–56; Saab, *For the Millions*, 160, 163.

WPA produced service training aids, posters, and other visual propaganda for the Office of War Information; in addition, many painters were drafted or enlisted and some were employed as “official war artists.”¹⁹² For instance, although Calder was not drafted, he contributed to the war effort by studying civilian camouflage and doing occupational therapy in veteran’s hospitals.¹⁹³ The war absorbed artists, critics, and theorists’ thoughts at this time. There were great debates on the role of the artist: some, like Archibald Mac Leish, attacked international modernism, defended an aggressive nationalistic art, and believed that it was the artist’s duty to employ his talents to serve the war efforts; meanwhile, others, like Dwight Macdonald, believed that American nationalism was dangerous.¹⁹⁴

One of the institutions that helped to cement the idea that modern art had an important political function to fulfill was MoMA. During the war years, MoMA’s efforts to employ modern art in the service of politics intensified. MoMA played a major role in proselytizing for the national defense.¹⁹⁵ In 1939, the museum had started to produce some shows related to the war theme. As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, the museum exhibited *Guernica* as the centerpiece of the exhibition “Picasso: Forty Years of His Art” (November 15, 1939 – January 7, 1940). This exhibition was such a success in terms of attendance that the museum decided to host another Picasso show, “Masterpieces of Picasso,” from July 16 to September 7, 1941.¹⁹⁶ The latter included 24 paintings and

¹⁹² “Poverty, Politics and Artists,” 88.

¹⁹³ Calder, Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder’s Universe*, 333.

¹⁹⁴ For Guilbaut, Macdonald’s position failed because the social forces that artists had to swim against were too strong. Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea*, 52–54.

¹⁹⁵ Saab, *For the Millions*, 165.

¹⁹⁶ According to a MoMA press release dated January 11, 1940, 100,670 people visited “Picasso: Forty Years of His Art,” a number only surpassed by the Van Gogh exhibition.

drawings and once more the *Guernica* along with ten studies for it.¹⁹⁷ In addition, the museum held other exhibitions based on the war theme: “Paris at War: 16 Gouaches by Bernard Lamotte (Early 1940); “War Comes to the People: A Story Written With The Lens” (December 10, 1940—January 5, 1941); “Britain at War” (May 22-September 2, 1941). In September 1941, MoMA exhibited the competition entries for propaganda posters for the US Treasury and the Army Air Corps.¹⁹⁸ The war-themed exhibitions intensified in quantity noticeably in 1942.¹⁹⁹ During the war years, MoMA adjusted its criteria to meet wartime needs: for example, the *Useful Objects Under Ten Dollars* exhibitions became *Useful Objects in Wartime*.²⁰⁰ In addition to the war themed exhibitions, MoMA took other measures to help such as granting free admission to men in uniform.²⁰¹

The political events surrounding the war would also help fuel the idea that modern was the right kind of art and architecture to represent Western democratic nations and that therefore they should be employed in the construction of monuments. As Guilbaut argues, the war did more for modern culture in the US than all the efforts of intellectual magazines combined: since modern art was rejected by fascism, the mass media ended up defending — without knowing it — the concept of modernism with all its ambiguities and contradictions.²⁰² Modern art, which had not yet become entrenched in the US, “slipped in through the back door,” as Guilbaut put it, and established itself in the national

¹⁹⁷ As reported in a MoMA press release dated July 9, 1941.

¹⁹⁸ Saab, *For the Millions*, 165.

¹⁹⁹ “MoMA | Exhibition History List,” accessed August 10, 2015, http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/archives_exhibition_history_list#1940.

²⁰⁰ Saab, *For the Millions*, 166.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 165.

²⁰² Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea*, 55.

consciousness.²⁰³ After 1945, modern art would be used to advertise freedom and democracy. During the Cold War, institutions such as national galleries and museums of modern art would be central to the formation of dominant cultures; while in Federal Germany it became “almost a badge of anti-fascism” to commission modern art, work as opaque as a Jackson Pollock’s painting was used in international touring exhibitions to promote the intellectual freedom of the western artist as opposed to the “supposed un-freedom” of the artist in socialist countries.²⁰⁴ These developments would grant validity to the New Monumentality discourse, since they set the stage for modern art — and along with it modern architecture — to finally be accepted as the right forms of aesthetic expression for postwar monumentality.

The Idea of the Integration of the Arts Gets Linked to the Concept of Modern Monumentality

The continued development of retrograde forms of monumentality so late into the 20th century irritated progressive thinkers like Giedion, Léger, and Sert. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Giedion, Léger, Sert noticed the conspicuous scarcity of modern art and architecture in their contemporary urban environment. Certainly in New York, avant-garde art had been included in a few FAP site-specific commissions, as well as the 1939-40 fair, and was shown in a few progressive and daring art galleries such as Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of this Century — itself a modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* created by the multidisciplinary Kiesler.²⁰⁵ Still, the participation of avant-garde artists in site-specific FAP commissions

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 86.

²⁰⁵ During the war years, an important place that fostered the development of avant-garde art in New York was Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of this Century gallery. A great patron of modern art, Guggenheim ran between 1942 and 1947 what art critic Jed Perl described as “one of the most adventurous galleries that the city has ever seen.” Art of this Century “radicalized” taste in Manhattan by displaying the work of Pollock, Mark Rothko,

appeared ridiculous in comparison to that of more conservative artists. Kiesler's modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* was confined in a private gallery space patronized by a highly educated elite. Meanwhile, the great public monuments recently built in the US had been fabricated with conventional art and architecture. In 1937, public complexes such as the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research in Pittsburg and the West Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC had been built in a classicizing style (fig. 55). Edward H. Bennett had designed the Apex building (1937-38), the home of the Federal Trade Commission, in a streamlined classical revival style inspired by the City Beautiful movement. In 1938, the sculptor Michael Lantz had won the largest national sculpture competition ever held to frame its eastern entrance with a pair of monumental sculptures; his *Man Controlling Trade* (designed 1937, installed 1942) (fig. 6), which depicted a heroic muscular stylized man struggling to tame a horse, recalled the figures of classical or Renaissance sculpture.²⁰⁶ In addition, conventional art styles had been the choice for the massive private development of the Rockefeller Center (1931-40), which defined one of the most important public spaces of New York. The sculptor Lee Lawrie, whose best-known work is *Atlas* (1936), got the most important commissions in the Rockefeller Center and executed them in a stripped classicist

Hoffman, and other avant-garde artists. Kiesler created a whole work of art by designing each gallery room to be in consonance with the art displayed in it. For example, in the Surrealist gallery, he installed curved walls made from South American gum wood; mounted the unframed paintings on baseball bats that could be tilted at any angle; and installed spotlights on each work, which, "to everybody's dismay," went out for three seconds so that only half the pictures were lit at a time. Jed Perl, *Art in America, 1945-1970: Writings from the Age of Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, and Minimalism*, 2014, 17-18.

²⁰⁶ Lantz's models for the sculptures were selected among the almost five hundred models submitted by more than two hundred artists; see: Smithsonian American Art Museum, "Man Controlling Trade (Model, Federal Trade Commission Building) by Michael Lantz / American Art," accessed May 27, 2015, <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=14289>.

style.²⁰⁷ Even the imaginative Noguchi had felt compelled to resort to a modernized realist style to create his relief for the Rockefeller Center (fig. 46).

Giedion arrived at the conclusion that the banishment of avant-garde art and architecture from the public realm was in great measure due to the lack of unity or integration of these arts. Léger and Sert probably agreed with him given their past professional experiences. Giedion had begun to toy with this idea in 1937 in two essays: “Do We Need Artists?” and “Art as the Key to Reality.” Interestingly, Giedion’s essays were written in the same year of the Paris fair. Perhaps he was inspired by the 1937 Spanish Pavilion and disgusted with the retrograde monumentalities of the German, Russian, and Italian pavilions, which were widely discussed and censured by critics in journals and newspapers in the US. These essays also coincided with the opening of the Mellon Institute and the West Building of the National Gallery of Art. It appears that these developments also outraged Mumford, who in the same year declared the “Death of the Monument.”²⁰⁸ In “Do We Need Artists?” (1937) Giedion argued that modern art was desperately needed in the buildings of the time; yet, it was not present.²⁰⁹ He decried the lack of recognition given to avant-garde artists and their exclusion from public commissions.²¹⁰ For Giedion, art, which was the means through

²⁰⁷ Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture*, 11–12; The lobby was going to feature Diego Rivera’s mural *Man at the Crossroads* (1933–34); however, it was destroyed in 1934 before its completion because Rivera insisted that it include the figure of Lenin. Francis V. O’Connor, “Rivera, Diego,” *Grove Art Online*, n.d.; The conservative nature of most of the compound’s art would trigger criticisms. Eleanor Bittermann complained that despite the fact that the artists were given the subject of “New Frontiers,” they employed “old nineteenth century symbolism” and produced conventional results. Bittermann, *Art in Modern Architecture*, 13–15.

²⁰⁸ Lewis Mumford, “The Death of the Monument,” in *Circle; International Survey of Constructive Art*, ed. Leslie Martin, Ben Nicholson, and Naum Gabo (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), 263–70.

²⁰⁹ Giedion wrote: “No civilization can develop without those high notes that we call art.” Sigfried Giedion, *Architecture, You and Me: The Diary of a Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 2.

²¹⁰ Giedion wrote: “On the one hand was this public art, produced on an enormous scale; on the other hand the work of half a dozen painters, upon whose shoulders lay all tasks of research and invention... The right to have his work recognized, which is expected by every normal individual, was almost always denied to such artists — throughout the last century and even today.” *Ibid.*, 4–5.

which humans canalized emotion, had been extricated from life — yet no community could live without it.²¹¹ Thus, the scholar considered that art was an important vehicle for the expression of collective feeling; this would lead him to argue that the presence of modern art was essential in the formation of the monuments of the future.

In “Art as the Key to Reality” (1937) Giedion developed these ideas further. He partially blamed architecture for the detachment of art from life: architecture had been overtaken by rationalization, technics, and mechanization, and a deleterious split between feeling and thinking had occurred.²¹² Giedion claimed that the modern period could not find its balance because people had not been able to cope with the new reality that had been brought about by the industrial revolution.²¹³ For him, the split between feeling and thinking was responsible for the rise of the public art of the 19th century, an art that he considered a mere “drug” or “narcotic” and was still “the standard of taste of the general public.”²¹⁴ As a consequence, avant-garde art had been banned from public life.²¹⁵ However, Giedion claimed, modern art could help to eliminate the rift between thinking and feeling and help people cope with modern life.²¹⁶ Giedion’s thinking approximated that of Léger, who in his

²¹¹ Giedion wrote: “Each man longs for an environment that is the symbol or mirror of his inner desires... There is no political platform and no community movement that has not some such symbol.” Ibid., 2–3.

²¹² Ibid., 7.

²¹³ Ibid., 6–7.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 7.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 7–8.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 8–9; Giedion would further elaborate his idea of the split between thinking and feeling in two books that he started before he wrote “Nine Points” (1943): *Space, Time, and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (first published in 1941) and *Mechanization Takes Command* (written between 1941 and 1945 and published in 1948). Ockman, “The War Years”; In the Introduction to *Space, Time and Architecture* Giedion wrote: “We have behind us a period in which thinking and feeling were separated. This schism produced individuals whose inner development was uneven who lacked inner equilibrium: split personalities... The real spirit of the age came out in these researches — in the realm of thinking, that is. But these

essay “Contemporary Achievements in Painting” (1914) had expressed his ambition of making abstract art that would be “representative, in the modern sense of the word, of the new visual state imposed by the evolution of the new means of production.”²¹⁷ Both thought that art could help people cope with the anxieties produced by modern existence, and therefore it should be present in architecture.

In yet another article, “Dangers and Advantages of Luxury” (1939), Giedion specifically argued for the necessity of the integration of modern art and architecture, foreshadowing the ideas contained in “Nine Points” (1943) and his individual essay “The Need for a New Monumentality” (1944). In “Dangers and Advantages,” he found the utilization of Beaux-Arts styles in buildings “unsatisfactory” and linked it to the “dangerous” suppression of modern architecture in most totalitarian countries and its nefarious influence in neighboring countries.²¹⁸ With this statement, he implied that classicizing architecture was linked to oppression and totalitarianism and modern architecture, to freedom and democracy. His words echoed Mumford’s feelings about the monument; yet, he departed from him in that he felt that there was a general need for luxury and a wish to impress that had to be met — otherwise, the public would turn away from contemporary architecture.²¹⁹ He considered that in their pursuit of functionalism, many architects had “lost touch” with painting and sculpture; for him, this situation was dangerous because the unity of a building could be

achievements were regarded as emotionally neutral, as having no relation to the realm of feeling. Feeling could not keep up with the swift advances made in science and the techniques.” Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture, the Growth of a New Tradition*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1954), 13.

²¹⁷ Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 11.

²¹⁸ Sigfried Giedion, “Dangers and Advantages of Luxury,” *Architectural Forum* 70 (May 1939): 348.

²¹⁹ For an explanation of Mumford’s views on the monument refer to the Introduction to this thesis.

destroyed if the architect treated painting and sculpture as secondary.²²⁰ Giedion argued that contemporary architects, painters, and sculptors had to collaborate in order to create a “new optical vision,” by which he meant a new formal expression that was true to modern times.²²¹

Clearly, Giedion thought that the best means for architecture to become more expressive — and thereby increase its chances of getting included in great public commissions — was through its integration with art. He reasoned: “Architecture, painting and sculpture spring from the same emotional source. That is their strength. Architecture can only satisfy emotional needs by means of collaboration with painting and sculpture.”²²² His conviction was tied to the notion that modern art and architecture were kindred spirits — an idea that was shared by many avant-garde architects and artists. For example, Kiesler and Smith had expressed this idea in 1935 and 1939 respectively, as I explained earlier in this chapter. The modern architect Peter Blake, who was also a frequent participant in Calder’s meetings at the Jumble Shop, recalled the fascinating bond felt by avant-garde practitioners in this period:

Above all, we believed that the new architecture was really part and parcel of the philosophical and artistic spirit of our age; that there was a profound kinship between what was being designed and built by Le Corbusier and Mies and others and what was being painted by Picasso and Braque and Klee and Mondrian and sculpted by Brancusi and Calder and Gabo and Henry Moore. We felt that that the writings of James Joyce or of Robert Musil and of others of their generation spoke to us as clearly as the flowing and reflective spaces of the Barcelona Pavilion, and that the experimental music and poetry and dance of the years between the World Wars were part and parcel of a modern culture that was at the heart of our architecture. In short, we felt that there was a profound unity in all the creative work that moved us and spoke to us, and

²²⁰ Giedion, “Dangers and Advantages of Luxury,” 348.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

that we were an integral part of a major artistic revolution that was sweeping the world.²²³

Avant-garde architects like Blake believed at this time that their work fit wholly with the modern *zeitgeist*, or the spirit of modern times, a larger way of thinking that guided the work of all fields of artistic creation. This conviction led many modern architects like Sert or Le Corbusier to think that it was important to integrate their work with modern art. These architects started to criticize the strict functionalistic position that had come to dominate the architectural avant-garde and to argue for greater expressiveness in modern architecture — a concept linked to architecture's relationship to art.

Even though Sert came to disagree with Mumford's idea that the modern monument was an oxymoron, his thought on monumentality was greatly influenced by Mumford's criticism of architectural functionalism. When Sert was working on the manuscript for *Can Our Cities Survive?* he sought Mumford's feedback and endorsement.²²⁴ Influenced by Mumford's comments, Sert began to reflect more on functions outside of CIAM's four functions of dwelling, recreation, transportation, and work: government, group association, or culture, all tasks associated to mental and spiritual rather than physical needs.²²⁵ Sert's

²²³ Peter Blake, *No Place like Utopia: Modern Architecture and the Company We Kept* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 179.

