

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY MODERNISM: PEGGY GUGGENHEIM AND ART OF THIS
CENTURY

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of Art History

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In Partial Fulfillments

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art History

By

Katy Martin-Beal

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Peggy Guggenheim built one of the most important and internationally esteemed collections of modern art, and established what is the most famous gallery of our time, Art of This Century. Guggenheim's scandalous life and numerous affairs with artists have often problematically overshadowed her role as director of Art of This Century, especially once she published her memoir in 1946. By examining Guggenheim's role as director of Art of This Century without centering my narrative around Guggenheim's personal life, I discovered four main ideas that I elaborate on throughout my thesis.

Guggenheim approached Art of This Century as an experimental, institutional hybrid and utilized unconventional and innovative methods for displaying artworks. Through Art of This Century, Guggenheim played an integral role in the development of the New York School and Abstract Expressionism, which led to the shift in the international art center from Paris to New York. Art of This Century was key in ushering in the second generation of avant-garde galleries in New York. And finally, Art of This Century is the best iteration of Guggenheim's Surrealist sensibility, and Art of This Century has become synonymous with Surrealism.

To my mother and father, Dee Ann and John M. Beal

and

To Elise Ingram, Patrick Moore, Meaghan O'Brien and Nick Pianalto

and also to Lady Jane Martin-Beal

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Introduction

Marguerite “Peggy” Guggenheim (1898-1979) built one of the most important and internationally esteemed collections of modern art, and established what has been referred to as the most famous gallery of our time, Art of This Century (Figure 1).¹ Guggenheim’s scandalous life and numerous affairs with artists often overshadow her role as director of Art of This Century, especially once she published her memoir in 1946, *Out of This Century: Confession of an Art Addict*.² By examining Guggenheim’s role as director of Art of This Century without centering my narrative around Guggenheim’s personal life, I examine how she approached her avant-garde enterprise, which began in the 1920s in an interdisciplinary, collaborative manner. Art of This Century (1942-1947) provided an unprecedented institutional structure to Surrealist ideas, and utilized innovative, unconventional methods for displaying art. Guggenheim’s unprecedented role as the director of her enterprise compliments the inherently interdisciplinary, experimental, and collaborative nature of Surrealism, which reflects the approach to avant-garde spaces that both Guggenheim and the Surrealists utilized.

Guggenheim began to promote Surrealism in the late 1930s, which happens to coincide with a key shift in the avant-garde movement that both complemented and inspired Guggenheim’s approach to her enterprise. Though it began in France as a literary movement, Surrealism resisted categorization from its beginning in 1924. Surrealism

¹ Bruce Altschuler, *The Avant-Garde Exhibition: New Art in the Twentieth Century*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998), 150.

² *Out of This Century: Confessions of An Art Addict* was first published by Dial Press in 1946. Later, in 1962, Guggenheim added another set of chapters to her memoir that detailed her life after she moved to Venice. In my thesis, I quote from the 2005 edition that includes a foreword by Gore Vidal and an introduction by Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

soon began to expand into the visual arts and underwent a pivotal shift in the mid-1930s.³ As a part of this shift, the Surrealists utilized the audience engaged exhibition space while expanding their visual strategies into the exhibition domain. As art historian Lewis Kachur recognized, “Engaged exhibition space also relates to both the internationalization the simultaneous commercialization of Surrealism in the mid-1930s.”⁴ For some, this problematically merged fine arts and consumer culture, but it complimented Guggenheim’s approach as she took a more expansive view on modes of display and exhibition space. Surrealist exhibition design informed Guggenheim’s approaches and strategies to her enterprise and was subsequently echoed in the designs of Art of This Century, further establishing Guggenheim’s surrealist sensibility. Through Guggenheim’s New York gallery, Art of This Century, Guggenheim gave institutional structure to Surrealist ideas that included innovative installation design and audience engaged exhibition space.

The Surrealists built on the established tradition of group exhibitions, and questioned authorship while utilizing a curatorial approach in ways that past group exhibitions did not. It is well-known that Dadaism was a precedent for Surrealism. The Dadaists utilized the group exhibition, merging art, literature, installation designs, and intentionally chose to exhibit in what art historian Lewis Kachur has referred to as “non-art spaces” such as the Cabaret Voltaire.⁵ The Surrealists echoed this Dada approach to

³ See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and the Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge: The MIT Press) 2001. See also *Surrealism against the Current: Tracts and Declarations*, ed. and trans. Michael Richardson and Kyzystof Fijalkowski (London: Pluto Press, 2001) 2.

⁴ Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press) 2001, 7.

⁵Ibid., 6-7.

the group exhibition, but distinguished themselves in the mid-1930s as art historian Bruce Altshuler has recognized through their inherent understanding that “display was a primary end of all Surrealist activity.”⁶ Kachur elaborates, “[The Surrealists] shifted energies to curating subjective installations, a major innovation and characteristic of late Surrealism.”⁷ Kachur and Altshuler articulate that this shift in Surrealism is framed by the Surrealist’s curatorial concern over innovative installation design, and allowed the movement to further itself from its precedent in Dadaism, by viewing the exhibition design as a work of art in its own right and further question the authorship over the various media presented.

Although Art of This Century is known as the most famous gallery of our time, by the time it opened, in 1942, there were many mobilized institutions and galleries dedicated to the presentation of modern art in New York. Alfred Stieglitz opened his iconic gallery 291 in 1908, and the first major exhibition of avant-garde artworks to the American public was the well-known Armory Show of 1913.⁸ Shortly thereafter numerous galleries and museums opened that were specifically dedicated to presentation avant-garde artworks to the public. Art historian and director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Philip Rylands has recognized that in establishing Art of This Century, “Guggenheim was even a latecomer among collectors of the European avant-garde who made their possessions accessible to the public: Alfred Stieglitz, Katharine S. Dreier,

⁶ Bruce Altshuler, *The Avant-Garde Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 118.

⁷ Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001), 6.

⁸ The Armory Show was integral to the artistic avant-garde transmission between the United States and Europe. With the exception of Alfred Stieglitz’s various galleries that he established.

A.E. Gallatin, Solomon R. Guggenheim⁹ as well as the Museum of Modern Art all amply preceded her.”¹⁰ Katherine Drier founded the Société Anonyme in 1920 as a small space dedicated to holding exhibitions of avant-garde art, and for education and for “study in America of the Progressive in Art.”¹¹ The Museum of Modern Art opened in 1929, and A.E. Gallatin founded The Museum of Living Art in 1927¹². By the 1930s, there were numerous galleries dedicated to avant-garde art, such as The Pierre Matisse Gallery (1923-1989), and The Julien Levy Gallery.¹³ Guggenheim, was one in a number of pivotal figures that shaped modern art in the United States.

Julien Levy (1906-1981), set an important precedent for innovative exhibition design and avant-garde spaces when he opened the Julien Levy Gallery on November 2, 1931. Levy was an early promoter of Surrealism and photography in the United States, and his gallery served as an experimental space that presented avant-garde artworks in an innovative setting. Levy was one of the first promoters of Surrealism in the United States, and exhibited photography long before there was a market for the medium. The Julien Levy Gallery displayed American theatrical posters, American folk art, drawings for

⁹ Peggy Guggenheim’s uncle, Solomon R. Guggenheim had established the Museum of Non-Objective Painting in New York in 1939.

¹⁰ Philip Rylands, “The Master and Marguerite” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 27.

¹¹ Aline B. Saarenin, *The Proud Possessors: The lives, times, and tastes of some adventurous American art collectors* (New York: Random House Press, 1958) 244. The Societe Anonyme is thought of by some as a precedent for Guggenheim’s enterprise p. 246 “The institution was not only America’s first museum of modern art; it was also the first place to organize travelling shows. Like Guggenheim, Drier also partnered with Marcel Duchamp.

¹² The Gallery of Living Art was on New York University’s campus, and renamed the Museum of Living Art in 1936, it closed in 1943. Gallatin also participated in the larger trend of institutional dialogue with his mission to create “a laboratory for exploration and experimentation.” See D’Harnoncourt, Anne “A.E. Gallatin and the Arensbergs: Pioneer Collectors of Twentieth Century Art. *Apollo N.S.* 99, No. 14, (1976): 52-61

¹³ The Curt Valentin Gallery (1934-1954) is also in this group of early gallerists that presented avant-garde art.

interiors by design students, costume designs for the ballet, films, and would sell books and periodicals; he even offered a line of his own photo objects, trompe-l'oeil wastebaskets and lampshades. The architectural designs of the Julien Levy Gallery preceded the curving walls of Art of This Century when he installed the white curving wall in his gallery in 1937.¹⁴ The gallery featured paintings hung at eye level, a curving white wall, and dark red carpet (Figure 2). Levy's innovative gallery was an important forerunner in interdisciplinary avant-garde centers.

Guggenheim and Levy are two figures that shaped modern art at a seminal moment in American art history. Their galleries practiced innovative display methods and utilized them as conceptual, experimental spaces to present art to the American public. Levy and Guggenheim, importantly, were integral in shaping the public reception of modernism by practicing innovative exhibition methods and giving several European and American avant-garde artists their first exhibition in New York. Their exhibitions were frequently visited by established artists, unknown artists, museum curators, collectors, other gallery owners, et al. Both Guggenheim and Levy were certainly part of what art historian Ingrid Schaffner recognizes as “the monopoly of modernist culture in the United States.”¹⁵ To elaborate, Guggenheim and Levy were one of several galleries and institutions that were monopolies of modernist culture in New York during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Both Levy and Guggenheim's enterprises set an important precedent for avant-garde gallery directors through influential display methods, marketing,

¹⁴ On October of 1937, Levy introduced the white curving wall which was the introductory space in the gallery, although he opened his gallery in 1931, this was the second of four locations. See Ingrid Schaffner, “The Alchemy of the Gallery” in *Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998) 20.

¹⁵ Steven Watson, “Julien Levy: Exhibitionist and Harvard Modernist” in *Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998), 85.

publishing, and critical engagement with art. Although Art of This Century typically overshadows the Julien Levy Gallery in the art historical narrative. Although Levy importantly set the groundwork in moving the international art center from Paris to New York, Guggenheim further solidified this shift in establishing Art of This Century in 1942.

Peggy Guggenheim, Surrealism, and Art of This Century

The Surrealist Gallery in Art of This Century has become an icon for Surrealist display, and greatly contributed to Art of This Century being synonymous with Surrealism.¹⁶ Art of This Century is most recognizable through an iconic black and white photograph (Figure 3) that presents a mysterious environment, absent of human presence. Unframed paintings project from the wall, mounted in various angles on wooden arms that project from concavely curved wooden panels attached to black walls. The curving panels and paintings that extend from the wall intrude into the viewer's space, absorbing the viewer into the seemingly infinite, otherworldly, space. Light fixtures placed in the middle of the wooden panel attached to the black ceiling function as spotlights to the artworks, casting an eerie range of shadows throughout the space. Several unusual, multipurpose devices which could be used for sitting or as a pedestal for sculpture, are placed throughout the room. These legless, armless "museum rocking chairs"¹⁷ as described by critic Edward Alden Jewell closest to the foreground uninvitingly offers seating to view *Woman with Her Throat Cut* (1932), by Alberto Giacometti, and serves as a barrier between the visitor and *The Antipope* (1941-1942) by Max Ernst (Figs. 4-5). The theatrical lighting serves to spotlight specific artworks, while the Giacometti sculpture is dimly lit, causing it to resemble a Freudian praying mantis. While the bright spotlight on *The Antipope* reveals the mysterious skeletal but nonhuman figures, and on the opposite wall, a desolate landscape by Giorgio de Chirico, *The Red Tower* (1913) is also shown under a bright spotlight, the smaller size of the canvas allows for a dark shadow to extend

¹⁶ Lewis Kachur refers to Art of This Century as being best-known for the Surrealist Gallery. See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 204.

¹⁷ Edward Alden Jewell, "Our Hemisphere Posters" *New York Times* 25 October 1942.

into the recess of the wood panels. The architectural designs echo the otherworldly, mysterious environment presented to the viewer. This image depicts the room now known as the Surrealist Gallery, and this photograph has become a stand in for Art of This Century.

This iconic photograph was taken by Berenice Abbott, and has greatly shaped our understanding of the Surrealist Gallery and Art of This Century.¹⁸ Abbott used an 8 x 10 box camera, Abbott's darkroom technique emphasized and saturated the light and dark tones which contrast throughout the space. The expansive quality of the black walls and ceiling are heightened when juxtaposed against the gumwood panels. The theatrical spotlights brighten the light gumwood panels to have a reflective, silver glaring quality to them. The repetition of concave curving forms gives the appearance of an endless tunnel, and along with the paintings that extend into the viewer's space, causing the space to seem as if it may engulf the viewer. Abbott's black and white photograph favored the dramatic, eerie environment that the Surrealist Gallery has evoked from the images.¹⁹ Artist and Art of This Century regular Charles Seliger has brought to our attention that the Abbott photograph has shaped the art historical memory of Art of This Century by pointing out that viewing the photograph and experiencing the Surrealist Gallery provide two drastically different experiences.²⁰ Seliger writes, "The perspective in those

¹⁸ Not all the photographs that circulated were taken by Abbott. Other photographers included K.W. Hermann, George Karger, John Rawlings, Luis Lemus while some of the photographers remain anonymous. See *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century* ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 184.

¹⁹ Besides the color audocad reproduction made by Don Quaintance, art historians have relied on the black and white photographs in interpreting Art of This Century. See *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 226.

²⁰ Charles Seliger was first a gallery regular of Art of This Century, then Guggenheim give him his first exhibition.

photographs made everything look longer and longer. The galleries were much more intimate.”²¹ Seliger’s experience is more reflective of Kiesler’s intent to create an environment that reflected biomorphic, automatic nature of Surrealism. Kiesler also wished to create a unified space, reflecting the Surrealist strategy of integrating the viewer into the exhibition realm. While *Art of This Century* encompassed four visually distinct rooms or ‘galleries’, the Abbott photograph is often used to represent the entirety of *Art of This Century* in the art historical narrative.

The Surrealist Gallery in *Art of This Century* reflects the visual characteristics and the psychological connection that is presented in both the architectural designs and in the artworks on display that the artists share. Many critics such as Clement Greenberg praised the Surrealist Gallery in particular, writing: “The surrealist pictures, thrust out on rods from tunnel-like walls, seem, because of the dramatic lighting, which switches at intervals from one group of canvases to another, to hang in indefinite space. This is exactly right, because it emphasizes that traditional discontinuity between the spectator and the space within the picture to which most of the Surrealists have returned.”²² Greenberg recognizes that the architectural designs of the Surrealist Gallery are reflective of a unified artistic movement, and concludes that the installation is fitting for Surrealism and its principles. The artists featured in the other ‘galleries’ of *Art of This Century* do not have this unified connection. For example, many of the artists represented in the Abstract Gallery were not bound by principles of a single artistic movement, artists featured such as Piet Mondrian and Francis Picabia may have many overlapping artistic

²¹Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting, Frederick Kiesler’s Design of *Art of This Century*” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 276.

²² Clement Greenberg, *The Nation* (30 January 1943)

approached and theories but they are not bound to the extent that the Surrealists were.