²²⁴ Sert had come to admire Mumford and had been influenced by his thought on the city. Sert valued Mumford's social vision and his promotion of human rights, but above all his ability to contextualize architecture within a urban landscape governed by social, economic, and technological forces. Sert sought Mumford's endorsement of his book with the approval of Gropius and Giedion, who also considered that an endorsement by Mumford would facilitate publication and guarantee favorable critical reception of the book. Eric Paul Mumford, Hashim Sarkis, and Neyran Turan, *Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953-1969* (New Haven; Cambridge: Yale University Press ; Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2008), 82–83.

²²⁵ Although Giedion shared Sert's esteem for Mumford, his relationship with him was problematic, since Mumford had refused to review *Space, Time and Architecture*. After reviewing Sert's manuscript and illustrations in 1940, Mumford declined to write the introduction of Sert's book. In the end, it was Giedion who wrote it. Yet, Mumford offered the young architect his support as well as meaningful constructive criticism. He considered that Sert's analysis was constrained by his adherence to CIAM's four functions — dwelling, work,

revised approach to urbanism in the 1940s, which shifted emphasis from CIAM's Functional City to the urban core, was pivotal in architectural history because it basically informed CIAM's thinking on the city during the postwar.²²⁶

At about the same time that Giedion and Sert were considering the issues of monumentality and greater expressiveness in modern architecture in relation to art, Léger continued in the US his lifelong quest to create avant-garde art that would integrate with architecture in order to reach the masses and fulfill a social purpose. However, despite his intense activity in the early 1940s, Léger was not able to participate in any large mural commissions or public projects as he had during his other visits to the US.²²⁷ The only mural he painted during this period was for a private residence: *Les Plongeurs* (Divers), a 10-meter mural for Harrison's Long Island home in 1943.²²⁸ Yet, Léger continued to think about integrationist, accessible art. He increasingly painted canvases in a monumental scale. According to art historian Simon Willmoth, Léger did this intentionally so that these works would have displayed in public areas by default (fig. 53).²²⁹ In addition, at this time Léger

recreation, and transportation — and its failure to consider the functions of government, group association, or culture. Ibid.; Ockman, "The War Years," 22. The concept of the Functional City, advocated by Le Corbusier, Giedion, and the president of CIAM and town planner Cornelis van Eesteren since the early 1930s, mandated a strict planning of the city on the basis of four function-based zones: dwelling, work, recreation, and transportation. This approach would be strongly criticized in the postwar.

²²⁶ Mumford, Sarkis, and Turan, *Josep Lluís Sert*, 84.

²²⁷ After his arrival to the US, Léger had been very busy: in 1941, he spent the summer teaching at Mills College in Oakland and had had a touring exhibition organized by the Arts Club that circulated through Chicago, the Mills College, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and other parts of the West Coast. Although he was very interested in finding a permanent teaching position, and despite the help of the director of Mills College Alfred Neumeyer, Léger was unable to find one. Lanchner, "Fernand Léger," 53, 55.

²²⁸ Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 49, 51.

²²⁹ Art historian Edward F. Fry observes that after his continued efforts to paint public murals in the 1930s, Léger reached a compromise solution for easel painting: in the 1940s and 1950s he frequently chose to paint in a monumental scale. For example, the final version of *La Grande Parade* (1954) measures nine by thirteen feet. Willmoth argues that Léger did so on purpose so that these works by necessity would be destined for public display. Léger, *Functions of Painting*, xxvi–xxvii.

attempted to reintroduce the human figure without compromising the escape from representation that modern painting had achieved.²³⁰ The artist's efforts to incorporate recognizable figures in his paintings were motivated by his desire to create a more accessible modern style for the public, as art historian Edward F. Fry argues.²³¹

Common Ground: A Multidisciplinary Theory that Emerged from Shared Concerns

The New York of the early 1940s was an ideal ground for the emergence of the New Monumentality discourse also because it had become a cosmopolitan environment that nurtured the close social interaction of avant-garde thinkers and practitioners from both the US and Europe (fig. 54). Out of their multidisciplinary and international discussions, a multidisciplinary and international theory surged. Most avant-garde members who participated in these discussions were European émigrés who had witnessed the attacks to modern art and architecture that were taking place in Europe and had been forced to flee. Some, like Calder, were not exiles but had also experienced firsthand the exclusion of their work from public space. The avant-garde recreated in New York an intellectually stimulating environment similar to that of prewar Paris, where Calder, Léger, Miró, and others had regularly met with architects like Kiesler, Paul Nelson, and Sert.²³² Similarly, in New York,

²³⁰ Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 49.

²³¹ Fry argues that in his late works, Léger accorded a greater importance to subject matter than he had done in his earlier cubist works. During the 1940s and 1950s Léger chose to use proletarian subjects such as sailors or workers or popular amusements such as the circus, bicycle outings, parades, or picnics as a way to bridge the gap between his aesthetic position and his wish to make accessible art without resorting to social realism. Léger, *Functions of Painting*, xxii.

²³² Sert recalled in an interview how the “remnants” of the Paris group came together again in New York: “What was interesting was that the Paris group also started arriving in New York. Everybody was arriving there. A few weeks after I had arrived, Chagall, whom I knew from Paris slightly, came to New York. I got to know him much better in New York. Jacques Lipchitz, who was a friend from Paris, came to New York. Georges Duthuit, Yves Tanguy, and Fernand Léger, who was a very old friend, came to New York. L’Ozenfant was also here in this country by that time. We had a wonderful time together there.” Interview with José Luis

Mondrian, Léger, Calder, Hans Hofmann, Gorky, and others frequently interacted with architects such as Kiesler, Sert, and Blake in the gatherings that Calder organized every Wednesday evening at the Jumble Shop, a large barnlike restaurant between 8th Street and MacDougal Alley in Greenwich Village.²³³

Léger and Sert formed part of this close-knit circle and were leading figures in their interdisciplinary discussions at the Jumble Shop. During the war years, they also became especially close to Giedion, the Czech-born architectural historian, champion of modern architecture, and secretary of CIAM. Their interaction resulted in “Nine Points” (1943), the manifesto that would give rise to the New Monumentality discourse. Léger had fled from the Nazi occupation, arriving in New York in November 1940.²³⁴ With Giedion’s help, Sert had arrived in New York in June 1939, shortly after the fall of the Spanish Republic and after the Franco government declared him unfit to practice his profession in Spain.²³⁵ Giedion’s situation was different. He had not been forced to flee from Europe; he left his professor position at the university in Zurich in 1938 after Walter Gropius, the Chairman of Harvard’s

Sert. John Peter, *The Oral History of Modern Architecture: Interviews with the Greatest Architects of the Twentieth Century* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994), 254–55; Giedion asserted that Léger along with a small circle of friends that included Calder and Sert, created in New York “a kind of Parisian atmosphere, expounding plans and commenting upon the American scene.” Giedion, *Architecture, You and Me*, 53–54.

²³³ Ockman, “The War Years,” 26; The modern architect Peter Blake, one of the participants of these weekly gatherings, recalled: “Mondrian, Léger, and other exiles from the Paris avant-garde joined locals as Frederick Kiesler, José Luis Sert, Alexander Calder, Hans Hofmann, Arshile Gorky, and others who had moved to New York in earlier years. And every Wednesday evening they would meet in a place called the Jumble Shop in Greenwich Village, and sit down at a large, rectangular table in one of the back rooms to talk, drink, smoke, and talk some more. Some of us starry-eyed youngsters – in and out of uniform – were sometimes invited to attend; and we would sit on chairs placed against the walls, watching and listening to the illustrious exiles seated around the long conference table in the middle of that room.” Blake, *No Place*, 66–67.

²³⁴ Léger set up his residence at 328 East 42nd Street, where his friend, the photographer Herbert Matter, shared his studio with him. Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 51, 52, 55.

²³⁵ Giedion, who was then the secretary of CIAM, helped Sert to make his way to the US with the manuscript and documents of Sert’s book *Can Our Cities Survive?* (published in 1942 by Harvard University Press), which elucidated CIAM’s principles of modern urban design. Mumford, Sarkis, and Turan, *Josep Lluis Sert*, 81–82; Ockman, “The War Years,” 22.

Graduate School of Design, invited him to give the Charles Eliot Norton lectures.²³⁶ Shortly after his arrival to the US, Sert came into close contact with Giedion at Harvard, where he also gave lectures after Gropius' invitation.²³⁷ Sert spent a few months in Cambridge writing his book *Can Our Cities Survive?*, which Giedion, Gropius, and the Dean of the school Joseph Hudnut helped publish in 1942.²³⁸ In addition, Sert and Léger renewed their friendship with Calder soon after their arrival to the US. They frequently went to his farmhouse in Roxbury, Connecticut, which became another gathering place for this tight circle during the weekends.²³⁹ Giedion traveled to New York in this period. Between 1942 and 1945, he developed a close relationship with Léger, visiting him in his studio in New York and meeting with him during the summers of 1944 and 1945 at Rouses Point, a village on Lake Champlain near the Canadian border.²⁴⁰

Between 1940 and 1943, Giedion, Léger, and Sert shared their concerns about the present situation and future of the avant-garde. They shared a common understanding of the continued attacks to modern art in Europe. The German propaganda magazine *Signal* had branded Léger's painting *La Ville* (1919) as "decadent art" in 1942. The Nazis had burned his paintings in a bonfire outside the Jeu de Paume Museum in Paris along with hundreds of

²³⁶ These lectures would be published in 1941 as his book *Space, Time and Architecture*. Ockman, "The War Years," 22, 26; "Sigfried Giedion," *Dictionary of Art Historians*, accessed September 10, 2015, <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/giedions.htm>; Gropius himself was an émigré; unsympathetic of the Nazi government, which had closed the Bauhaus School in 1933, Gropius had secretly fled Germany in 1934 and arrived to the US in 1937. "Walter Gropius | German-American Architect," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed September 10, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Walter-Gropius>.

²³⁷ There, Sert renewed contact with ex-members of the Bauhaus: Marcel Breuer and László Moholy-Nagy; and also met others: Joseph Albers and Serge Chermayeff. Ockman, "The War Years," 22.

²³⁸ Mumford, Sarkis, and Turan, *Josep Lluís Sert*, 82.

²³⁹ Other people that frequently attended the weekend gatherings were the Tamayos, André Masson, and the Josephsons. Calder, Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder's Universe*, 28.

²⁴⁰ Giedion, *Architecture, You and Me*, 53–54.

canvases by Picasso, Miró, Max Ernst, and other modern artists in May 1943.²⁴¹ Sert had had to defend *Guernica* from being torn down from the 1937 Spanish Pavilion and replaced with a realist work of art.²⁴² He had been banned from practicing his profession in his native Spain at the young age of 37.²⁴³ The three friends noticed the conspicuous lack of modern art and architecture in the emblematic public commissions of the time. Undoubtedly Léger recalled the French government's preference for conservative styles for the permanent structures of the 1937 fair and the rejection of his Radio City and French Line murals in the US. Giedion, Léger, and Sert were most likely aware of the great difficulties that their friends faced when they attempted to work in public space: Gorky's challenges with the Newark Airport commission and the rejection of Calder's fountain for the 1939-40 fair.

Giedion, Léger, and Sert had a common interest in the problem of modern monumentality. The artist and the architect surely discussed their experiences — both positive and negative — of trying to create modern monuments through the integration of the arts at the 1937 Paris fair. Like Sert and Léger, Giedion was aware that the 1937 fair had raised the issue of modern monumentality against the repressive and retrograde forms imposed by fascist and Nazi regimes.²⁴⁴ Giedion, Sert, and Léger were convinced that avant-garde art and architecture would play a crucial role in the construction of monumentality in the future. With the endless stories of rejection of the avant-garde in mind, they decided to

²⁴¹ Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 61; Barbara McCloskey, *Artists of World War II* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), 29–30.

²⁴² Peter, *The Oral History*, 252–53; Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion*, 632–33.

²⁴³ Ockman, “The War Years,” 22.

²⁴⁴ Although it is not known if Giedion actually travelled to the 1937 Paris fair, he had to have been familiar with it. In December 1938, he wrote a historical overview of world's fairs, perhaps thinking about the upcoming 1939-40 New York fair. In this article, Giedion included a photograph of Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret's 1937 Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux, another example of modern artistic integration. This pavilion involved Sert, Léger, and Miró's collaboration, as discussed in Chapter 1. Sigfried Giedion, “Can Expositions Survive? Historical Note, 1798-1937,” *Architectural Forum* 69 (December 1938): 439–43.

write a manifesto in order to address the problem of the exclusion of avant-garde art and architecture from society.

Nine Points on Monumentality

*Que donneriez vous ma belle
Pour revoir votre mari ?
Je donnerai Versailles,
Paris et Saint Denis
Les tours de Notre Dame
Et le clocher de mon pays.
Auprès de ma blonde
Qu'il fait bon, fait bon, fait bon.*²⁴⁵

This verse from the old French song “Auprès de ma Blonde” opened Giedion, Léger, and Sert’s manifesto. Their choice of a folk song sheds light on their intentions. By mentioning a few well-known *Gesamtkunstwerks* of the French past in the context of the folk song, they wanted to demonstrate that these whole works of art remained ingrained in collective consciousness. They also suggested that modern art and architecture should aspire to become part of society’s heritage.

In 1943, Giedion, Sert, and Léger discovered that the American Abstract Artists, in which Léger was active at the time, had invited them separately to contribute articles for its forthcoming publication.²⁴⁶ According to Giedion, when the three got together one evening

²⁴⁵ “What would you give, my beauty, to see your husband again? I will give Versailles, Paris and Saint Denis, the towers of Notre Dame, and the steeple of my native countryside. With my girlfriend, how good it is, good it is, good it is.” José Luis Sert, Fernand Léger, and Sigfried Giedion, “Nine Points on Monumentality,” in *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology*, by Joan Ockman and Edward Eigen ([New York]: Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation : Rizzoli, 1943), 29.

²⁴⁶ Sigfried Giedion, “The Need for a New Monumentality,” in *New Architecture and City Planning, a Symposium*, ed. Paul Zucker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), 549; Ockman, “The War Years,” 26; The American Abstract Artists association had been founded in 1937 by a group of New Yorkers with the intention of fostering the public’s understanding of abstract art. The group’s 28 original members included

and discussed their invitations, they decided that it would be much more effective if they wrote about an issue that concerned all of them — monumentality — each from the point of view of their own field.²⁴⁷ A text that came from distinct professional fields would produce a greater effect and probably reach both artists and architects more effectively, which was their intention. After writing their individual articles, Giedion, Léger, and Sert summed up their opinions on modern monumentality in a common “resolution” of nine points, which was supposed to appear in the *American Abstract Artists* issue along with their individual articles, but never did for reasons that should be investigated.²⁴⁸

“Nine Points on Monumentality” represents one of the earliest critiques of modern architecture’s *tabula rasa* and functional attitudes and its unwillingness to deal with issues of monumentality and lasting collective expression. Unlike Mumford, who believed that the modern monument was an oxymoron, Giedion, Léger, and Sert believed that there was an ongoing, real human need for monumentality that deserved to be addressed. In their joint essay, Sert, Léger, and Giedion defined monuments as follows: “Monuments are human landmarks which men have created for their ideals, for their aims, and for their actions. They are intended to outlive the period which originated them, and constitute a heritage for future generations. As such, they form a link between the past and the future.”²⁴⁹ Thus conceived, monuments were vital because they helped people cope with the ephemerality of life by

Albers, Diller, and Smith. Kooning, Elderfield, and Mahony, *De Kooning*, 56–57; According to Guilbaut, this group’s stance was similar to that of the Partisan Review: Its “internationalism,” which aimed to transcend nationalism and regionalism and raise American painting to the level of international painting led them to realize art that merely commented on European modernism with the resulting loss of anything that would be uniquely American in their work. For this they were criticized by critics and museums and they did not make much of an impact during the postwar. Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea*, 29–30.