The black and white photographs taken were key in making Art of This Century accessible to a broad audience. As art historian Valentina Songozi recognized, Art of This Century “received an unprecedented amount of press coverage for an art gallery at that time.”²³ Photo spreads by numerous photographers often featured all the ‘galleries’ in Art of This Century. Not all the photographs that circulated of the Surrealist Gallery upon the inaugural reviews of Art of This Century were not taken by Berenice Abbott, however, her photographs have been crucial to the way contemporary art historians interpret Art of This Century. Importantly, images of the other ‘galleries’ were included in inaugural reviews of Art of This Century. For example, the two-page photo essay by the New York Times Magazine included images of the Surrealist Gallery, the Abstract Gallery, the Kinetic Gallery, and the Daylight Gallery (Figure 6).²⁴ However, black and white photography, which was standard for the 1940s, that was used compliments the Surrealist Gallery more than the other ‘galleries’ in Art of This Century; further associating Art of this Century with Surrealism.

The association of Art of This Century with Surrealism is in no small part because its opening coincided with the First Papers of Surrealism exhibition. First Papers opened just six days prior to the inaugural opening of Art of This Century, which led to both openings being co-reviewed, and frequently labeled as “Surrealist exhibitions”²⁵.

²³Valentina Sonzogni, “‘You will never be bored within its walls’ Art of This Century and the Reaction of the Press” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 275.

²⁴ -- “Modern Art in a Modern Setting” *The New York Times Magazine* (1 November 1942). Photographs taken by K.W. Herrmann.

²⁵ Most reporters and critics labelled the two openings as surrealist exhibitions. See *Newsweek*, *Time*, *New York Times*, *New York Sun*, and the *New York World Telegram*.

Although neither exclusively featured Surrealist artworks, labeling the exhibitions as Surrealist reflected the association of innovative exhibition design with Surrealism rather than a critical misunderstanding of the style. Like *Art of This Century*, *First Papers* featured avant-garde artworks in an inventive setting. Critic Emily Genauer snidely remarked “And it’s the installation in both cases which is the big news. Because the pictures shown are practically all either very familiar or very typical.”²⁶ Genauer’s statement is reflective of the critical focus on the installation design of both exhibitions rather than on the artworks. *First Papers* was the first group exhibition of Surrealism to be held in the United States that represented a key shift in the avant-garde movement. As Melvin P. Lader recognized, there had not been a major exhibition of Surrealism in the United States since Alfred H. Barr Jr.’s groundbreaking, *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* of 1936.²⁷ Though there had been several exhibitions of Surrealism during that six-year gap, by 1942 Surrealism had claimed the exhibition space as a medium which regenerated excitement surrounding the recognizable avant-garde through riveting installation design.

First Papers is most recognizable by the complicated installation conceived by one of the exhibition’s organizers, artist Marcel Duchamp. The *Time* reporter described seeing “a seven-foot high cobweb”²⁸ upon entering *First Papers*, which was held at the

²⁶ Emily Genauer, “Surrealist Paintings Hung Surrealistically: One of Two New Exhibitions Makes Gallery Visit Delightful” *New York World-Telegram* (24 October 1942).

²⁷ Melvin P. Lader, “Peggy Guggenheim’s *Art of This Century*: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-Garde, 1942-1947”. Ph.D Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, 111. Lewis Kachur recognizes that “string is fairly novel as art material.” The use of string has precedents with artists Arp, Gabo, and in Duchamp’s *Chocolate Grinder No. 2* of 1914. Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 284.

²⁸ -- “Inheritors of Chaos” *Time* (2 November 1942)

historic Whitelaw Reid mansion, near Art of This Century on 451 Madison Avenue.²⁹

The “cobweb” that the Time reporter referred to is the now iconic Mile of String. In this black and white photograph which Duchamp commissioned John Schiff to take of the installation, the exhibition space is covered from floor to ceiling with thin white string (Figure 7). The Mile of String was intertwined through the chandeliers and over avant-garde artworks which were installed on moveable rows of white temporary partitions walls, transforming the ostentatious setting of the Reid mansion into an avant-garde exhibition space. Duchamp’s Mile of String disrupted the viewer’s access to the artworks, creating a disorienting, intriguing viewing experience. Critics were captivated by the Mile of String, drawing comparisons to a “labyrinth”³⁰ or a “cat’s cradle”³¹. Duchamp refers to the Mile specifically as a labyrinth, and as art historian T.J Demos has recognized, “The labyrinth and its counterpart the Minotaur, had variously served as subjects of Surrealist works throughout the 1930s and early ‘40s. And *Minotaure*, of course, was the title of the Surrealist journals from 1933 to 1939.”³² Demos reflects how by 1942, the labyrinth had been established in the Surrealist vocabulary, which refers to the classical myth of Theseus and the Minotaur.³³ While some critics recognized the Mile of String as an artwork itself, art historian T.J. Demos has pointed out that the string

²⁹ Guggenheim also refers to the Whitelaw Reid Mansion in her memoir as “an ugly old fashioned building” See Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005), 273.

³⁰ Almost every review refers to the Mile of String as a labyrinth. Also note that the Mile of String was placed in only one of the exhibition rooms in the Whitelaw Reid Mansion, See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001), 169.

³¹ --, “Inheritors of Chaos” *Time* (2 November 1942)

³² T.J. Demos, “Duchamp’s Labyrinth: ‘The First Papers of Surrealism’, 1942” *October* Vol. 97 (Summer 2001): 112.

³³ William Hansen, *Classical Mythology: A Guide to the Mythical World of the Greeks and Romans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 218, 232.

acted as a barrier, separating the viewer from the artwork. Although the Mile acts as a barrier, it still requires the viewer's participation in the exhibition space, which is reflective of Surrealist exhibition strategies.

The Art of This Century and First Papers exhibitions announced the arrival of the European avant-garde in the United States because of World War II, under the label of Surrealism. Many reporters focused on this theme in reviews. For example, the Newsweek reporter begins the review writing, "[Art of This Century] has the country's most complete collection of modernism's isms, much of it bought by Miss Guggenheim in Paris and smuggled out disguised as household goods after France fell."³⁴ The Newsweek reporter recognized that the dramatic tale of transporting Guggenheim's collection from southern France to New York made for captivating journalism. The admission fee to First Papers was \$1.10, to charitably support the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies to raise funds to help French citizens emigrate to the United States. The Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies now had its headquarters in the Whitelaw Reid mansion, where First Papers was held.³⁵ The opening fee to Art of This Century was \$1 to support the American Red Cross, to buttress Guggenheim's statement that: "Opening this gallery and its collection to the public during a time when people are fighting for their lives and freedom is a responsibility of which I am fully conscious."³⁶ Like First Papers, Art of This Century's opening also participated in World

³⁴ -- "Isms Rampant: Peggy Guggenheim's Dream World Goes Abstract, Cubist, and Generally Non-Real" *Newsweek* (2 November 1942). To specify, Marseilles was the city that Guggenheim and several other avant-garde artists stayed in hiding after Hitler invaded Paris.

³⁵ Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001) 171.

³⁶ Press release for Art of This Century, October 1942. Reprinted in Angelica Zander Rudenstine, *Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice* (New York: Abrams, 1985) 771.

War II related philanthropy. Critic Emily Genauer noted the importance of the European avant-garde presence in the United States, writing “Since the outbreak of the war, a lot of Surrealist artists have arrived in this country, and it’s altogether natural for them to carry on as they always have.”³⁷ This reflects the burgeoning artistic energy that was brought into the United States as a result of World War II. Genauer continued her review: “There can be no doubt that both exhibitions are the product of serious, energetic, and almost pious activity.”³⁸ Genauer’s word choice is revealing: “pious” reflects how Surrealism was something deeply meaningful and akin to religion for the Surrealists. Genauer continues her review, writing: “Surrealism pro and con, its validity, honesty, and importance have been discussed ad infinitum.”³⁹ Although Genauer parodies Surrealist principles, she recognizes the universal appeal of the visual strategies of Surrealism. By 1942, the public was very familiar with the presence of European avant-garde artists in the United States; for example, Marcel Duchamp frequently travelled between the United States and Europe as did Salvador Dali who first arrived in the United States in 1934.⁴⁰ Genauer’s review reveals that the European avant-garde was noticeably more concentrated in the United States by this time, which would be integral in shifting the international art center from Paris to New York.

Art of This Century and First Papers were often viewed as opposing, avant-garde competitors, since both exhibitions presented so many similarities. Both exhibitions presented avant-garde art by both Europeans and Americans in an innovative exhibition

³⁷ Emily Genauer, “Surrealist Paintings Hung Surrealistically: One of Two New Exhibitions Makes Gallery Visit Delightful” *New York World-Telegram* (24 October 1942)

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Marshall N. Price, “Chronology of Surrealism in the United States, 1931-1950” in Isabelle Dervaux, *Surrealism USA* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2005) 174.

setting. The *Time* reporter used the Surrealist Gallery in *Art of This Century* as a point of transition to review “another Surrealist exhibition - it also had a striking installation.”⁴¹ Though the *Time* reporter is trite, critic Henry McBride reflects the initial critical tendency compare the two exhibitions, “If the Surrealist paintings in the Whitelaw Reid mansion were curious entertainment, the newest collection, owned by Peggy Guggenheim is curiouser still. Frankly, my eyes have never bulged further from their sockets.”⁴² McBride’s review places one exhibition [*Art of This Century*] as “better” or “more “shocking” than the other. Emily Genauer favors *Art of This Century*, writing that Kiesler’s designs “have made exhibition history”⁴³ and dislikes the installation design of *First Papers*, “It’s all odd as can be, irritating at first, silly afterward.”⁴⁴ Genauer’s reaction to the *First Papers* is reflective of the Surrealist intent to engage the audience through exhibition design, which was also intended through Kiesler’s designs in *Art of This Century*. The reviews of *Art of This Century* and *First Papers* were generally centered around Surrealism and focused specifically on the installation.

First Papers and *Art of This Century* was the result of an intentional European and American collaborative effort to promote the avant-garde.⁴⁵ Although Guggenheim vainly praises *Art of This Century*’s opening in comparison to *First Papers* in her memoir, Guggenheim contradicts herself by revealing that she also made important

⁴¹ -- “Inheritors of Chaos” *Time* (November 2, 1942)

⁴² Henry McBride, “New Gallery Ideas: The Guggenheim Collection Shown in a Remarkable Manner.” *New York Sun*, (23 October 1942)

⁴³ Emily Genauer, “Surrealist Paintings Hung Surrealistically: One of Two New Exhibitions Makes Gallery Visit Delightful” *New York World-Telegram* (October 24, 1942)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Sponsors to *First Papers* included Walter and Louise Arensberg, Katherine Dreier, Pierre Matisse, Sidney Janis and several others. Many of these sponsors had their own galleries and collections of avant-garde art. See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001)

contributions to First Papers. Guggenheim was asked to be a sponsor of First Papers by fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli.⁴⁶ In her memoir Guggenheim writes, “About this time [c. September 1942], Elsa Schiaparelli came to ask me to help her arrange a Surrealist show for a charity called the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies. I sent her to Breton. With the help of Max and Marcel Duchamp, Breton organized a big exhibition.”⁴⁷ Guggenheim declined to be a sponsor, presumably because she was busy preparing Art of This Century. Nonetheless she lent works to the show, and importantly put Schiaparelli in touch with Andre Breton, who agreed to be a head organizer of the show along with Marcel Duchamp.⁴⁸ One of the most important connections between First Papers and Art of This Century is Duchamp’s Mile of String. Art historian Lewis Kachur recognized that the string was later extended into Art of This Century through the avant-garde film *Witch’s Cradle*. The unfinished film was directed by Maya Deren, who used Art of This Century as the set for her film August 1943.⁴⁹ In *Witch’s Cradle*, we see Duchamp with the white string that looks nearly identical to the string used in the First Papers installation (Figures 8-9). Duchamp playfully handles the string, and pulls it throughout all of the ‘galleries’ in Art of This century. The string motif presented in both First Papers and Art of This Century provides further evidence that both exhibitions were

⁴⁶ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 274.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 273

⁴⁸ See Melvin P. Lader, “Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-garde, 1942-1947. Ph.D Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, 109. Here he clarifies that one newspaper article in the New York Times lists Peggy Guggenheim as a sponsor, but she confirmed in an interview that she did not sponsor the show, however, the error reveals how closely associated Peggy Guggenheim was to the avant-garde sponsors of the show.

⁴⁹ Art of This Century, like many other galleries in New York closed during the summer months, which made filming in August ideal. The film starred Anne Matta and Marcel Duchamp. There were also parts filmed in Breervort Restaurant in New York. See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying The Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 192.

an intentional collaboration, rather than avant-garde competition. First Papers and Art of This Century took a collaborative approach to effectively utilize both exhibitions as a cross promotional effort to benefit the avant-garde.

The First Papers-Art of This Century collaboration is further revealed through the group photographs taken at the Guggenheim-Ernst townhome in the months leading up to both exhibitions' openings (Figure 10). Guggenheim purchased a townhouse at Beekman Place, 440 East 51st Street and would regularly host both European emigres and administrators of the museums and galleries. Guggenheim also had her collection on display there before Art of This Century's opening, meaning that some critics, like Robert Coates may have seen her collection beforehand. In her memoir she writes, "When I finally got my paintings out of storage and hung them in the house, I asked Alfred Barr to come see them. I was in a state of great excitement to know what he would think of them."⁵⁰ When Marcel Duchamp arrived in New York on June 25, 1942, he first stayed in Guggenheim's townhome, then lived with the Kieslers while both exhibitions were being planned, and Kiesler was in regular contact with Breton.⁵¹ Kiesler worked closely with Duchamp during this time. In a black and white photograph taken by George Platt Lynes (Figure 11), captioned, "Artists in exile in Peggy's apartment, c. fall 1942." We are presented with a group photograph typical of the photographs that would appear in Surrealist manifestos and publications. In this photograph the group is divided into three rows; seated in the first row Stanley William Hayter and Kurt Seligmann gaze

⁵⁰Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 260.

⁵¹ Philip Rylands, "The Master and Marguerite" in *Peggy Guggenheim and Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 21. To specify, Duchamp, Kiesler, Guggenheim, and Breton were in frequent contact during these months.

towards the camera, while Frederick Kiesler and Leonora Carrington gaze at each other. The founder of Surrealism, Andre Breton, is seated, centered in the second row, flanked by Max Ernst, Amedee Ozenfant on the left and Fernand Leger on the right, with their gaze towards Berenice Abbott, who stares back at the European avant-garde artists. In the top row, Jimmy Ernst, Peggy Guggenheim, John Ferren, Marcel Duchamp, and Piet Mondrian are standing, prominently posing, facing the left. This photograph deviates from previous Surrealist group photographs, since it not only includes people that are not official Surrealist members such as Hayter, or affiliated with the movement such as Mondrian, but it also features the head collaborators of both First Papers and Art of This Century, Guggenheim and Kiesler, and Duchamp and Breton. As art historian Lewis Kachur recognized, “photographs [for Surrealists] were meaningful as documents of group identity.”⁵² Since the photograph was taken at a time when both Art of This Century and First Papers were either being planned or had opened, this indicates that all these figures are united and in frequent contact through their association of the avant-garde in general, and intended to promote the mixing of the European and American avant-gardes while in exile as a result of World War II. As art historian Melvin Lader has recognized, “there is no doubt that Guggenheim’s gatherings served as a focal point for the people involved and stimulated much subsequent intellectual interaction.”⁵³ Shortly after their arrival in New York, the townhome where Guggenheim and Ernst lived became a gathering place for the Surrealists in “exile” before Art of This Century opened.