²⁴⁷ Giedion, “The Need for a New Monumentality,” 549.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Sert, Léger, and Giedion, “Nine Points,” 29.

constituting an atemporal communion between generations. They also defined monuments as “the expression of man’s highest cultural needs. They have to satisfy the eternal demand of the people for translation of their collective force into symbols. The most vital monuments are those which express the feeling and thinking of this collective force — the people.”²⁵⁰ In this part of their definition, the force of Giedion’s voice can be clearly distinguished. The monument as an expression of collective “feeling and thinking” recalls Giedion’s 1937 essays “Do We Need Artists?” and “Art as the Key to Reality.” Giedion had concluded that modern monuments would constitute modern *Gesamtkunstwerks* that would help bridge the gap that existed between thinking and feeling and thus help people cope with modern life. Léger’s voice can be also heard loudly in the emphasis placed on the social role of art — its ultimate goal was to serve the people.

This manifesto also confirms Giedion, Léger, and Sert’s adherence to the idea that architecture and art were kindred spirits that reflected the modern *zeitgeist* — the spirit of the age. They argued that true monuments are “...only possible in periods in which a unifying consciousness and unifying culture exists.”²⁵¹ As true reflections of the spirit of the age, modern art and architecture, Giedion, Léger, and Sert concluded, should be the ones elected to constitute the formal representations of their period — its monuments. Léger had already expressed this idea at MoMA in 1935, when in his lecture “The New Realism” he praised the Radio City for being “the true expression of modern America.” Giedion, Léger, and Sert were convinced that the public deserved to be connected with avant-garde art, an idea that Léger had already articulated when he stated that the modern murals at the Williamsburg

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

housing project in New York (1935-37) could help to “establish a connection between the collective masses and the art of their time.”²⁵²

However, Sert, Giedion, and Léger argued, the current period had not yet produced “lasting monuments.”²⁵³ Like Mumford, they strongly criticized the way in which monumentality was being shaped. They vehemently declared that the monuments of their time had failed the public: “The last hundred years have witnessed the devaluation of monumentality. This does not mean that there is any lack of formal monuments or architectural examples pretending to serve this purpose; but the so-called monuments of recent date have, with rare exceptions, become empty shells. They in no way represent the spirit or the collective feeling of modern times.”²⁵⁴ They partially blamed architecture for this situation: modern architects had forsaken the monument. In what appears to be a nod to Mumford’s ideas, they argued that the “decline and misuse of monumentality” had been the main reason why modern architects had rebelled against the monument. Yet, at the same time they tried to justify modern architects’ reasons for doing this by arguing that they had been forced to concentrate on the fulfillment of physical needs first.²⁵⁵ Although these words statements probably came from Giedion and Sert, they also echoed Léger’s idea that modern architecture had gone “too far” in its attempt to “cleanse through emptiness.”²⁵⁶

²⁵² Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 46.

²⁵³ Sert, Léger, and Giedion, “Nine Points,” 29.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ “Modern architecture, like modern painting and sculpture, had to start the hard way. It began by tackling the simpler problems, the more utilitarian buildings like low-rent housing, schools, office buildings, hospitals, and similar structures.” Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 94; This lecture, delivered on August 9, 1933, was later translated and published as “The Wall, the Architect, the Painter” in *Functions of Painting* (1973). In this book it is described as previously unpublished; however, it was published in French as “Discours aux architectes” in *Quadrante* (Milan) 11 no. 5 (September 1933): 44-47; See note 134 in Lanchner, “Fernand Léger,” 68; Joan Ockman,

For the authors of “Nine Points,” a new step lay ahead for architects: the “organization of community life.”²⁵⁷ In this statement, Sert’s voice can be heard the loudest: challenged by Mumford’s critique of his book *Can Our Cities Survive?*, Sert had already started thinking about ways in which he could how meet mental and spiritual needs of people that had not been addressed by CIAM’s Functional City. People, the authors of “Nine Points” argued, “want the buildings that represent their social and community life to give more than functional fulfillment. They want their aspiration for monumentality, joy, pride, and excitement to be satisfied.”²⁵⁸ What they meant was that modern society demanded the creation of a new kind of monumentality, one that would not constitute an autocratic imposition by the elite on the public, but a democratic expression that would emerge from the people themselves and correspond to their current emotional needs. This new form of expression would represent the collective ideals of a newly reformed, democratic, international, and modern society.

Yet, the most significant aspect of Giedion, Léger, and Sert’s manifesto is that it formally connected for the first time the idea of the integration of the arts with the concept of modern monumentality. They argued that in order to achieve monumentality with the new means of aesthetic expression, the integration of the arts was required: “The following conditions are essential for it: A monument being the integration of the work of the planner, architect, painter, sculptor, and landscapist demands close collaboration between all of

Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology (New York: Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation / Rizzoli, 1993), 65.

²⁵⁷ Sert, Léger, and Giedion, “Nine Points,” 29.

²⁵⁸ Ockman, *Architecture Culture*, 29–30.

them.”²⁵⁹ They considered that modern architects were at fault for the lack of integration of the arts in the recent past.²⁶⁰ Yet at the same time they placed the greatest responsibility for the exclusion of modern art and architecture from public commissions on governing authorities.²⁶¹ On the one hand, this manifesto was a clear appeal to architects similar to the one that Léger had made in front of the CIAM 4 audience in 1933; Giedion, Léger, and Sert wanted to persuade modern architects to view art as an integral and important part of a monument and not just as an accessory or decoration that could ruin their pristine work. On the other hand, their manifesto was also an appeal to artists to convince them to leave aside disciplinary considerations and adjust their work to meet the requirements of an integrationist practice — all in the name of fulfilling an important social need.

The authors of “Nine Points” went beyond theory: in the final section of the manifesto they delivered an image of what these monuments could look like. Sert recalled his 1937 Spanish Pavilion when he wrote: “Modern materials and new techniques are at hand: light metal structures, curved, laminated wooden arches; panels of different textures, colors, and sizes...”²⁶² Giedion, Calder, and Sert paid a tribute to Calder’s *Mercury Fountain* when they proposed that mobile elements enliven the modern monuments of the future: “Mobile elements can constantly vary the aspect of the buildings. These mobile elements, changing

²⁵⁹ Sert, Léger, and Giedion, “Nine Points,” 29–30.

²⁶⁰ Giedion, Léger and Sert wrote: “This collaboration has failed in the last hundred years. Most modern architects have not been trained for this kind of integrated work. Monumental tasks have not been entrusted to them.” Ibid., 30.

²⁶¹ The authors of “Nine Points” wrote: “As a rule, those who govern and administer a people, brilliant as they may be in their special fields, represent the average man of our period in their artistic judgments. Like this average man, they experience a split between their methods of thinking and their methods of feeling. The feelings of those who govern and administer the countries is untrained and still imbued with the pseudo-ideals of the nineteenth century.” According to them, this was the reason why they had not recognized the “creative forces of our period” that could build monuments that could be “a true expression of our epoch.” Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

positions and casting different shadows when acted upon by wind or machinery, can be the source of new architectural effects.”²⁶³ Their words prefigured Calder’s *Spirale*, a gigantic mobile that the artist would create for the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in 1958. Their manifesto also incorporated Léger’s unfulfilled desire to color entire cities in a spectacular fashion, an idea that he had proposed repeatedly.²⁶⁴ His influence is also felt in this passage: “During night hours, color and forms can be projected on vast surfaces. Such displays could be projected upon buildings for purposes of publicity or propaganda. These buildings would have large plane surfaces planned for this purpose, surfaces which are nonexistent today. Such big animated surfaces with the use of color and movement in a new spirit would offer unexplored fields to mural painters and sculptors.”²⁶⁵ Reminiscent of Léger’s unrealized Radio City mural, this visionary image of the city as an ensemble of cinematic murals foreshadowed contemporary public spaces such as Times Square in New York.

Although “Nine Points” was not published in the *American Abstract Artists* issue of 1943, Giedion, Léger, and Sert’s ideas reached an architectural and artistic audience not long after that. The actual manifesto remained unpublished until 1956.²⁶⁶ However, its principal ideas appeared in Giedion’s individual essay “The Need for a New Monumentality” in Paul Zucker’s book *New Architecture and City Planning: A Symposium* in 1944. Léger’s thoughts surfaced in “Modern Architecture and Color,” published in an issue of *American Abstract*

²⁶³ Ockman, “The War Years,” 30.

²⁶⁴ Léger had first proposed this idea for New York after his first visit of 1931. He elaborated on this idea in his plan for the 1937 Paris fair. He proposed this idea once more for the 1939–40 New York fair. Finally, he made a variation of this proposal in January 1942, when architect Paul Nelson invited him to speak to a committee of the US Housing Authority in Washington about his ideas on color in town planning. Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 47.

²⁶⁵ Sert, Léger, and Giedion, “Nine Points,” 30.

²⁶⁶ Giedion included “Nine Points” in his book *Architektur und Geimenschaft* in 1956 and in *Architecture, You and Me: The Diary of a Development* in 1958. Ockman, “The War Years,” 28.

Artists in 1946, as well as in several essays he wrote later.²⁶⁷ A few years later, Sert wrote about this subject in his essay “Centres of Community Life” for the 1951 CIAM Congress publication *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanisation of Urban Life* (1952), a book that constituted a manifesto for the important role of art in city centers.²⁶⁸

Giedion’s “The Need for a New Monumentality” (1944) offers an expanded version of his ideas. The historian asserted that it was modern painting that had led the way towards modern monumentality: “Painting, the most sentient of the visual arts, has often forecast things to come. Painting first realized the spatial conception of our period and discovered methods of representing... Now painting announces other period at a moment when we are living in blood and horror. This is the rebirth of the lost sense of monumentality.”²⁶⁹ Again, Picasso was a key example. Giedion put Picasso’s *Monument en Bois* (1930), a study for an enormous public sculpture, as an example of a modern monument that symbolized or told “the truth” about “reality” — in this case, war.²⁷⁰ Giedion considered that erecting this kind of collective “symbols” was of an utmost importance for mankind. He argued that Picasso

²⁶⁷ Ibid.; Léger wrote several essays in which he argued that modern art had to come into contact with the public through integrationist works, such as “The Human Body Considered as Object” (1945), “Art and the People” (1946), “Modern Architecture and Color” (1946), “A New Space in Architecture” (1949), Mural Painting and Easel Painting” (1950), and “Color in Architecture” (1954). Léger, *Functions of Painting*.

²⁶⁸ This book included essays on the subject by Sert, Giedion, Walter Gropius, and even James Johnson Sweeney, then the director of the Guggenheim Museum in New York. International Congresses for Modern Architecture, *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanisation of Urban Life*, ed. Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, José Luis Sert, and Ernesto N. Rogers (London: Lund, Humphries, 1952); Although architectural historian Eric P. Mumford argues that Sert’s individual essay was also published in Zucker’s book as “The Human Scale in City Planning,” this essay does not address the issue of monumentality in a direct way. Instead, it summarizes Sert’s views on the need to revise CIAM’s functionalistic approach to city planning and create civic centers that would fulfill neglected human needs such as culture or gathering. In fact, Sert’s essay was included in the book section “City and Regional Planning” and not in the section “The Problem of a New Monumentality,” where Giedion’s essay was included along with other papers by the modern architects George Nelson, Louis I. Kahn, and Philip L. Goodwin. Whatever happened to the individual essay that Sert wrote for “Nine Points” should be investigated. Mumford, Sarkis, and Turan, *Josep Lluís Sert*, 87.

²⁶⁹ Giedion, “The Need for a New Monumentality,” 561.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 566.

had been a visionary that had sensed the modern monument's relevance.²⁷¹ It is interesting to note that in this essay Giedion also mentioned *Guernica* as one of the exceptional instances in which the avant-garde artist was allowed to participate in a "community task."²⁷² The Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris fair was a great example for New Monumentality.

With "The Need" Giedion also launched an appeal to commissioning authorities around the world. He blamed them more forcefully than ever before for the prevailing scarcity of modern monuments: "...art is still regarded as a luxury, and not as the medium to shape the emotional life in the broadest sense... the best known artists today have a good market, but they have no walls, no places, no buildings, where their talent can touch the great public, where they can form the people and the people could form them."²⁷³ Giedion agreed with Léger's idea that the masses were ready to understand and appreciate avant-garde art and architecture:²⁷⁴ "Again and again it has been reiterated that modern art cannot be understood by the public. We are not sure that this argument is absolutely correct. We only know that those who govern and administer public taste do not have the necessary emotional understanding."²⁷⁵ For Giedion, authorities kept justifying their decisions to commission conventional art and architecture for public buildings with the exhausted argument that lay people would not be able to understand modern art and architecture, when in reality it was *they* who did not understand.

²⁷¹ Giedion argued: "Picasso did not specify for what purpose his studies for a monument in 1930 were meant. But it is now clear that those sketches forecast the reality and that the inherent significance of the symbol has not revealed itself until today." By reality he meant a world ravaged by war. Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid., 557.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Léger had expressed this idea in "The New Realism Goes On" (1937).

²⁷⁵ Giedion, "The Need for a New Monumentality," 557.

Like Barr had done before him, Giedion employed politics in a subliminal way to come to the defense of modern art and architecture. In “The Need” he suggested that the leaders’ preference of conventional styles reflected a “moral cowardice” that was linked to their inability to govern in accordance with the needs of the time.²⁷⁶ He marked a clear difference between modern monumentality and the ubiquitous retrograde forms of monumentality, or what he termed “pseudo-monumentality” — that is, monuments “imitating the manner of a former ruling class.”²⁷⁷ In this way, Giedion associated pseudo-monumentality both with the elite and with despotic governments. Moreover, he suggested that the US and other democratic nations should not be erecting important buildings and monuments with styles that looked so similar to those utilized by the Nazis. He compellingly supported this argument by juxtaposing a photograph of Hitler’s *Das Haus der Deutschen Kunst* in Munich (designed by Paul Ludwig Troost and finished in 1937) with a photograph of the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research in Pittsburg (designed by Benno Janssen and also finished in 1937) (fig. 55).²⁷⁸ In the context of World War II, the realization that these two buildings looked like twins — both were heavy prismatic volumes elevated on a plinth, finished in stone, and lined with monumental colonnades, prominent entablatures, and grandiose steps — was shocking.

Giedion also understood that world’s fairs were experimental grounds where nations attempted to project their image through ephemeral but nonetheless powerful and memorable

²⁷⁶ Giedion wrote: “The palace of the ‘League of Nations’ at Geneva (finished 1935) is perhaps the most distinguished example of internationally brewed eclecticism. The moral cowardice reflected in its architecture seems to have an almost prophetic affinity to the failure of the League itself.” *Ibid.*, 553.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 555.

²⁷⁸ This essay, published in 1944, contained the ideas that Giedion had contributed to “Nine Points” in 1943. Further explanation is provided later in this chapter. *Ibid.*, 554–55.

monuments. Ephemerality was not a quality that precluded a structure or object from becoming a monument — perpetuated by human memory or recordings of the event. He included in his essay a picture of E. Beaudouin and M. Lods' *La Fête Lumineuse* at the 1937 Paris fair as well as a photograph of the fountain spectacle "The Spirit of George Washington" at the 1939-40 New York fair (fig. 11). Clearly, he regarded these artistic spectacles as interesting possibilities for the formulation of modern monumentality.²⁷⁹ For Giedion these "festivities" were as important as permanent monuments for the achievement of mental balance.²⁸⁰ Giedion's inclusion of these ephemeral spectacles would draw criticisms, as some related them to Nazi spectacles (fig. 56). However, with this concept, most likely inspired by Léger's proposals to paint cities with colored light and animated surfaces, Giedion might have been trying to fight the oppressive Nazi spectacles with light-hearted modern spectacles that expressed and celebrated the joy of men living freely in democratic societies.

In his individual essay "Modern Architecture and Color" (1946), Léger elaborated on the ideas that he had expressed years earlier in his CIAM 4 lecture (1933). This essay, which clearly contains many of the ideas expressed in "Nine Points," reached an art world audience in 1946, when the American Abstract Artists included it in its publication. In this essay, Léger argued: "the future certainly cries out for the collaboration of the three major art forms

²⁷⁹ Giedion wrote: "These spectacles form one of the rare events where our modern possibilities are consciously applied by the architect-artists. They use the structural values of different materials as the medium to intensify the emotional expression, just as the cubists liked to introduce sand, fragments of wood, or scraps of paper in their paintings." Ibid., 563.

²⁸⁰ Giedion argued: "We have banned from life the artistic expression for joy and festivities. Both have to be incorporated into human existence and are as necessary for our equilibrium as food and housing. That we have become incapable of creating monuments and festivals, and that we have lost all feeling for the dignity of civic centers, all this is tied up with the fact that our emotional life has been regarded as unessential and as a purely private affair." Ibid., 565.

— architecture, painting, sculpture. No period since the Italian Renaissance has understood this artistic collectivity.”²⁸¹ Like he had done in 1933, Léger looked back at the great monuments of the past such as temples and set them as examples of whole works of art that could constitute a genuinely collective modern art. Yet, despite his invocation of the past, Léger made it very clear that these new collaborations — the new monuments to come — had to take on new forms; they could not just mimic those of the past.²⁸²

Yet an interesting twist in Léger’s conception of collective art, which probably derived from his conversations with Giedion and Sert, was the idea that monumentality could take unexpected new forms: he claimed that architecture was at the artist’s disposal, with “...as much freedom as ever. The exaltation of 80,000 spectators at a football-match is not the end of a civilization. A temple for contemplation is as authentic a need as the great sport-spectacles.”²⁸³ Not surprisingly, Léger used once more his 1937 proposal to color Paris as an example of the “unending” possibilities of mural painting.²⁸⁴ Another new element in Léger’s thinking was his argument that color — by which he meant painting — was an indispensable human need of a mental nature that deserved to be addressed: “Color is a human need like water and fire. It is a raw material indispensable to life. In every period of his existence and history, man has associated it with his joys, his acts, and pleasures.”²⁸⁵ Thus, as in “Nine

²⁸¹ Léger, *Functions of Painting*, 153.

²⁸² Léger wrote: “It is our own [period] which must take up the problem again under a different aspect. The successive liberations which, since impressionism, have allowed modern artists to escape from the old restrictions (subject, perspective, the imitation of the human body) permit us our own realization of entirely different architectural ensembles... “When we evoke former epochs that have produced so many magnificent temples the result expresses only the past civilization. It is unthinkable that our own will not realize its own popular temples.” Ibid., 153–54.

²⁸³ Ibid., 154.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 152–53 Refer to Chapter 1 for an explanation of his 1937 proposal to color Paris.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 149.

Points,” Léger focused the argument on the fulfillment of human needs and justified the claim that art was a necessary presence in the human environment with a logical reason.

To conclude, Giedion, Léger, and Sert had a positive view of monumentality; they shared the idealistic hope that the New Monumentality would obliterate the negative implications of the oppressive, retrograde monumentalities that had been populating cities all over the world. It is worth repeating here that for them, the New Monumentality would constitute an expression of joy and freedom that would stem from the masses — not something that would be imposed on them by the elite. In the context of international war, tyranny, and the flaunting of oppressive forms of monumentality, their conception of the monument presented the public a viable alternative. As I explain in my conclusion, the New Monumentality discourse would become pivotal in architecture history, changing the way that architects approached public commissions in the postwar period. At the same time, it would affect the development of art in significant ways, since many artists considered that it was their responsibility to shape the public monuments of the future.

Conclusion

The Resonance of the New Monumentality

The American art history canon has conditioned us to think that modern art was an individualistic, detached endeavor dedicated exclusively to the solution of formal problems. However, contrary to what Clement Greenberg argued, much modern art was as socially and politically engaged as the social realist Federal Art Project murals of the 1930s. Picasso did not paint *Guernica* just to experiment with cubist forms. He did not paint this mural so that it would be cloistered in the purified environment of a museum for the sole purpose of giving aesthetic pleasure to the elite. He did it to join his fellow artists and architects in political protest. Yet, after Greenberg's anti-integrationist theories were enshrined in art history, scholars analyzed *Guernica* for decades as if it were a freestanding work of art and not a part of a large and daring modern *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Like Picasso, many other avant-garde artists who had witnessed or participated in the socially committed integrationist art projects of the 1930s had become convinced that modern art had a social purpose: it had the responsibility to help shape human life. They concluded that the best way to connect with the masses was to place their art in the places where average people gathered, in the urban environment. However, in the 1930s and early 1940s this was not happening — avant-garde art was still encapsulated in modern art museums, a few progressive art galleries, and the living rooms of a few educated elites. At this time, the avant-garde started to fight for the presence of modern art in public spaces, which would culminate in high-profile modern integrationist projects such as the UN Headquarters in New York or the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris during the 1950s and the

proliferation of modern public art in American cities during the 1960s. The New Monumentality discourse, which emerged in New York during World War II with the architectural historian Sigfried Giedion, the artist Fernand Léger, and the architect José Luis Sert's manifesto "Nine Points on Monumentality" (1943), demonstrates the inclination that several members of the avant-garde had towards integrationist, socially committed art.

It is widely acknowledged that New Monumentality was pivotal in the architecture world because it redefined the way that architects approached major public commissions of the postwar period. What has been ignored in scholarship is the fact that this discourse also had a significant resonance in the art world. It is worth repeating that the cornerstone of the new approach to monumentality was the integration of the arts, a strategy that assigned visual artists a vital role in the construction of new monuments. Several avant-garde artists — notably Picasso, Léger, Isamu Noguchi, Hans Hofmann, Joan Miró, and Alexander Calder — seized the opportunity that this multidisciplinary approach afforded them and created art specifically for public monuments during the postwar period, recasting the integrationist tradition of the 1930s as a new aesthetic.

Although the issue of modern monumentality had been discussed before in the architecture world,¹ the 1937 Paris World's Fair brought this idea into practice on an international stage. The fair made monumentality a critical matter in intellectual circles, since it was inextricably linked to politics. As I have explained in Chapter 1, on the eve of World War II, the fair became a battleground where competing nations such as France, the US, Spain, Russia, Germany, or Italy aggressively exploited art and architecture — both modern

¹ This happened in the late 1920s after the infamous rejection of modern projects at the League of Nations Building competition (1926-27) — among them one by Le Corbusier — in favor of classicist designs.

and conventional — to convey their ideologies and advance their political agendas. Although most of the pavilions at the fair were ephemeral, they nonetheless constituted valuable experiments on monumentality that could be translated to the permanent urban environment. Thus, the 1937 Paris fair embodied and promoted the ideal that art and architecture had to work together in order to generate compelling monuments, a strategy that was adopted in most of the national pavilions including the boldly avant-garde Spanish Pavilion.²

The Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair was the first incarnation of successful modern monumentality. This modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* challenged the prevalent notion that modern art and architecture were incapable of generating moving monumental expression.³ It essentially disproved Lewis Mumford's contemporary idea that a modern monument was an oxymoron.⁴ At the Spanish Pavilion, the clever juxtaposition of Sert and Luis Lacasa's rationalist yet expressive architecture with an ensemble of poignant avant-garde works of art by the renowned Picasso, Calder, Miró, Alberto Sánchez, Julio González, and José Renau had a cumulative effect on viewers — this combination effectively conveyed to the public the message that the beleaguered Spanish Republic needed the help of the international community and that the political stakes reached far beyond the Republic's borders and its ongoing Civil War.

² As I explained in Chapter 1, it was the fair planners who called for the integrationist approach, in great part to counteract what was viewed as excessive bareness in modern architecture. At the time, modern architecture was dominated by the functionalist doctrine and was focused on the fulfillment of physical needs, leaving aside psychological or mental issues such as artistic expression or monumentality.

³ As I have discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, at the time there was a widespread assumption that stripped modern buildings and difficult avant-garde art could not communicate anything to the general public; therefore, they were considered unsuitable for public buildings and spaces.

⁴ Lewis Mumford, "The Death of the Monument," in *Circle; International Survey of Constructive Art*, ed. Leslie Martin, Ben Nicholson, and Naum Gabo (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), 263–70.

The successful experiences of the integration of the modern arts at the 1937 Paris fair, especially that of the Spanish Pavilion, suggested to the avant-garde that the integration of the arts was the most effective strategy that they could employ to achieve the elusive modern monumentality. This thought sprouted into a full-blown theory when Léger, who had also participated in several integrationist projects at the 1937 Paris fair, Sert, the architect of the Spanish Pavilion, and Giedion, a champion of modern art and architecture, met in New York during World War II.

The New Monumentality theory was borne out of common concerns and frustrations of the architectural and artistic avant-gardes: out of a multidisciplinary conversation, a multidisciplinary manifesto emerged. As I have explained in Chapter 2, in New York Léger and Sert had the opportunity of sharing with Giedion their past experiences with integrationist projects and their great concern about the constant banishment of modern art and architecture from the great public commissions of their time. Léger and Sert played leading roles in the interdisciplinary discussions of a tight avant-garde circle that gathered around Calder, who had also worked in the Spanish Pavilion and was very interested in executing works of monumental public art. Giedion, Léger, and Sert became familiar with the great challenges that avant-garde artists and architects interested in participating in important public commissions faced. They were aware that the 1937 Paris fair had mirrored the reality of most Western nations: governments, institutions, and many private patrons still preferred conventional and classicizing art and architecture styles over modern styles for emblematic public buildings and spaces. They usually either rejected avant-garde styles

blatantly or relegated them to subordinate roles.⁵ The futures of the architectural and artistic avant-gardes appeared to be linked: classicizing buildings called for classicizing art, whereas modern buildings would demand modern art.

The 1937 Spanish Pavilion provided the avant-garde with hope for the future and a successful model to follow. Giedion, Léger, and Sert concluded that an integrationist approach like that of the Spanish Pavilion would present a solution to the common conundrum that avant-garde artists and architects faced: their exclusion from the most emblematic public commissions of their time and the consequential isolation of their work from society. When they wrote “Nine Points” (1943), Giedion, Léger, and Sert connected formally the idea of the integration of the arts to the issue of modern monumentality for the first time. They argued that modern society demanded the creation of a new kind of monument, one that would not constitute an autocratic imposition by the elite on the public, but a democratic expression that would emerge from the people themselves and correspond to their current emotional needs. This new form of expression would represent the collective ideals of a newly reformed, democratic, international, and modern society. For Giedion, Léger, and Sert, the integration of the arts was required to achieve this important public task.

The New Monumentality discourse took root in New York in great part because the integrationist projects and ideas of the 1930s had predisposed architects and artists to such thinking. As I have explained in Chapter 2, the city had become a testing ground for the idea

⁵ This situation became obvious at the 1937 fair, where the buildings that would become permanent landmarks in the city, the new Palais de Chaillot and the Musée d'Art Moderne, were designed in stripped classicist styles and were populated by conventional murals and sculptures. As I have demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2, the avant-garde had been brutally expelled from many countries in Europe. In the US, artists had been allowed to participate in public projects in a very limited measure through the FAP or world's fair assignments; however, these opportunities had been very few and far between and had been realized in relatively minor or ephemeral projects. None of these commissions would leave a significant permanent imprint on the city and on collective consciousness.

that modern art and society should be together. Prominent art historians such as Meyer Schapiro promoted the idea of a social modern art. The FAP had been populating the city's urban spaces and public buildings with monumental works of art that sought to represent the ideals and values of American society. A few of these works had been executed in modern styles through the direct participation of several avant-garde artists, among them Stuart Davis, Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning, and Léger himself. In addition, the influential Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) had enthusiastically adopted the concept that modern art should be an integral part of life and help shape it. Through the 1930s and 1940s, MoMA promoted intensively the integration of the visual and applied arts with architecture through exhibitions like "Useful Objects" or others that highlighted the work of the FAP, American modern murals, or the German Bauhaus. During the war years MoMA also endorsed the notion that modern art had an important political function to fulfill: it played a major role in proselytizing for national defense, featured the politically charged *Guernica* as the centerpiece of two important Picasso exhibitions in 1940 and 1941, and staged several exhibitions on the theme of war.

Léger's presence in New York during the 1930s and during the war years was decisive to the formulation of the New Monumentality theory. His work and writings bridged the art and architecture worlds: Léger constituted a key link between the idea of collective art and modern monumentality. As I have argued in Chapter 2, Léger's stance both influenced and was influenced by the American art world. During his US stays, the artist closely examined integrationist art by other artists and participated directly in FAP projects alongside modern American artists such as de Kooning. He also exhibited his work in museums, participated frequently in the multidisciplinary discussions of Calder's avant-garde circle,

painted a large mural for the 1939-40 New York World's Fair, and gave lectures. Leger's activity after his return to France in 1945 would continue to feed the New Monumentality discourse. Through several essays, Léger continued to argue that avant-garde art had to fulfill an important political and social role by becoming architecture's partner in shaping modern life.⁶ In addition, between 1945 and his death in 1955, he was finally able to materialize his ideas in several integrationist projects around the world, including the extremely important UN Headquarters in New York (fig. 57).⁷

The concept of the New Monumentality spread rapidly in the architecture world and became a primary concern of architects in the thirty years that followed World War II.⁸ Many influential figures joined this discourse after 1943. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Paul Zucker's book *New Architecture and City Planning: A Symposium* (1944) included an entire section entitled "The Problem of a New Monumentality," in which Giedion published his individual essay on the subject along with others by the well-known architects George Nelson, Louis I. Kahn, and Philip L. Goodwin, the co-designer of the 1939 MoMA building.⁹ Another key

⁶ Léger wrote several essays in which he argued that modern art had to come into contact with the public through integrationist works, such as "The Human Body Considered as Object" (1945), "Art and the People" (1946), "Modern Architecture and Color" (1946), "A New Space in Architecture" (1949), "Mural Painting and Easel Painting" (1950), and "Color in Architecture" (1954). Fernand Léger, *Functions of Painting* (New York: Viking Press, 1973).

⁷ After returning to France in December 1945 and joining the Communist Party, Léger created a mosaic façade for the church at Assy (1946-49), decorations for the Congrès International des Femmes at the Porte de Versailles (1949), mosaics for the crypt of the American Memorial at Bastogne, Belgium (1950), stained-glass windows and a tapestry for the church at Adincourt (1951), mosaic murals and stained-glass windows for the church at Courfaivre in Switzerland (1954), a large stained glass window and a mosaic mural for the Ciudad Universitaria De Caracas in Venezuela (1954), color studies for the Memorial Hospital of Saint-Lo (1954), and a mural for the auditorium of the Opera of Sao Paolo, Brazil (1954). Fernand Léger et al., *Fernand Léger: The Later Years* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1987), 70–72, 177–78.

⁸ José Luis Sert, *Sert: Arquitecto en Nueva York*, ed. Xavier Costa, Guido Hartray, and Museu d'Art Contemporani (Barcelona) (Actar Coac Assn Of Catalan Arc, 1997), 8.

⁹ Kahn would attempt to apply his ideas on monumentality throughout his life. Riverside Drive Park, a memorial for Adele Levy (1961-65) is a magnificent example of his collaborative endeavor with Noguchi for a vast public space where art and architecture would have merged seamlessly to serve a social purpose.

figure that pushed for the integration of the arts in postwar buildings and monuments was Le Corbusier, the “father” of modern architecture. In 1944 Le Corbusier began to promote what he termed the “synthesis of the major arts” through several essays that reached a large international audience.¹⁰ As I explained in Chapter 1, the architect’s close relationship and frequent collaborations with Léger during the 1920s and early 1930s had shaped both practitioners’ integrationist stances. Le Corbusier’s intervention was decisive for the New Monumentality discourse because he applied his idea of the “synthesis of the major arts” in highly publicized projects such as his government complex for the new city of Chandigarh, India (1951-65) (fig. 58). Perhaps because of Léger and Le Corbusier’s influence, the synthetic movement for postwar reconstruction became particularly strong in France.¹¹

The New Monumentality discourse thrived amidst the great interest in artistic integration or synthesis that took over the architecture around the midcentury. This is illustrated by the continued promotion of integrationist practices by several publications and institutions. For example, the journal *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui* embraced Le Corbusier’s idea of the synthesis of the arts in 1945 and enthusiastically supported it through the 1960s.¹²

Unfortunately, Kahn and Noguchi’s modern *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which would have allowed Noguchi to materialize the sculptural landscapes that he had envisioned as monuments in the 1930s, was never built.