⁵²Lewis Kachur, “Intrusion into the Enchanters’ Domain: Duchamp’s Exhibition Identity” in *aka Marcel Duchamp: Meditations on the Identities of an Artist*, ed. Anne Collins Goodyear and James W. McManus (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2014), 144.

⁵³Melvin P. Lader “Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-garde, 1942-1947. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981. 95

Art of This Century provided an institutional setting for Surrealism and the avant-garde in New York. The ideas introduced in First Papers continued in Art of This Century. Art historian T.J. Demos recognized that, “Kiesler’s installation provided what can be seen as a compensatory “home” for a displaced Surrealism.”⁵⁴ Demos recognizes the importance of the displacement of the Surrealists during World War II.⁵⁵ Duchamp and Breton intended for First Papers to be a temporary exhibition that was only open from October 14 through November 7, 1942 while Art of This Century remained open from October 1942 through May 1947. Art of This Century remained opened for five more years, providing a more permanent setting for Surrealism and the avant-garde than First Papers did. The Mile of String that extends in to Art of This Century is exemplary of the continuity between the European and American avant-garde in both exhibitions. We continue to see Duchamp’s string motif throughout Art of This Century in this photograph of artist William Baziotes in the Daylight Gallery installing artworks for an exhibition (Figure 12). Baziotes is pulling or “threading” the string to secure the canvas. This provides further evidence that the string motif connects the avant-garde from First Papers and is extended into the artworks of young artists that were introduced in First Papers and later featured in Art of This Century. The fluidity of the avant-garde that was established with First Papers and Art of This Century was integral to the development of new art styles in the United States.

Art of This Century is also associated with Surrealism through Guggenheim’s

⁵⁴ T.J. Demos, “Duchamp’s Labyrinth: “First Papers of Surrealism”, 1942” *October*, Vol. 97 (Summer 2001): 94-95. Demos uses “home” and “homeless” in reference to the Freudian definition he defined in the famous 1919 essay, “The Uncanny”.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 94. “To accept any continuity between the two installations, moreover, is a direct result of a failure to adequately historicize the aesthetic developments of 1942 and especially those relating to installation art.” Demos also incorrectly refers to the Abstract Gallery as the Surrealist Gallery throughout his article.

marriage to Surrealist artist, Max Ernst. Guggenheim had recently married Ernst in December 1941, and the *Newsweek* reporter does not hesitate to remind us that “Miss Guggenheim is the wife of one Surrealist painter (Max Ernst) and the ex-wife of another (Lawrence Vail).”⁵⁶ By 1942 Ernst was a well-known artist in the United States, and upon his arrival in New York with Guggenheim on July 14, 1941 the two were photographed and interviewed by reporters, and appeared in the newspapers with various captions such as “While Old World Capitals collapse, Miss Guggenheim saves artistic treasures.”⁵⁷ Ernst had several solo exhibitions in the United States beginning in 1932 and had his artworks featured in the widely publicized Museum of Modern Art exhibition of 1936 (December 7 - January 1937), *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*. *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* travelled throughout the country, further expanding Ernst’s artworks into the public sphere. Several critics centered reviews around Guggenheim’s collection and the innovative architectural designs of *Art of This Century* rather than her personal life, but in general very few reporters neglected from at least briefly mentioning her personal life. Reporter Adelaide Kerr centers on Guggenheim’s personal life through her review title, “New Museum is Built by Artist’s Wife”⁵⁸. The Guggenheim-Ernst townhome was also featured in *Vogue* before *Art of This Century* opened, in an article centered around Ernst’s presence in the United States. Guggenheim was a public figure her entire life, and her marriage to a Max Ernst, who was famous in the United States by 1942 was widely

⁵⁶ -- “Isms Rampant: Peggy Guggenheim’s Dream World Goes Abstract, Cubist, and Generally Non-Real” *Newsweek* (2 November 1942). The *Newsweek* reporter misspells Vail’s name, it’s Laurence, not Lawrence.

⁵⁷ Susan Davidson “Focusing an Instinct: The Collecting of Peggy Guggenheim” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 66.

⁵⁸ Adelaide Kerr, “New Museum is Built by Artist’s Wife” *Toledo Times* (1 November 1942)

publicized, allowing for Art of This Century to be further associated with Surrealism.

While Surrealism has dominated the discussion of Art of This Century, Surrealism was a much more fluid concept for Guggenheim and Kiesler. Guggenheim and Kiesler's understanding of Surrealism is reflective of the ongoing dialogues and debates on surrealism and abstraction. The two were aware that the definitions of abstraction and Surrealism were complex and not clearly defined while planning Art of This Century, in 1942. Art of This Century purposely blended abstraction and surrealism, despite the designation of its rooms, which separated the Surrealist Gallery from the Abstract Gallery. Guggenheim advantageously drew attention to this division by purposefully wearing the two infamous mismatched earrings to represent abstraction and Surrealism for the opening of Art of This Century.⁵⁹ Guggenheim explained in her memoir that her intent was "to show my impartiality between Surrealist and abstract art."⁶⁰ One of the earrings was designed by Yves Tanguy and was intended to represent Surrealism.⁶¹ The other earring was designed by Alexander Calder, which was intended to represent abstraction.⁶² (Figs. 13-14) This was more of a successful press tactic on Guggenheim's part rather a reflection of her stylistic division, and by announcing a stylistic separation Guggenheim took advantage of the general public's familiarity with abstraction and Surrealism being divided either through separate exhibitions or

⁵⁹ Isabelle Dervaux "Tale of Two Earrings: Surrealism and Abstraction, 1930-1947" in *Surrealism USA*. (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2005) 48-55.

⁶⁰ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 275-276.

⁶¹ The Tanguy earring was a miniature biomorphic oil painting, stylistically similar to his painting style at that time which were referred to as "submarine landscapes" See Alexander Kerr, Thimo Tu Duits, and Ghislaine Wood in "Object Entries" in *Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design*, ed. Ghislaine Wood (London: V&A Publications, 2007) 296.

⁶² The Calder earring was a miniature metal wire "mobile". See *Peggy Guggenheim: A Collector's Album* ed. Laurence Tacou-Rumney (New York: Flammarion, 1996) 124.

architectural divisions. This division replicates Alfred H. Barr Jr.'s model used in the groundbreaking 1936 Museum of Modern Art exhibitions, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, which was followed by *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (Figs 15-16).⁶³ Barr, Guggenheim and Kiesler, as well as anyone aware of the then current art historical debates knew that artworks can be both abstract and surreal, however, by 1942 as art historian Martica Sawin recognized, "for the American public the term Surrealism was synonymous with Dali."⁶⁴ Salvador Dali had been a looming presence in the United States beginning in the 1930s. The New York Times announced Dali's arrival in the United States in 1934, and he was featured on the cover of Time Magazine in 1936. To elaborate on Sawin's assertion, Dali was synonymous with Surrealism to the general public, but anyone who was following various art related publications, or in newspapers, would have been aware that there were numerous debates on defining abstraction versus surrealism. Sidney Janis's *Abstract and Surrealist Art in America*, published in 1944 is exemplary of the fluidity and debates surrounding abstraction and surrealism.⁶⁵ There were several other exhibitions held throughout the country that also divided abstract and Surrealist art.

The architectural designs of the introductory room in *Art of This Century* now known as the Abstract Gallery provided a shocking experience as one entered the Beaux-Arts facade and took an elevator ride to the seventh floor of 28-30 West 57th Street. The

⁶³ Many artworks by the Surrealists were included in both *Cubism and Abstract Art* and *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*. For example, *Cubism and Abstract Art* featured Masson, Miro, Klee, Ernst, and Arp as examples of abstract surrealism for the exhibition. See Isabelle Dervaux "A Tale of Two Earrings: Surrealism and Abstraction, 1930-1947" in *Surrealism USA* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publications, 2005) 48-55.

⁶⁴ Martica Sawin, *Surrealism and Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997) 78.

⁶⁵ Janis started working on this catalogue in 1942. See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001) 164.

Time reporter described, “As art lovers emerged from the dimmed out Manhattan streets, they encountered a blinding white light” (Figure 17).⁶⁶ The Abstract Gallery was heavily illuminated with fluorescent tube lighting. The Abstract Gallery featured bold blue curving ultramarine canvas walls, evocative of ocean like movement, while the wooden floors were painted turquoise, complementing the color of the walls (Figure 18). Correalist Instruments are placed throughout the gallery, and suspension devices gave the artworks the appearance of being in fixed mid-air. The sharp geometries are mirrored in the white rope used to fasten the curving walls, which was laced in a rigid zigzag pattern from floor to ceiling. presented unframed paintings and sculptures installed in various angles on slender, triangular suspension devices. Installed on this suspension device, fixed with a thin white rope and closest to the foreground is Wassily Kandinsky’s *White Cross*, 1922 (Figure 19). The juxtaposition of sharp geometries and the organic curving shape of the sculpture are reflected in the architectural designs of the Abstract Gallery. Art critic Emily Genauer felt irritated by her experience in the Abstract Gallery, “The triangular suspension columns kept getting in the way. Intruding on one’s consciousness.”⁶⁷ Genauer’s word choice is revealing; “consciousness” is part of the Surrealists vocabulary, and also Kiesler’s vocabulary in his Notes on Designing the Gallery.⁶⁸ Consciousness is reflective of the Freudian psychoanalysis that heavily inspired the Surrealists, and Genauer’s reaction reflects the Surrealist principle that requires the viewer’s psychological participation within the exhibition space, which was

⁶⁶ -- “Inheritors of Chaos” *Time* (2 November 1942)

⁶⁷ Emily Genauer, “Surrealist Paintings Hung Surrealistically: One of Two New Exhibitions Makes Gallery Visit Delightful” *New York World Telegram* (24 October 1942)

⁶⁸ Frederick Kiesler, “Note on Designing the Gallery”, (October 1942). Archive of the Kiesler Foundation, reproduced in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 174-175.

resonant throughout Art of This Century.⁶⁹ The extensive fluorescent tube lighting that lined the ceiling cast a blue haze that expanded throughout the Abstract Gallery, further enhancing the bold ultramarine walls and bright turquoise floors. The Abstract Gallery presents an unprecedented experience for the visitor upon entering Art of This Century, which greatly contributes to the “shocking” reception of Art of This Century. Artist John Cage recalled that Art of This Century was, “a kind of fun house...you couldn’t just walk through it, you had to become a part of it.”⁷⁰ Cage’s remarks reveal that the architectural designs of the Abstract Gallery initiated the sensory experience that would continue throughout Art of This Century. The Abstract Gallery set the tone for Art of this Century as a whole, serving as an introduction to the subsequent rooms or ‘galleries’ in Art of This Century (Figs. 20-21).⁷¹

By featuring an oversize wheel made by Kiesler to feature Marcel Duchamp’s *Boite-en-Valise*, the Kinetic Gallery integrates Duchamp into Art of This Century (Figure 22).⁷² The large wheel, seven feet in diameter was attached to a wall painted black, and resembles the wheel that was installed in Duchamp’s studio in this photograph taken by Berenice Abbott. Next to the wheel, a small wooden box projects from the wall; this device is a vision machine designed by Kiesler. The Time reporter describes the viewing experience as “manipulated by turning a ship’s wheel shows a rotating exhibit of

⁶⁹ Interview with art historian Virginia Dortch and Clement Greenberg, “Greenberg did not like that way the paintings were hung in the Abstract Gallery.” (2 October 1973) in Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends*, (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994), 108.

⁷⁰ Interview with Bruce Altschuler and John Cage. Published in Bruce Altschuler, *The Avant-Garde Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 154.

⁷¹ The colors in the abstract gallery are reflective of Guggenheim’s personal preference for blue.

⁷² Peggy Guggenheim and Duchamp may have been planning to open Art of This Century with a retrospective of works by Marcel Duchamp to be held in the Daylight Gallery. See Catherine Craft, “Pictures of the Past: Dada and the Two Duchamps” in *aka Marcel Duchamp: Meditation on the Identities of an Artist*, ed. Anne Collins Goodyear and James W. McManus (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2014) 126.

reproductions of all the works by screwball Surrealist, Marcel Duchamp.”⁷³ It is revealing that the reporter refers to Duchamp as a Surrealist, which further integrates Surrealism into the Kinetic Gallery, but also further associates Duchamp with Surrealism, which anticipated the contemporary connection that has been made by scholars which now connects Duchamp more explicitly Surrealism. *Boite-en-Valise* is an innovative work that featured diminutive reproductions of works in Duchamp’s oeuvre; Duchamp referred to it as a or portable museum (Figure 23).⁷⁴ Photographs of the large wheel were often the only representation of the Kinetic Gallery that reached a broad public. *Boite*’s public debut was in the Kinetic Gallery of Art of This Century, and the wheel’s spiral motif echoes similar imagery in Duchamp’s works such as *Rotoreliefs*, and in Kiesler’s past architectural designs.⁷⁵ Duchamp lived with the Kieslers for a year after he arrived in New York. Art historian Lewis Kachur notes that the two frequently exchanged ideas, going on to do several more innovative collaborations, after Art of This Century opened.⁷⁶

The Kinetic Gallery required the viewer’s engagement with the exhibition space, and featured more strategies and vocabulary of Surrealism than any of the other ‘galleries’ in Art of This Century. The Kinetic Gallery was purposefully designed to experiment with visual perception and motion, reflecting the sensory experience

⁷³ -- “Inheritors of Chaos” *Time* (2 November 1942)

⁷⁴ See *Marcel Duchamp: Work and Life: Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy, 1887-1968*, ed. Pontus Hulten (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993)

⁷⁵ The spiral motif is also reflective of the burgeoning trend of utopian architecture that both Kiesler and Frank Lloyd Wright utilized in their designs. See *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009)

⁷⁶ Guggenheim’s accountant, Bernard Reis has records about selling reproductions of *Boite*, reflecting Guggenheim’s commercial concerns over supporting the avant-garde. See Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994)

introduced in the Abstract Gallery that was resonant throughout Art of This Century. The novel installation design provided an exciting new viewing experience that provoked mixed responses by critics. The Kinetic Gallery was the smallest room in Art of This Century; it was a slender hallway in between the ‘galleries’ where visitors were invited to view artworks from various devices. “Vision machines”, which were devices invented by Kiesler,⁷⁷ and generally referred to as “peepshows”, are reflective of Kiesler’s inspiration from photographic and cinematic techniques.⁷⁸ One of the vision machines designed by Kiesler, he defined as a “shadow box” as graphic designer Don Quaintance recognized, “A third kinetic device, a two-foot deep volumetric shadow box with an elliptical inset and a round peephole.”⁷⁹ In this photograph, artist Buffie Johnson is lifting the lever to use the shadow box, which resembles a camera lens (Figure 24). Quaintance describes that the vision machine would “shutter” after the lever was lifted, connecting the Kinetic Gallery to photography.⁸⁰ The spectator has now been put in the role of the photographer, and their participation is required in order to view the diminutive Klee paintings, shown “on an incandescent light, revealing an artwork in isolation.”⁸¹ By referring to the language and techniques of photography, the vision devices put the Kinetic Gallery in the territory of Surrealism.⁸² Art historians now recognize the complex and new inventions and methods of display designed by Kiesler, which utilized photography, film, retail

⁷⁷ Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 251.