¹⁰ In 1944, Le Corbusier wrote “Vers l’Unité. Synthèse des Arts Majeurs: Architecture, Peinture, Sculpture,” in which he advocated for the “synthesis of the major arts” in postwar reconstruction projects. This article, which was published in the Resistance magazine *Volontés* on December 13, 1944, reached a wider audience when it was reprinted in 1946 in Volume IV of his book *Ouvre Complete*. In addition, Le Corbusier elaborated on his idea of bringing “pure plastic emotion” into architecture in the essay “L’Espace Indicible [Ineffable Space]” (1945), which he published in the magazine *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* in 1946 and then used to open his 1948 book *New World of Space*. In 1948 Le Corbusier arrived to the fullest manifesto of his synthetic project in the article “Unité,” also published in the magazine *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. Christopher E. M. Pearson, *Designing UNESCO: Art, Architecture and International Politics at Mid-Century* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 77, 107.

¹¹ One great example of postwar synthetic activity in France is Henri Matisse’s Chapel of the Rosary at Vence (1948-51). *Ibid.*, 75–76.

¹² *Ibid.*, 74–75, 107; For example, the magazine published these articles: “Synthèse Des Arts; Décors Abstraits Dans l’Architecture de Façades d’Immeubles,” *Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* 24 (July 1953): 86–86;

The editor of this magazine, the French sculptor André Bloc, founded the *Group Espace* in 1951, an organization that sought to align the synthesis of the arts with French reconstruction and spurred the creation of similar groups all over the world.¹³ Four books that were published in the US around midcentury — three of them in New York — demonstrate that the gusto for synthesis was not exclusively French.¹⁴ US art institutions also participated in this trend. For example, following MoMA's lead, the Kootz Gallery in New York hosted the exhibition "The Muralist and the Modern Architect" (October 3-23, 1950), which featured an interesting collaboration between the Abstract Expressionist Hans Hofmann and Town Planning Associates (Sert and Paul Lester Wiener's firm) for the Chimbote Civic Center for the Peruvian city of Chimbote (1948-50), as well as four other collaborative projects (figs. 59 & 60).¹⁵

"Synthèse Des Arts, Une Expérience Valable à La Cité Universitaire de Caracas," *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 25 (January 1954): 96–99; Renée Diamant-Berger, "De l'Union Pour l'Art à l'Association Pour Une Synthèse Des Arts Plastiques et Au Groupe Espace," *Aujourd'hui* 10 (December 1967): 54–57.

¹³ Pearson, *Designing UNESCO*, 80, 82.

¹⁴ One of these publications was *Art in European Architecture: Synthèse des Arts* (1956), a book by architect Paul Damaz that included a preface written by Le Corbusier. In this manifesto for artistic integration, Damaz presented several examples of integrationist projects that had been realized in Europe, including the Spanish Pavilion for the 1937 Paris World's Fair, Léger's mosaics for the *American War Memorial* and his color studies for the Memorial Hospital of Saint-Lo, among many others. Two other books promoted artistic integration through inventories of US cases. The first one was published in conjunction with the an exhibition that took place at the Contemporary Arts Museum of Houston from November 8 to December 6, 1953: *Integration: The Use of Painting and Sculpture with Architecture in Daily Life: a Survey Exhibition of the Use of Art in the Environment of Architecture for Educational, Religious, Commercial, Residential and Other Ends*. Another was curator Eleanor Bitterman's *Art in Modern Architecture* (1952). In addition, Damaz published in 1963 *Art in Latin American Architecture*, which featured prominently Raúl Villanueva's Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas.

¹⁵ *The Muralist and the Modern Architect* (New York: Kootz Gallery, 1950); Hofmann created studies for mosaic murals for a freestanding 50-foot slab in front of the church on the Chimbote Civic Center plaza, as well as a design for the pavement of this plaza. The other collaborations were: Gropius and his firm The Architects Collaborative with Robert Motherwell, for the main stair of a junior high school in Attleboro, Massachusetts; Marcel Breuer and Adolph Gottlieb for a screen wall in a lounge at Vassar College dormitory; Philip Johnson and William Baziotés, for a mural in a Glass House; and Frederick Kiesler and the sculptor David Hare, for a free-form staircase in one version of Kiesler's Endless House. Hans Hofmann and Xavier Costa, *Hans Hofmann: The Chimbote Project: The Synergistic Promise of Modern Art and Urban Architecture* (Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2004), 52.

The New Monumentality discourse did not remain encapsulated within the architecture world. MoMA greatly contributed to the intensification of the New Monumentality debates in New York during the late 1940s through the organization of three symposiums: “What is Happening to Modern Architecture?” (February 1948), presided by Alfred H. Barr, “In Search of a New Monumentality” (September 1948), and “How to Combine Architecture, Painting and Sculpture” (1951), presided by Philip Johnson.¹⁶ After World War II ended in 1945, and with the reconstruction of war-torn Europe and the construction of new monuments in the US in sight, the subject of modern monumentality became a pressing matter for political leaders, impresarios, intellectuals, architects, and artists — and MoMA sought to mediate this conversation. These symposiums fueled the notion that the integration of the modern arts was important, even more so in emblematic monuments such as the forthcoming UN Headquarters in New York, a project that was discussed in all three symposiums (Fig. 61). Although the first two symposiums were primarily directed to an architectural audience, they fostered multidisciplinary discussions; for example, Noguchi intervened at the end of the “What is Happening” symposium.¹⁷ The “How to Combine” symposium congregated even more figures from the art world, among them James Johnson Sweeney, the social realist painter Ben Shahn, and the avant-garde

¹⁶ Alfred H. Barr Jr. et al., “What Is Happening to Modern Architecture?,” *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 15, no. 3 (April 1, 1948): 4–20, doi:10.2307/4058109; In the symposium “In Search of a New Monumentality” Giedion joined other architects and theorists to discuss this issue, presented once more the ideas he had discussed in his essay “The Need for a New Monumentality,” and set *Guernica* at the Spanish Pavilion as an example to follow (1944). “In Search of a New Monumentality: A Symposium,” *Architectural Review* 104 (September 1948): 117, 120; Philip Johnson, “A Symposium on How to Combine Architecture, Painting and Sculpture [Symposium, Museum of Modern Art, Mar. 19, 1951, Philip C. Johnson Presiding],” *Interiors* CX, no. 10 (May 1951): 100–105.

¹⁷ The bulletin mentions that other figures, among them Noguchi, made interesting contributions to the discussion during the question period, but their statements were edited out because of lack of space. Barr et al., “What Is Happening to Modern Architecture?,” 4.

artists Amedée Ozenfant and Mark Rothko.¹⁸ The latter's presence demonstrates that some modern artists were interested in the concept of artistic integration and that they were not just concentrated on the solution of formal problems and on the expression of their inner self, like Greenberg argued. In fact, a few years later, Rothko would be thrilled to receive three important commissions that would allow him to materialize his "dream" of surrounding a civic space with his art: the murals for the Seagram Building in New York (1958-59), the Holyoke Center at Harvard University (1961-63), and the Rothko Chapel in Houston (1964-67, installed 1971) (fig. 62).¹⁹

Prominent midcentury projects in which renowned members of the artistic avant-garde collaborated with architects, such as Paul Lester Wiener and Sert's Civic Center for the city of Chimbote in Peru (1948-50), Oscar Niemeyer's government buildings for the new city of Brasilia in Brazil (1956-64), or perhaps the most ambitious of all, Carlos Raúl Villanueva's Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas in Venezuela (1940-60),²⁰ prove the great international spread of the New Monumentality as well as the sustained interest of the artistic avant-garde in partnering with architecture to construct the monuments of the future (fig. 63). The international reach of the New Monumentality was largely fueled by the debates that took place at the *Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) during the late

¹⁸ Amedée Ozenfant and Mark Rothko were present in the audience and made contributions to the discussions at the end. Rothko declared that he painted very large pictures in order to be "very intimate and human," to place himself in the same position of the viewer and make a "spiritual" connection with him/her. Johnson, "A Symposium on How to Combine," 104.

¹⁹ Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, "Considering Mark Rothko's Murals" (Lecture, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, October 17, 2015).

²⁰ The long list of Venezuelan and foreign artists that participated in Villanueva's *Proyecto de Integración de las Artes* at the Ciudad Universitaria includes Léger, Calder, Jean Arp, Antoine Pevsner, Jesús Rafael Soto, Victor Vasarély, and Bloc, among others. In the project's Central Area alone there are thirty works of art. In this project, art is not just a decorative complement; it actually defines space and is endowed with special communicative and practical functions like establishing circulation patterns.

1940s and 1950s, during which Giedion and Sert reiterated the ideas they had expressed in “Nine Points” before a large international audience.²¹ The meetings’ emphasis on the New Monumentality and the integration of the arts logically stems from Giedion and Sert’s key positions in the architecture world.²² The 1951 Hoddedson congress was particularly emphatic on the integration of the arts as a means to achieve modern monumentality; its publication, *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanisation of Urban Life* (1952), edited by Sert and others, advocated from beginning to end for the important role of art in the construction of new urban centers.²³ As a result of the CIAM discussions, modern architects gradually drifted away from their adherence to functionalist principles and developed a more expressive architecture that attempted to tackle the problem of monumentality without renouncing the modern aesthetic. These architects actively sought the participation of modern artists in their projects.

The great resonance of the New Monumentality theory becomes patently visible in the most emblematic postwar projects: the UN Headquarters in New York City (1947-52) and its offspring, the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (1953-58), both based on the rhetoric of artistic integration as a metaphor of international political integration.²⁴ These projects,

²¹ As Joan Ockman observes, the issue of modern monumentality was the focus of its first three postwar meetings: Bridgewater (1947), Bergamo (1949), and Hoddedson (1951). Joan Ockman, “The War Years in America: New York, New Monumentality,” in *Sert: Arquitecto en Nueva York*, ed. Xavier Costa, Guido Hartray, and Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Actar Coac Assn Of Catalan Arc, 1997), 28, 32.

²² Sert was CIAM’s president from 1947 to 1956 and dean of Harvard’s Graduate School of Design from 1953 to 1969; Giedion was CIAM’s secretary-general from 1928 to 1956, taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University beginning 1951, and wrote seminal books on modern architecture history.

²³ This book included essays on the subject by Sert, Giedion, Walter Gropius, and even James Johnson Sweeney, then the director of the Guggenheim Museum in New York. International Congresses for Modern Architecture, *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanisation of Urban Life*, ed. Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, José Luis Sert, and Ernesto N. Rogers (London: Lund, Humphries, 1952).

²⁴ Pearson, *Designing UNESCO*, 85–93.

built at about the same time that Greenberg was arguing for the supremacy of the supposedly detached Abstract Expressionism, demonstrate that many modern artists were deeply invested in the construction of monumentality and the shaping of human life.

However, although the UN complex was the focus of attention of intellectual discussions like those at the MoMA symposiums of 1948 and 1951, it did not achieve the same level of harmonic artistic integration of the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris fair. Artists were called in after its International Style architectural design had been set, something that triggered Johnson's criticisms at the 1951 MoMA symposium.²⁵ In addition, the building was gradually populated with gifts and artistic commissions by many nations, which resulted in a cacophonous mixture of styles.²⁶ These were aesthetic compromises that were accepted for the sake of politics by the leader of the architectural team Wallace K. Harrison (the architect of Radio City and Léger's acquaintance) and the UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.²⁷ Yet modern art still got the privileged spots at the UN. When Harrison and Hammarskjöld commissioned works directly, these were all modern.²⁸ They commissioned Léger to create the first works for the building in 1952: two murals for the General Assembly Hall (fig. 57).²⁹ Ironically, this less than perfect integrationist building ended up displaying a tapestry reproduction of *Guernica* at the entrance of the Security Council, a gift from the

²⁵ Johnson, "A Symposium on How to Combine," 101.

²⁶ For example, modern abstractions such as Ezio Martinelli's sculpture *Untitled* (1961) or social realist works such as Evgenij Vuchetin's sculpture *Swords into Plowshares* (1959) were installed at the complex. Pearson, *Designing UNESCO*, 100.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*; In 1952, Léger submitted two 8-inch square gouaches that were enlarged by a former student of his atelier, Bruce Gregory. Léger et al., *Fernand Léger*, 72.

estate of Nelson D. Rockefeller in 1985.³⁰ Perhaps *Guernica*, as Sert suggested in 1951, should live in a building such as the UN instead of settling quietly inside a museum like it does today (fig. 64).³¹ The partly unsatisfactory experience at the UN demonstrates that collaboration has always been difficult, perhaps even more so when expectations are so high. Still, the UN project demonstrates that at this point, the integral presence of art in the great monuments of the time was considered essential in both the art and the architecture worlds. It also shows that the possibility of constructing emblematic monuments was something that greatly moved and motivated artists.

Perhaps because of the lessons learned at the UN, the integrationist approach was applied more fully at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. UNESCO was perhaps the most ambitious, idealistic, and optimistic project in which architects and artists worked together from beginning to end in order to achieve modern monumentality (fig. 65). The enterprise was truly collaborative and international in nature: Breuer, a Hungarian-born, ex-Bauhaus member who had immigrated to the US in 1937, led the architecture team made up by the French architect Bernard Zehruss and the Italian structural engineer Pier Luigi Nervi.³² As a result of the artists' involvement in the project from the beginning, the expressive and modern architectural forms engaged in a dialogue with the works of modern art that populated the complex. Some of the world's most renowned avant-garde artists participated in this project: Henry Moore, who created the monumental travertine sculpture *Reclining*

³⁰ David Cohen, "Hidden Treasures," *Slate*, February 6, 2003, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/the_gist/2003/02/hidden_treasures.html.

³¹ Sert had envisioned the UN Headquarters in 1951 as "a great opportunity for the expression of international art" and had proposed that *Guernica*, "the best mural of the last centuries," be placed in the lobby of the new Assembly Building instead of in a museum. Johnson, "A Symposium on How to Combine," 103. *Guernica* is at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid now. It returned to Spain on September 10, 1981, as Picasso had wished.

³² Anna Rowland, "Breuer, Marcel," *Grove Art Online*, n.d.

Figure; Miró, who painted two exterior freestanding tiled murals, the *Wall of the Sun* and the *Wall of the Moon*; Jean Arp, who produced the outdoor low-relief bronze sculpture *Constellation*; Calder, who created *Spirale*, the largest mobile he had ever done; Picasso, who painted the monumental interior mural *The Fall of Icarus*; and Noguchi, who was finally able to execute two sculptural landscapes, the *Patio des Delegués* and the *Jardin Japonais* (figs. 66 & 67) .

Like they had at world's fairs, art and architecture at both the UN and the UNESCO Headquarters served politics: they helped to convey to a global audience the message that in the future, a coalition of democratic governments would safeguard peace and guarantee the well-being of all mankind, all under the aegis of the US. The adoption of modern art and architecture at both the UN and the UNESCO buildings demonstrates that many Western governments and private patrons considered, at this time, that modern art and architecture were the most appropriate styles for the representation of their democratic ideals. The main reason for this was, once again, politics. As Serge Guilbaut explains, even before World War II ended, every section of the political world agreed that art would play an important role in the new US; although at first it was not clear what kind of art would execute this mission, it soon became clear that it would be modern art.³³ As I have argued in Chapter 2, this happened in great part because of the efforts of modern art and architecture champions such as Barr and Giedion, who seized each opportunity they had to stress that classicizing or social realist art had been co-opted by Nazism and fascism and that modern art was the victim of their virulent attack. Therefore, the US and other “civilized” democratic nations could not possibly continue to employ these retrograde styles in order to represent their people.

³³ Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 55.

As demonstrated by the postwar New Monumentality projects, several avant-garde artists, including Léger, Calder, Noguchi, Hofmann, Picasso, and Miró, enthusiastically embraced the idea that avant-garde art and society should be together; that modern art had the responsibility to shape human life. These artists came to believe that one of the most effective ways to achieve this goal was to place their work in the public realm, where they could reach the widest possible audience. As I have argued, the integrationist art and architecture projects of the 1930s — both in Europe and in the US — had predisposed these artists to this thinking.