⁷⁸ -- “Inheritors of Chaos” *Time* (November 2, 1942). Most critics make the “peepshow” reference

⁷⁹ Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 252.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

display, and etc. The press release for Art of This Century reads, “The Cubist and abstract paintings and sculptures will be exhibited in Gallery 1 while the surrealist paintings, sculptures, and objects will be displayed in Gallery 2 and 3”⁸³. This reflects Kiesler’s intentional use of Surreal strategies and vocabulary within the Kinetic Gallery⁸⁴.

The white walls and neutral viewing environment of the Daylight Gallery did not captivate critics for the inaugural opening of Art of This Century (Figure 25). The Daylight Gallery was a white walled room with a thin fabric screen over the windows that overlooked the New York skyline, providing natural sunlight.⁸⁵ The Newsweek reporter was unimpressed with the somber installation design writing, “Least spectacular more or less conventional room that served as a catch-all for temporary exhibitions.”⁸⁶

The Newsweek reporter reflects how critics were familiar, and bored with a neutral environment for viewing artworks. By the time Art of This Century opened, in 1942, the

⁸³ Frederick Kiesler, “Press Release pertaining to the Architectural Aspects of the Gallery” (October 1942), Archive of the Kiesler Foundation. Reproduced in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 176-177.

⁸⁴ Kiesler also published drawings of the devices in the Kinetic Gallery in *VVV*, which included Breton’s *Portrait of A.B. the Actor*, which was part of Guggenheim’s collection, but Art of This Century scholars now know that Breton’s work was not featured in the Kinetic Gallery. See Don Quaintance “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004)

Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 206-273. Kiesler’s designs of the Kinetic Gallery also echo his approach to the design of theater sets and window displays, which were important spaces for the Surrealists, further connecting the Kinetic Gallery and Surrealism. One of the first commissions Kiesler received after emigrating to the United States was in 1929 to design the Film Guild Cinema auditorium in New York, which art historian Lisa Phillips has recognized, “as the first theater in America designed solely for the projection of cinema.” It has also been recognized that by 1942, hundreds of nickelodeons were in existence in New York, this also likely influence the various vision machines Kiesler invented for the Kinetic Gallery. See Lisa Phillips, *Frederick Kiesler* (New York: Whitney Museum Publications, 1989) 13.

⁸⁵ The screen was made of ninon, a thin chiffon like fabric. See Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 252.

⁸⁶ -- “Isms Rampant: Peggy Guggenheim’s Dream World goes Abstract, Cubist, and Generally Non-Real” *Newsweek* (2 November 1942)

“white cube” aesthetic which was later articulated by Brian O’Doherty had become the typical, neutral viewing environment for modern art museums. Barr implemented the neutral viewing environment to the Museum of Modern Art in 1932 and although the Pierre Matisse Gallery was host to several exhibitions of Surrealism, the gallery walls were grey, providing a neutral viewing environment.⁸⁷ Greenberg concluded his review of Art of This Century writing, “Except for the Surrealist room, the gallery is, however, a little crowded and scrappy. Mr. Kiesler overdid the functionalism in not providing the other rooms with a more unified background...nevertheless, the decor does create a sense of exhilaration and provides a relief from the other usually over-upholstered or over-sanitary museums and galleries.”⁸⁸ Clement Greenberg gestures towards the importance of experimental museum architectural designs and recognizes the burgeoning importance of innovative museum architectural designs and appreciates Art of This Century’s experimental nature.

Dedicated to temporary exhibitions, the Daylight Gallery would be the most important room for contemporary art in Art of This Century, when, shortly after the opening, it began to feature unknown artists that would be integral to the development of new art styles. The Daylight Gallery was the only space in Art of This Century that had a view of the New York skyline, which has been interpreted by scholars as a reflection Guggenheim’s anticipation of Art of This Century’s influence on the New York art

⁸⁷ Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 209. The reviewers were also bored by both the neutral viewing environment and the Victorian living room style setting that was typical of galleries such as Knoedler & Co.

⁸⁸ Clement Greenberg, *The Nation* (January, 30 1943) This may be a direct reference by Greenberg specifically to the Museum of Non-Objective Painting and the Museum of Modern Art.

world.⁸⁹ Although in the initial reviews, the Daylight Gallery received little attention, the Daylight Gallery remain the center of attention in reviews of Art of This Century once the exhibition program began.⁹⁰ Unlike the critical majority, Edward Alden Jewell recognized the importance of the Daylight Gallery writing, “It should be specified, however, that Miss Guggenheim has not confined to her connoisseurship to the work alone of recognized leader in the field. Of course the roster embraces names such as Picasso, Braque, Chirico, Chagall, Brancusi, Ernst, Duchamp, Kandinsky, Leger, Klee, Miro, Picabia, and Mondrian. But it also plays host to a score of artists of whom I, for one have never before heard. This fact gives breadth to the enterprise and enlarges our empire of research.”⁹¹ Jewell recognizes the future importance of the Daylight Gallery through its innovative temporary exhibition program, since the Daylight Gallery would serve as the setting for some of Art of This Century’s most important exhibitions.⁹² The Daylight Gallery began to receive notoriety in 1943, during its first exhibition season when Art of This Century hosted the *Exhibition by 31 Women* from January 5 - February 6, 1943 and the first Spring Salon for Young Artists, which was held from May 18 - June 26 1943. The Spring Salon featured unknown artists that would go on to figure prominently in the New York art world such as Jackson Pollock, William Baziotes, Robert Motherwell, Ad Reinhardt, and others (Figure 26). There was also a temporary

⁸⁹ Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 261.

⁹⁰ The first temporary exhibition of Objects by Joseph Cornell and Bottles by Laurence Vail was held a little over a month after Art of This Century’s opening, from November 30, 1942 to January 1943.

⁹¹ Edward Alden Jewell, “Our Hemisphere Posters” *New York Times* (25 October 1942)

⁹² At the opening, the Daylight gallery featured Magritte’s *The Discovery of Fire* (1934-5), Chagall’s *Rain* (1911), and Ernst’s *Sea, Sun, Earthquake* (1931), and various other works from Guggenheim’s collection. See *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 211.

partition wall⁹³ in the Daylight Gallery which was used if more works needed to be displayed. The paintings were installed on a simple key and hook system, so that temporary exhibitions could be easily installed and uninstalled.⁹⁴

The Painting Library, which consisted of Correalist Instruments placed within the Daylight Gallery, making Guggenheim's collection more accessible to the public, and anticipates the contemporary museum practice of open storage displays (Figure 27). Kiesler also shared Guggenheim's concern over the mobility of her collection, and designed a group of twelve multifunctional wooden stands, allowing the artworks to be easily accessible. The stands were low to the ground and as writer and graphic designer Don Quaintance recognized this, "Allowed seated visitors to examine works while holding them in their hands or propping them on removable wooden ledges."⁹⁵ Since the Painting Library is located within the Daylight Gallery, this has caused some confusion in the scholarship as to the difference between the two. Kiesler had made over fifty folding stools from wooden sawn off baseball bats and the blue canvas used in the Abstract Gallery to accompany the painting library stands, additionally Correalist rockers were used as seating. Kiesler explains the Painting Library in the Press Release Pertaining to the Architectural aspects of the Gallery, "the spectator has a chance of sitting in front of mobile stands and adjust himself each painting to angles best suited for his own studying, also to exchange some of them from a built-in storage."⁹⁶ The Correalist Instruments in

⁹³ The wall was initially black, but painted white by August 1943.