The New Monumentality discourse enabled these artists to participate in the construction of the new monuments of the future, which allowed them to continue with the 1930s tradition, however recasting it in modern styles. These socially committed artists would participate in modern projects constructed around the rhetoric of integration all around the world. These projects represent a pioneer attempt to humanize modern art and architecture, a substantive critique to cold-hearted functionalism in architecture and the emergent view of detached formalism in art. It had taken almost two decades and painstaking effort, but the avant-garde generation of the 1930s was finally able to place their work in the public realm, come into contact with the public, and help to shape human life (fig. 68). Ironically, when they got to do this, their work was not as avant-garde as it had once been. Evidently, it takes a long time for avant-garde to be accepted in the public realm; it first appears in progressive galleries, then it steps into museums, and finally, it walks out to the streets and into the lives of average people.

Undeniably, the New Monumentality discourse emerged from a dynamic artistic dialogue between the two world capitals of art and culture: Paris and New York. It began in

Paris at the 1937 World's Fair; crossed the Atlantic along with Giedion, Sert, and Léger to New York, from which the conversation with Paris continued; and finally spread all over the world. With the New Monumentality, the supposedly "detached" avant-garde art refused to produce dead objects for pure aesthetic contemplation and produced living entities that fulfilled cultural-symbolic functions.

Appendix



Fig.1.

The Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair, exterior view with Alberto Sánchez's sculpture *El Pueblo Español Tiene un Camino que Conduce a una Estrella* in the foreground. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 39.



Fig. 2.

Ezra Stoller, photograph showing Pablo Picasso's *Untitled* (1964-65) in Daley Plaza, Chicago, 1967. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 20, 2015).



Fig. 3.

World's Columbian Exposition, 1893. The Court of Honor from behind the *Statue of the Republic* looking toward the Administrative Building. From: Harriet Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation, and Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 7.



Fig. 4.

Haig Patigian, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1926, San Francisco City Hall. Available from: Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln_%28Patigian%29#/media/File:Abraham_Lincoln_by_Haig_Patigian_-_San_Francisco_City_Hall_-_DSC02814.JPG (accessed October 20, 2015).

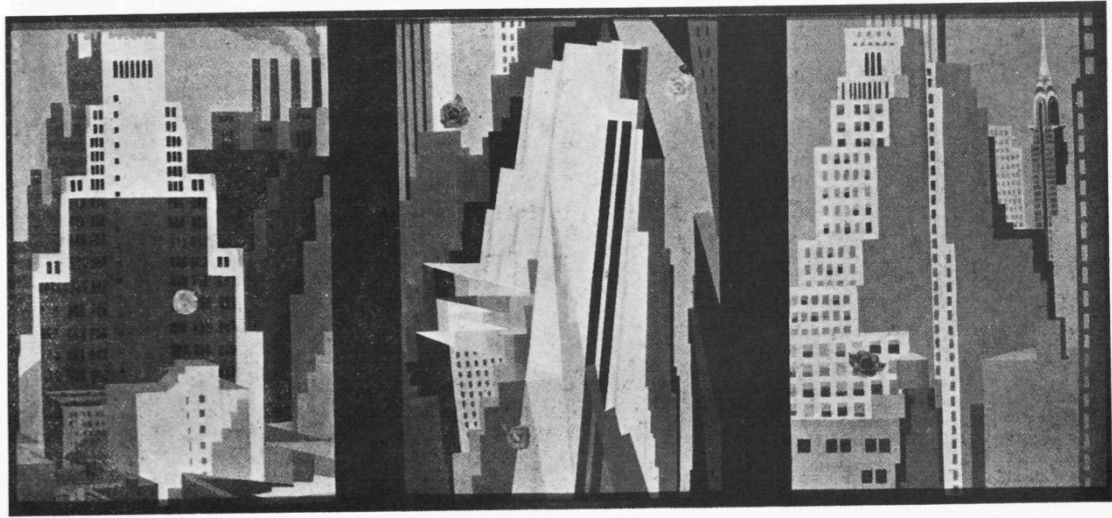


Fig. 5.

Georgia O'Keeffe, study for the three-part mural *Manhattan*, created for the “Murals by American Painters and Photographers” exhibition at MoMA (May 3-31, 1932). From: Museum of Modern Art (New York), *American Art of the 20's and 30's* ([New York: Published for the Museum of Modern Art by Arno Press, 1969), n.p.



Fig. 6.

Michael Lantz, *Man Controlling Trade* (1937, installed 1942), view of western figures in front of the Apex Building, home of the Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 20, 2015).

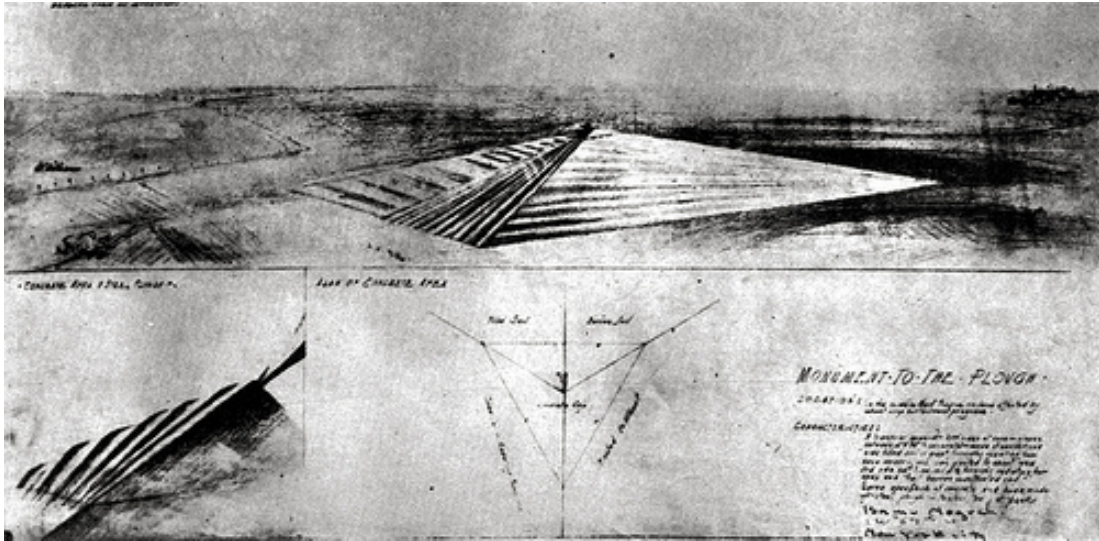


Fig. 7.
Isamu Noguchi, sketch for *Monument to the Plough*, 1933. From: Dore Ashton, *Noguchi East and West* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1993), 51.



Fig. 8.
Arshile Gorky, *Study for Activities on the Field*, for *Aviation: Evolution of Forms under Aerodynamic Limitations*, a mural for the Newark Airport, 1935-36. From: Arshile Gorky et al., *Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective* (Philadelphia; New Haven: Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2009), 235.



Fig. 9.

General view of the main axis of the 1937 Paris World's Fair towards the Palais de Chaillot. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 17.



Fig. 10.

View of the main axis of the 1937 Paris World's Fair towards the Eiffel Tower, with Albert Speer's German Pavilion to the left and Boris Iofan's Russian Pavilion to the right. Available from: Wikimedia Commons, <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons> (accessed October 25, 2015).



Fig. 11.

Messrs, Baeudouin and Lods, *Fete of Light*, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 20.



Fig. 12.

Fernand Léger and his students executing *Le Transport des Forces*, Palais de la Découverte, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Matthew Affron, "Léger's Modernism: Subjects and Objects," in *Fernand Léger*, by Fernand Léger et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art : Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 141.

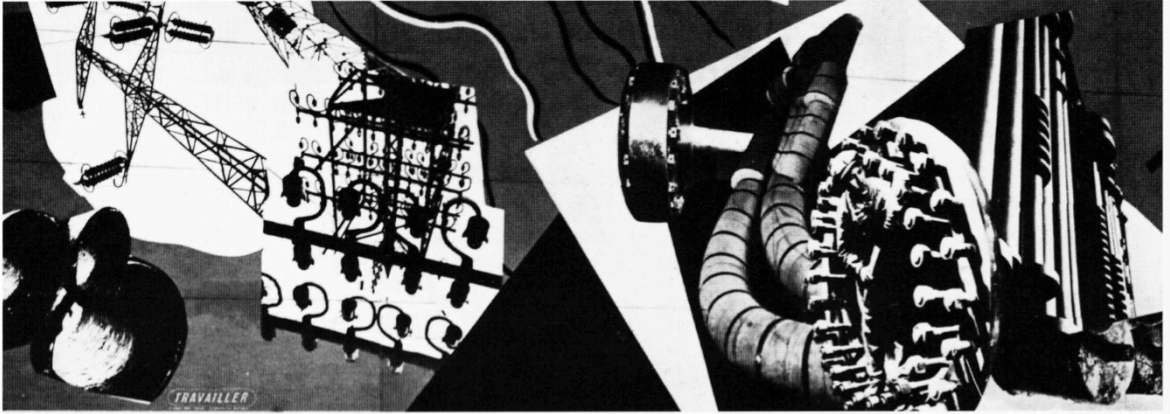


Fig. 13.

Fernand Léger, *Travailler*, for Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret's Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Matthew Affron, "Léger's Modernism: Subjects and Objects," in *Fernand Léger*, by Fernand Léger et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art : Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 122.

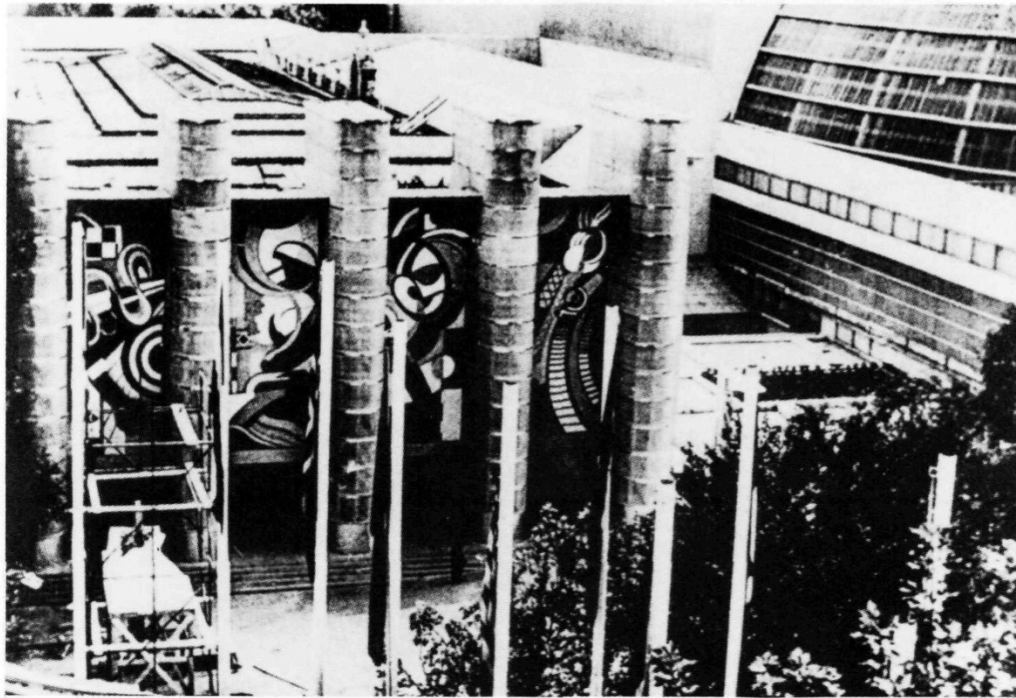


Fig. 14.

Robert Delauney, murals between the monumental pillars of the Rail Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Catherine B. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937*, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), illustration D 16.



Fig. 15.

Boris Iofan, Palace of the Soviets, 1933, perspective drawing. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 25, 2015).



Fig. 16.

J.C. Dondel, A. Aubert, P. Viard, and M. Dastuge, Musée d'Art Moderne, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "Paris 1937," *Architectural Forum* 67 (September 1937), 162.

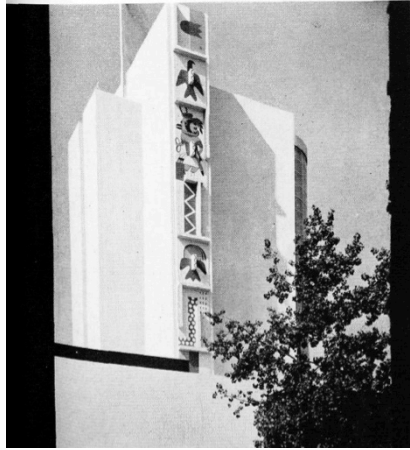


Fig. 17.

Eduard “Buk” Ulreich, native American motifs on the US Pavilion, 1937 Paris World’s Fair.
From: Eleanor Bittermann, *Art in Modern Architecture* (New York: Reinhold, 1952), 27.

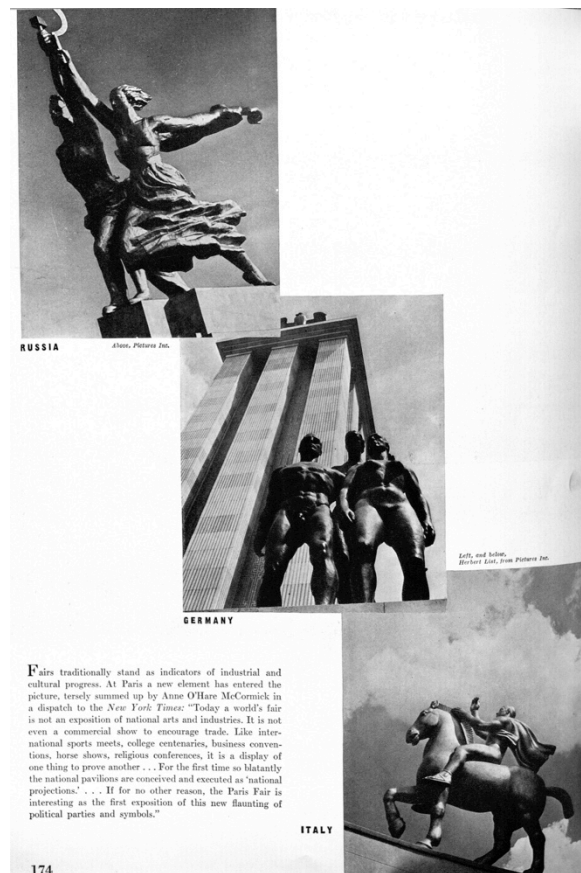


Fig. 18.

Henry Russell-Hitchcock, juxtaposition of photographs of the symbolic exterior sculptures of the Russian, German, and Italian pavilions in “Paris 1937,” *Architectural Forum* 67 (September 1937), 174.

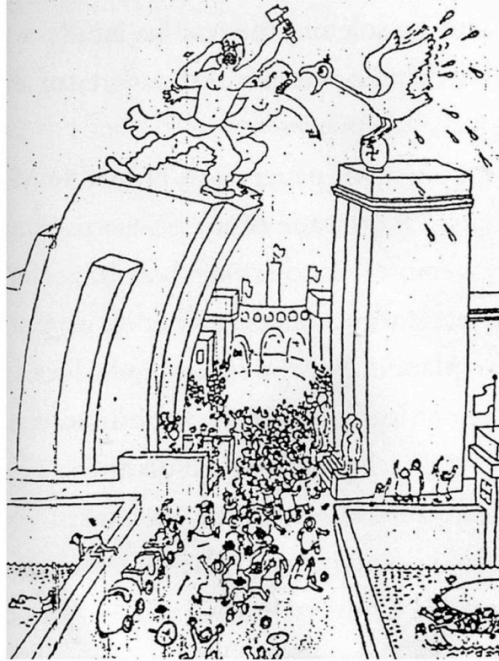


Fig. 19.

Cartoon from the journal *Candide*, July 15, 1937. From: Udovicki-Selb D, "Facing Hitler's Pavilion: The Uses of Modernity in the Soviet Pavilion at the 1937 Paris International Exhibition," *J. Contemp. Hist. Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 1 (2012), 18.



Fig. 20.

Albert Speer, German Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 25, 2015).

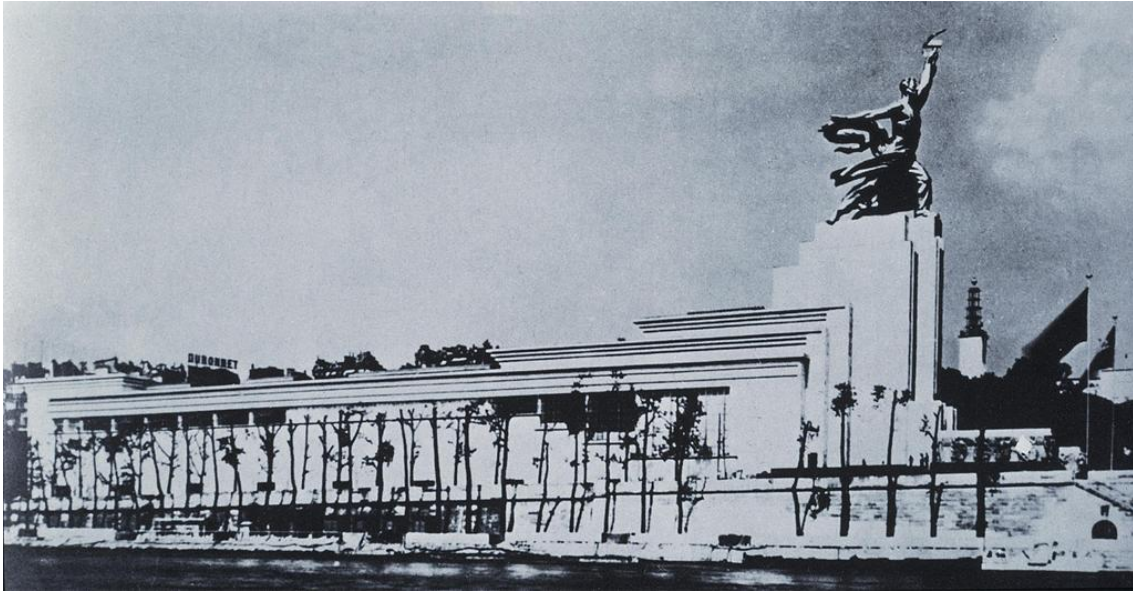


Fig. 21.
Boris Iofan, Russian Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. Available from: ARTstor,
<http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 25, 2015).

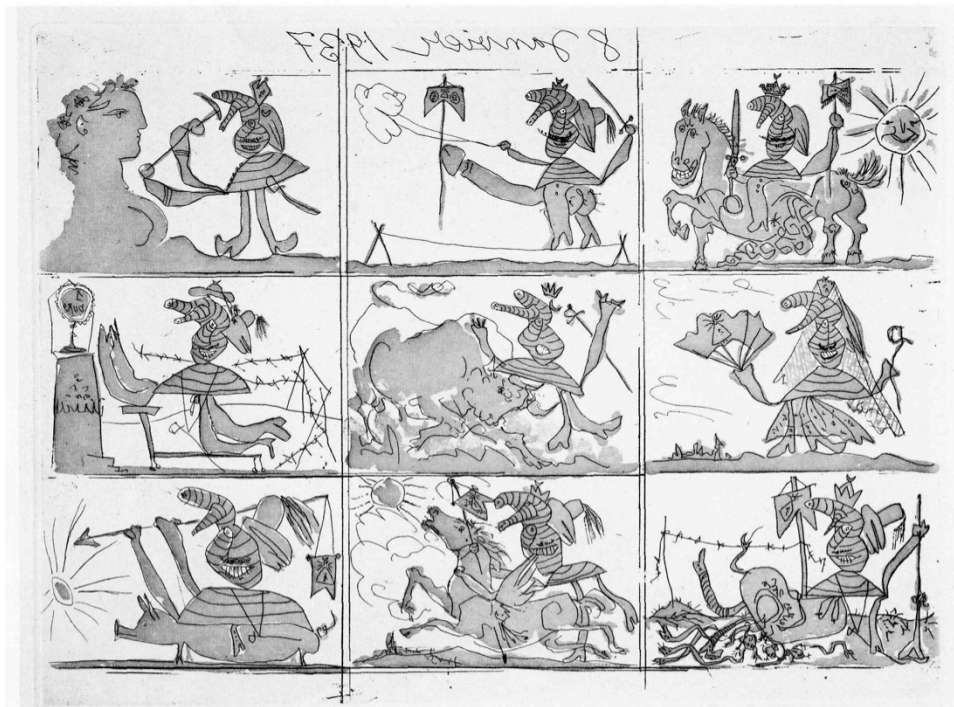


Fig. 22.
Pablo Picasso, *Sueño y Mentira de Franco*, 1937, etching. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and
Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937*
(Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 105.



Fig. 23.

José Luis Sert and Luis Lacasa, Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair, left section of main façade. The photograph shows Picasso's sculpture *Tête de Femme au Chignon* (Head of a Woman), 1931, under the exterior stairs. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 38.



Fig. 24.

José Luis Sert and Luis Lacasa, view from the court towards the Spanish Pavilion's first floor exhibition, with *Guernica* and *Mercury Fountain*. Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 43.



Fig. 25.

José Luis Sert and Luis Lacasa, court of the Spanish Pavilion with stage and tree at the left; a portion of Calder's *Mercury Fountain* shows on the right. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 43.

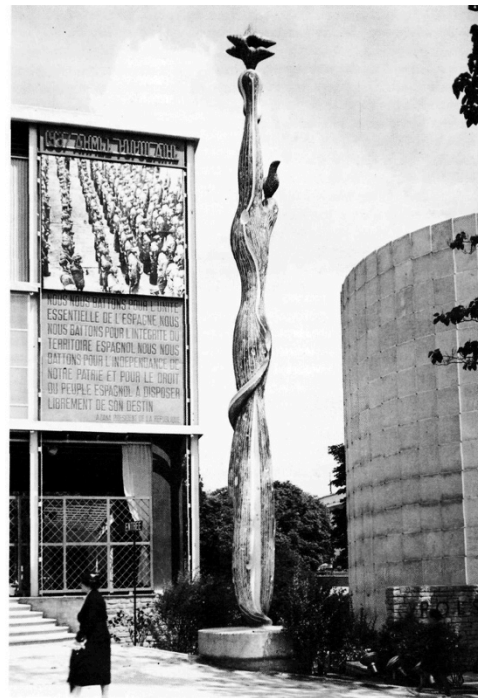


Fig. 26.

Alberto Sánchez, *El Pueblo Español tiene un Camino que Conduce a una Estrella* (The Spanish People have a Path that Leads to a Star), 1937, Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 45.



Fig. 27.

Pablo Picasso, *Tête de Femme au Chignon* (Head of a Woman), 1931. From: Catherine B. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937*, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), illustration P 1.



Fig. 28.

Julio González, *La Montserrat*, ca. 1936-37. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 91.

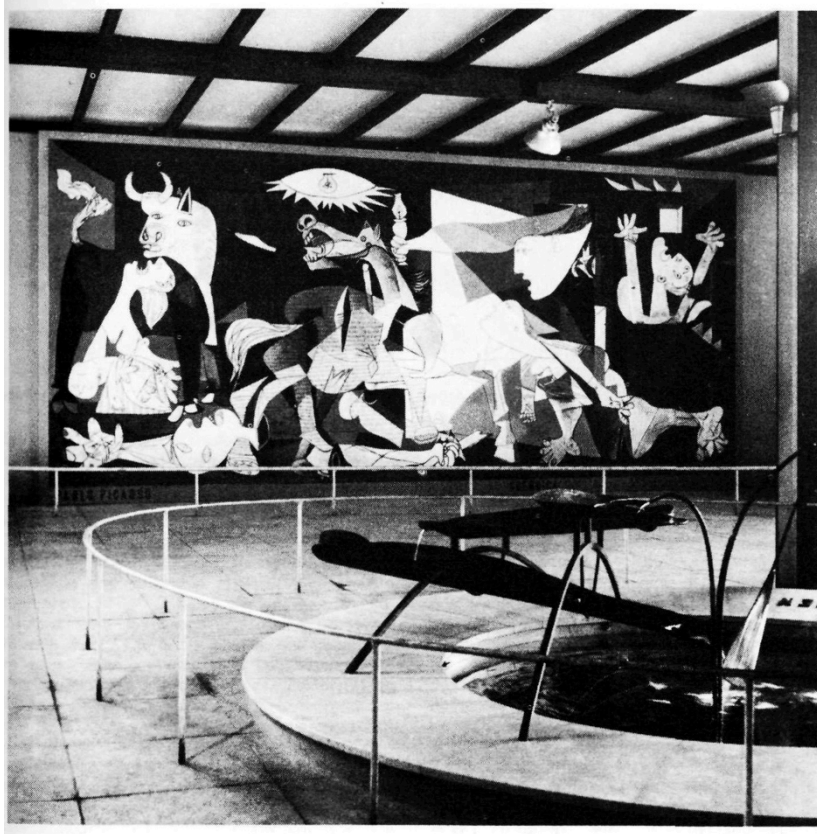


Fig. 29.

Photograph showing Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (background) and Alexander Calder's *Mercury Fountain* (foreground), Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Jaume Freixa and José Luis Sert, *Josep Ll. Sert* (Barcelona: G. Gili, 1992), 51.



Fig. 30.

Alexander Calder, *Mercury Fountain*, Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair, July 1937. Available from: Tate, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/who-is-alexander-calder> (accessed October 26, 2015).



Fig. 31.

Pablo Picasso, *Guernica* as installed in the Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Jordana Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939* (Penn State Press, n.d.), 134.

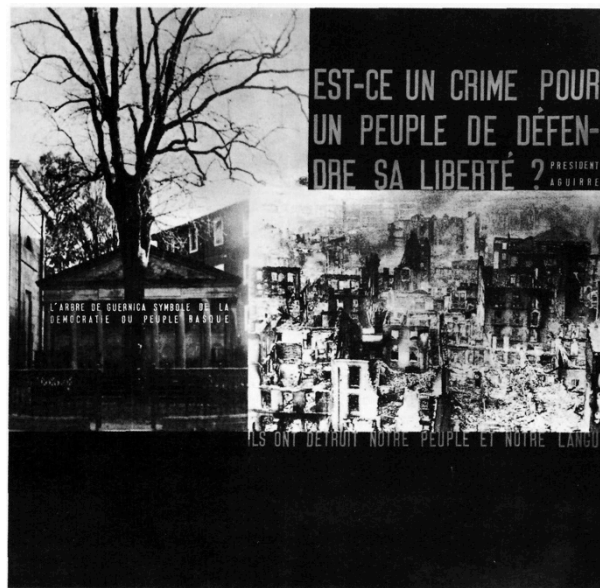


Fig. 32.

Josep Renau and assistants, photomontage juxtaposing images of the town of Guernica burning and its tree, 1937. From: Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 133.

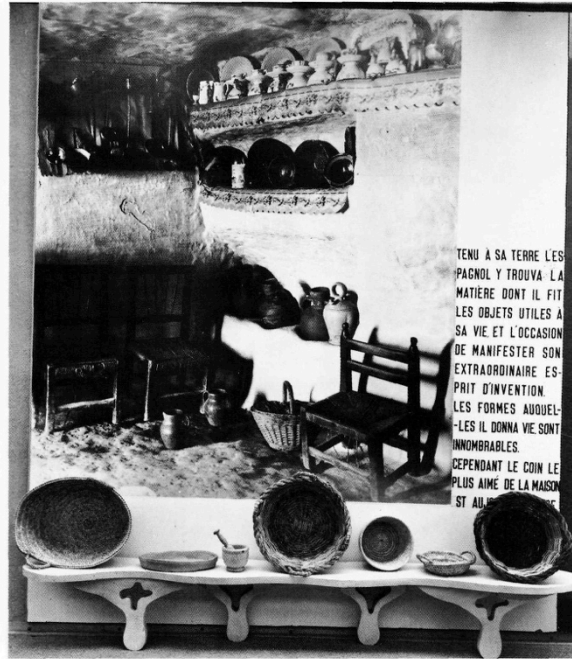


Fig. 33.

Josep Renau and assistants, installation of large photomurals with folk pottery and baskets on top of Alberto Sánchez's wooden shelves, Popular Arts exhibition, Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 129.

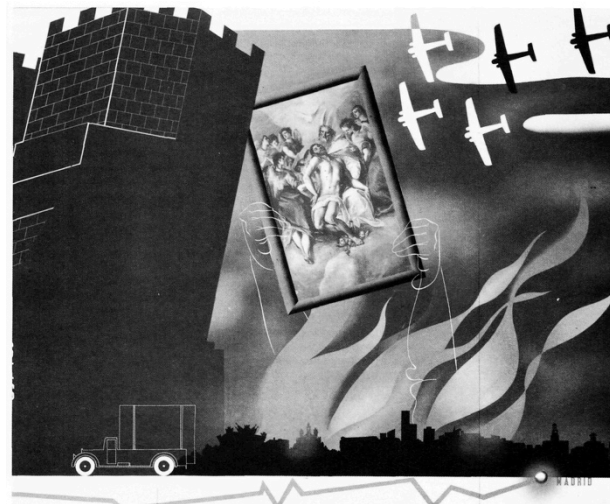


Fig. 34.

Josep Renau and assistants, detail of photomural on the evacuation of the works of art from the Museo del Prado in Madrid, Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 147.

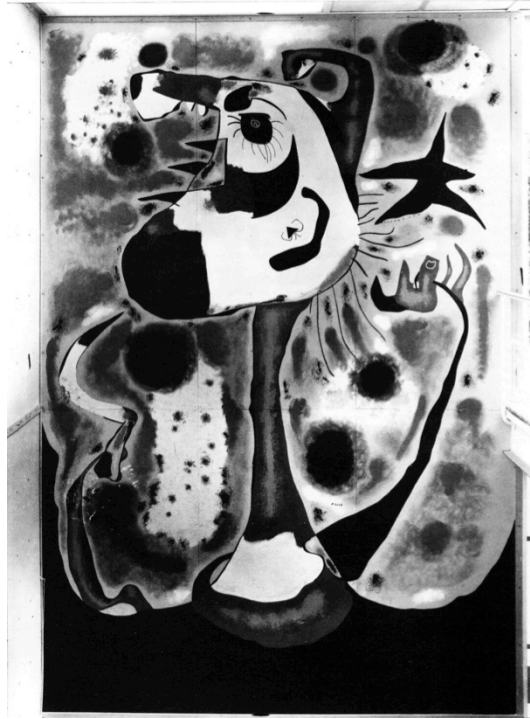


Fig. 35.

Joan Miró, *Pagés Catalá en Revolta* (Catalan Peasant in Revolt), also known as *El Segador* (The Reaper), 1937, Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. Josefina Alix Trueba and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987), 94.



Fig. 36.

Joan Miró Painting *Pagés Catalá en Revolta* in situ. Spanish Pavilion, 1937 Paris World's Fair. From: Catherine B. Freedberg, *The Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937*, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), illustration M 1a.



Fig. 37.

Adolf Hitler and Albert Speer's Plan for Berlin, model, 1939. Available from: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_146III-373,_Modell_der_Neugestaltung_Berlins_%28%22Germania%22%29.jpg#filelinks (accessed October 27, 2015).

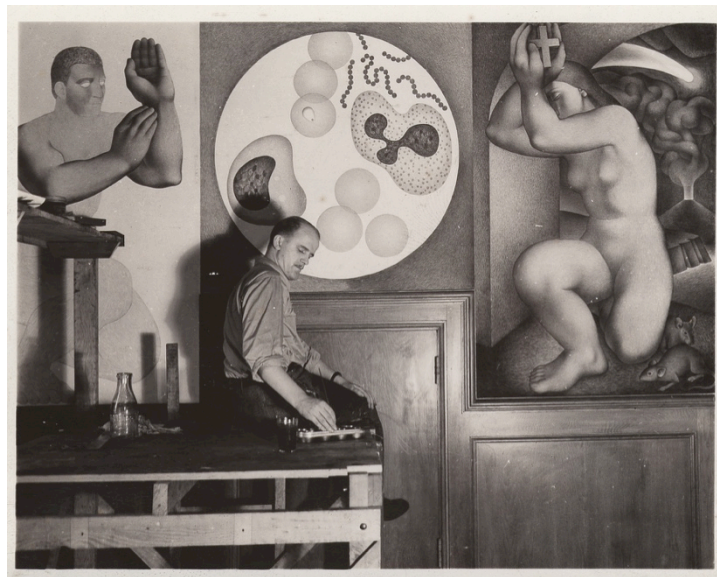


Fig. 38.

Andrew Herman, photograph of Eric Mose painting FAP mural at the Harlem Hospital, New York City, October 20, 1936. Available from: Archives of American Art, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/eric-mose-2294> (accessed October 27, 2015).

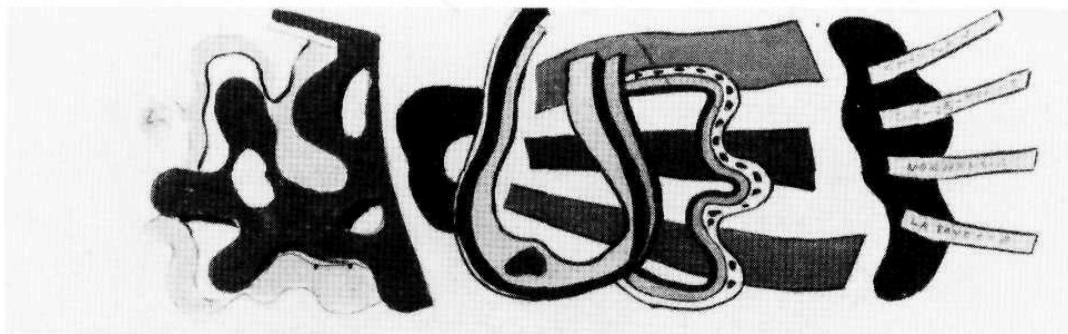


Fig. 39.
Fernand Léger, study for French Line Shipping Company mural, gouache, ca. 1935-36.
From: Fernand Léger et al., *Fernand Léger: The Later Years* ([Munich]: Prestel-Verlag, 1987), 46.

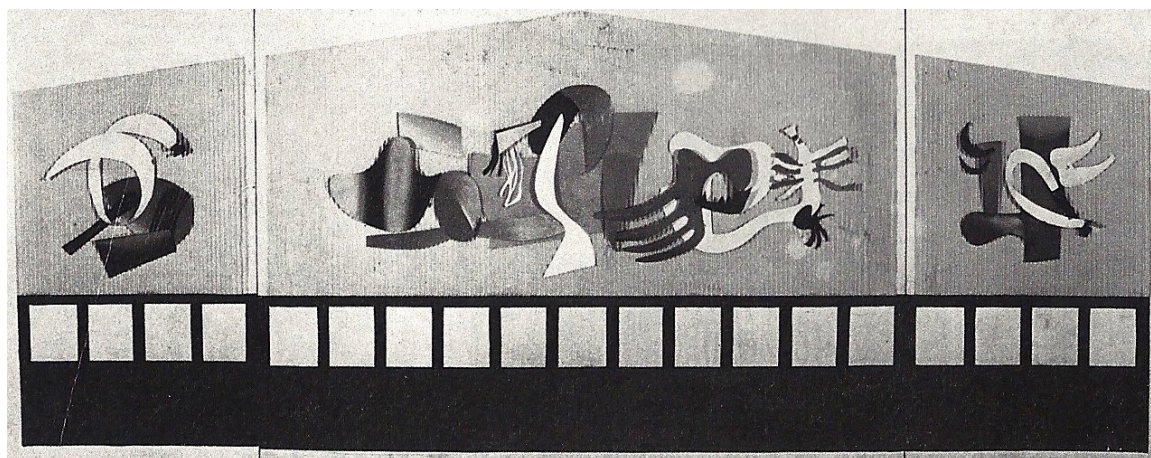


Fig. 40.
Willem de Kooning, study for the French Line mural, 1936. From: Willem De Kooning, John Elderfield, and Lauren Mahony, *De Kooning: A Retrospective* (The Museum of Modern Art, 2011), 57.



Fig. 41.

Stuart Davis, *Men Without Women*, mural for Radio City, 1932. From: National Collection of Fine Arts (U.S.), *Stuart Davis Memorial Exhibition, 1894-1964* (Washington, D.C., 1965), 50.

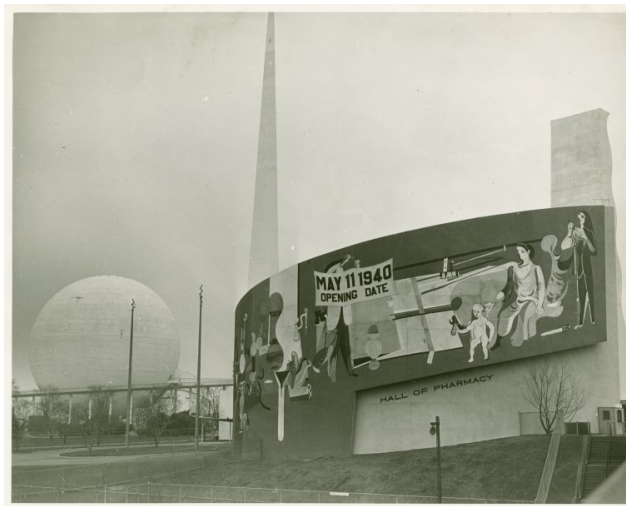


Fig. 42.

Willem de Kooning, *Medicine*, mural for the Hall of Pharmacy at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair. Available from: The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/> (Image ID 1653872) (accessed October 20, 2015).



Fig. 43.

Stuart Davis, *Swing Landscape*, 1937. Available from: Indiana University Art Museum, http://www.indiana.edu/~iuam/online_modules/picturing_america/explore_an_image.php?page=9 (accessed October 20, 2015).



Fig. 44.

Isamu Noguchi, unrealized model for *Monument to Ben Franklin*, 1933-35. Available from: The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, NY, <http://www.noguchi.org/museum/collection/monument-ben-franklin> (accessed October 20, 2015).



Fig. 45.

Isamu Noguchi, *History Mexico*, 1935-36. Available from: The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, NY, <http://www.noguchi.org/node/560> (accessed October 20, 2015).



Fig. 46.

Isamu Noguchi, *News*, 1938-40, Associated Press Building, New York. Available from: The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, NY, <http://www.noguchi.org/node/564> (accessed October 20, 2015).



Fig. 47.

Photograph showing Léger, Calder, and Giedion at the opening of the Calder exhibition at the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Gallery, Springfield, Mass., 1938 (from left to right: Louisa Calder, Aino Aalto, Cordelia Sargent Pond, Katherine Dreier, Giedion, Alvar Aalto, Calder, and Léger). From: Carolyn Lanchner, "Fernand Léger: American Connections," in *Fernand Léger*, by Fernand Léger et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art : Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 51.



Fig. 48.

Fernand Léger, study for cinematic mural for Radio City, ca. 1939-40, unrealized. From: Fernand Léger et al., *Fernand Léger: The Later Years* ([Munich]: Prestel-Verlag, 1987), 45.



Fig. 49.

Fernand Léger, mural for Consolidated Edison's exhibition hall, New York World's Fair 1939-40. From: Fernand Léger et al., *Fernand Léger: The Later Years* ([Munich]: Prestel-Verlag, 1987), 47.



Fig. 50.

Samuel H. Gottscho, photograph of *Trylon* and *Perisphere* at night, with 60-foot statue of George Washington, May 26, 1939. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 26, 2015).



Fig. 51.

Philip Guston, *Maintaining America's Skills*, WPA Building, 1939-40 New York World's Fair. Available from: The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/> (Image ID 1653866) (accessed October 26, 2015).



Fig. 52.

Installation view of the exhibition "Picasso: Forty Years of His Art" at MoMA (November 15, 1939 – January 7, 1940). Available from: <http://www.nuevayork-exhibition.org/galleries/5/civil-war-in-spain> (accessed October 26, 2015).



Fig. 53.

Alexander Liberman, *Fernand Léger*, 1952. This photograph shows Léger standing by two monumental canvases typical of his later work. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 20, 2015).



Fig. 54.

Photograph showing Hayter, Carrington, Kiesler, Seligmann, Max Ernst, Ozenfant, Breton, Léger, Abbott, J. Ernst, P. Guggenheim, Ferren, Duchamp, and Mondrian, 1942. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 20, 2015).



Munich 1937

Adolf Hitler's "Das Haus der Deutschen Kunst"
554



Pittsburgh 1937

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The Mellon Institute

Fig. 55.

Juxtaposition of a photograph of Hitler's Das Haus der Deutschen Kunst in Munich (1937, left) and a photograph of the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research in Pittsburg (1937, right) in Sigfried Giedion's essay "The Need for a New Monumentality." In *New Architecture and City Planning, a Symposium*, edited by Paul Zucker. New York: Philosophical Library, 1944, pp. 554-55.



Fig. 56

150 Search lights creating the *Cathedral of Light* at the Zeppelin Field, Nuremberg, Germany, n.d. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 20, 2015).



Fig. 57

Fernand Léger, one of two murals he designed for the General Assembly Hall, UN Headquarters, New York City, 1952. Available from: United Nations Media and Photo, <http://www.unmultimedia.org/s/photo/detail/642/0064261.html> (accessed October 27, 2015).



Fig. 58.

Le Corbusier, monumental enameled mural on entrance door to the Parliament Building at Chandigarh, India (1956-61). Available from: Igor Fracalossi, "AD Classics: Palace of the Assembly / Le Corbusier," *ArchDaily*, August 10, 2011, <http://www.archdaily.com/155922/ad-classics-palace-of-the-assembly-le-corbusier/> (accessed October 27, 2015).

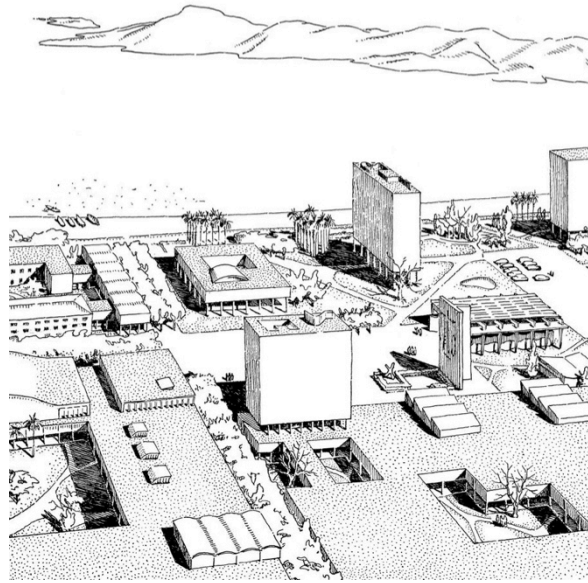


Fig. 59.

José Luis Sert and Paul Lester Wiener (Town Planning Associates), sketch for Chimbote Civic Center, Peru, showing central plaza with Calder-like freestanding sculpture and detached bell tower, 1948-50. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 20, 2015).

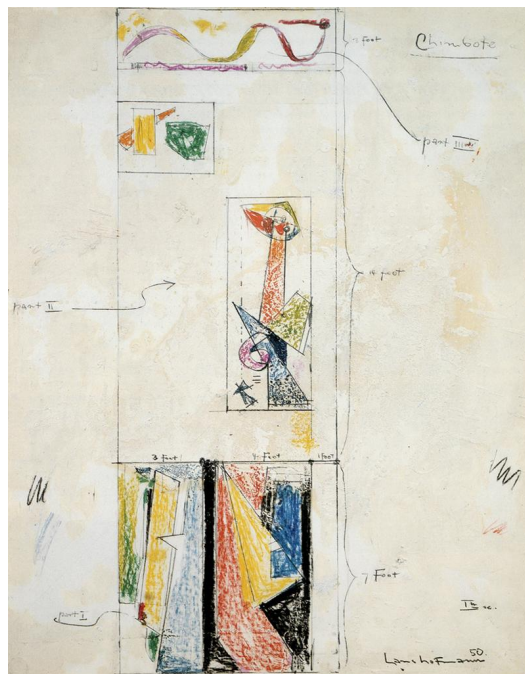


Fig 60.

Hans Hofmann, study for murals for the bell tower at the Chimbote Civic Center, Peru, 1950. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 27, 2015).



Fig. 61.

Photograph of the UN Headquarters, New York, October 1955. From: Christopher E. M Pearson, *Designing UNESCO: Art, Architecture and International Politics at Mid-Century* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 95.

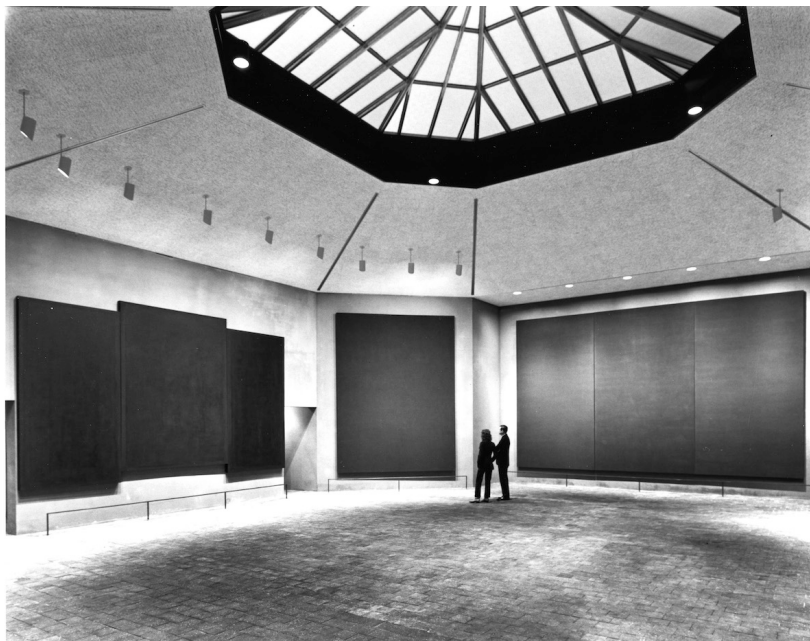


Fig. 62.

Mark Rothko, murals for the Rothko Chapel, Houston, 1964-67 (installed 1971). Available from: <http://houmuse.com/forever-cool-museums-offer-antidote-to-summer-heat/> (accessed October 27, 2015).



Fig. 63.

Henri Laurens' sculpture *L'Amphion* in front of Léger's *Bimural* at the covered plaza of Carlos Raúl Villanueva's Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas, Venezuela, ca.1953. Available from: Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HenriLaurens-L'Amphion-Leger-Bimural1953.JPG> (accessed October 27, 2015).



Fig. 64.

Guernica as exhibited currently at the Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain. Available from: Museo Reina Sofía, <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/coleccion/sala/sala-20606> (accessed October 10, 2015).



Fig. 65.

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, general view of the complex with Henry Moore's *Reclining Figure* and Joan Miró's *Wall of the Moon*, both 1958, on the entry plaza. Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed October 27, 2015).



Fig. 66.

Calder, *Spirale*, 1958, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, with Eiffel Tower on background. From: Alexander Calder, Jean Lipman, and Whitney Museum of American Art, *Calder's Universe* (New York: Viking Press in cooperation with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1976), 283.



Fig. 67.

Isamu Noguchi, *Jardin Japonais*, 1958, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris. Available from: Dwell magazine, <http://www.dwell.com/outdoor/article/5-public-landscapes-isamu-noguchi#1> (accessed October 27, 2015).



Fig. 68.

Calder, *La Grande Vitesse*, 1967-69, “the ubiquitous symbol of Grand Rapids, Michigan,” dedication ceremony, 1969. Available from: National Endowment for the Arts, “Initial Public Art Project Becomes a Landmark,” <https://www.arts.gov/article/initial-public-art-project-becomes-landmark> (accessed October 27, 2015).

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