⁹⁴ Don Quaintance, "Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler's Design of Art of this Century" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 260

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Frederick Kiesler, "Press Release Pertaining to the Architectural Aspects of the Gallery" (October 1942) Archive of the Kiesler Foundation. Reproduced in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of*

the Daylight Gallery were designed for the dual purpose of both art storage and display, which also allowed the room to function as a Painting Library. The Correalist Instruments provided seating, while allowing for more artworks to be displayed.

The Painting Library allowed the viewer to have a tangible relationship to the artworks, and offered the public an intimate experience with the artworks, which anticipates contemporary object based learning practices and reflects the educational purpose of Art of This Century. Guggenheim recognized that her understanding of artworks was greatly enhanced through her visits to the artist's studios, where she would have a direct relationship to the artwork, which ultimately piqued her interest in avant-garde art. The first artist studio she visited was Jean Arp's studio in 1937 with Marcel Duchamp, where she picked up the small sculpture *Head and Shell* (c. 1933) and described the experience in her memoir: "The instant I felt it. I wanted to own it."⁹⁷ Some may be inclined to interpret Guggenheim's reaction as a "buyers thrill", however, art historian Susan Davidson recognized that she did not purchase *Head and Shell* until the summer of 1940, nearly three after Guggenheim's first visit to Arp's studio.⁹⁸ By making her collection so accessible, the Painting Library demonstrates that Guggenheim hoped Art of This Century would serve an educational purpose as well.

The Correalist Instruments designed by Kiesler expanded the integrative nature of

Art of This Century, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 176-177.

⁹⁷ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict*, (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005), 175

⁹⁸ Susan Davidson, "Focusing an Instinct: The Collecting of Peggy Guggenheim" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 82.

Art of This Century, to also include furniture design (Figs. 28-30).⁹⁹ The numerous Correalist instruments that were placed throughout Art of This Century were reflective of both Kiesler's theories of "Correaltion". Kiesler defined his theory of Correalism several years before he was commissioned to design Art of This Century, in 1939, writing: "[Correalism represented] the dynamics of continual interaction between man and his natural and technological environments."¹⁰⁰ And that, Correalism is "an investigation into the laws of the inter-relationships of natural and man-made organisms."¹⁰¹ As art historian Christoph Thun-Hohenstein recognized, "Kiesler's concept of Correalism is a comprehensive philosophical vision of the unity of the natural world and human culture."¹⁰² The resulting biomorphic furniture is reflective of Kiesler's deviation from the Bauhaus and de Stijl traditions that he followed previously, and his increasing involvement with the Surrealists. Kiesler also designed the Correalist instruments to prevent museum fatigue, which reveals that Kiesler was actively engaging in museum theory and critique.¹⁰³

Significantly, Guggenheim placed her desk in the Daylight Gallery, which then served as a physical representation of her dedicated administration over Art of This

⁹⁹ The Surrealist use of furniture design that began with the 1938 Paris, Exposition Internationale du Surrealisme. The furniture featured in the 1938 Exposition Internationale du Surrealisme was the focus of much of the press coverage of the exhibition.

¹⁰⁰ Cynthia Goodman, "The Art of Revolutionary Display Techniques" in *Frederick Kiesler* (New York: Whitney Museum Publications, 1989) 61.

¹⁰¹ Frederick Kiesler, "On Correalism and Biotechnique: Definition and Test of a New Approach to Building Design," *Architectural Record*, 86 (September 1939).

¹⁰² Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, "Learning from Kiesler" in *Frederick Kiesler: Life Visions, Architecture – Art – Design*, ed. Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Dieter Bogner, Maria Lind, and Barbel Vischer (Basel, Switzerland: Birkhauser Verlag GmbH, 2016) 9.

¹⁰³ See Frederick Kiesler, "Press Release pertaining to the Architectural Aspects of Art of This Century" (October 1942) Archive of the Kiesler Foundation. Reproduced in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 176-177.

Century (Figure 31). Guggenheim's desk held a typewriter, files, books, magazines such as *VVV* and *View* (both publications associated with Surrealism),¹⁰⁴ and various catalogues, presumably *Art of This Century* that were also for sale.¹⁰⁵ Guggenheim's friend and accountant, Bernard J. Reis's records show that "Art of This Century made a profit in 1942, but with one exception lost money the following years." And that "Even after sales, Peggy lost \$5,086.53 in 1944"¹⁰⁶ This reflects Guggenheim's dedication towards supporting avant-garde artists, which she did by selling their artworks. Kiesler originally wanted to put Guggenheim's desk in a back, storeroom office space; unsatisfied with this placement she explained: "I wanted to be in the gallery all the time so I could see what was going on."¹⁰⁷ The desk reflects her desire to remain the head of her enterprise, and faced towards her gallery entrance, so that Guggenheim could greet incoming gallery.¹⁰⁸ A small reception desk occupied by her gallery assistance was placed at the entrance to Art of This Century, and Guggenheim would have been able to easily see who entered the gallery through the glass window that divided the Daylight and Abstract galleries.¹⁰⁹ Although Guggenheim sat with her back towards the windows as

¹⁰⁴ Guggenheim placed ads for Art of This Century exhibitions in *View*, a magazine associated with Surrealism, which further reflects the self-promotional nature of Guggenheim that she shared with many of the Surrealists.

¹⁰⁵ Sometimes her desk would also exhibit Joseph Cornell's boxes and Laurence Vail's bottles, which we know were for sale because her accountant, Bernard Reis kept records on these sales. See Don Quaintance, "Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler's Design of Art of This Century" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 262.

¹⁰⁶ Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994) 93.

¹⁰⁷ Don Quaintance, "Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler's Design of Art of This Century" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 263

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ This glass window was next to one of the Klee vision machines, was part of the Kinetic Gallery. Art of This Century scholars discovered that the Kinetic Gallery served as a transition zone to all the 'galleries' in Art of This Century. It separated the Daylight Gallery from the Surrealist Gallery, and the Abstract Gallery from the Daylight Gallery. Kiesler likely did this because of his preference for no natural lighting to be

Quaintance has recognized, “by simply glancing to her left from the seventh-floor perch, she could see an unencumbered view of the plaza hotel nearby.”¹¹⁰ To elaborate, Guggenheim was able to see who was coming in from the street entrance, and was able to anticipate the arrival of certain guests, reflective her dedication as director of Art of This Century. The large, imposing desk itself was a physical symbol of Guggenheim, and its placement near the cityscape emphasizes her presence throughout both Art of This Century and the city. Evidence of Guggenheim’s presence throughout Art of This Century is provided by art historian and later curator of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Fred Licht, who frequently visited at Art of This Century while he was in high school. Licht writes, “And though I had never actually met Peggy in those days, I could not help knowing her all the same. One of her great gifts was all around you at Art of This Century: the gift of inviting you to share what I can only call the ‘moment privilégie.’”¹¹¹ Regardless of her physical presence, Guggenheim’s impact on the space was evident.

The whole experience of Art of This Century was Surreal, not just the gallery labeled the Surrealist Gallery (Figure 32). There were many familiar avant-garde design elements used in the designs of Art of This Century. However, it is the combination of the curved wall, the innovative furniture, unframed paintings, bright colors, theatrical lighting, and elaborate designs in a relatively compact exhibition space that allows Art of

used in museums. The Museum of Non-Objective Painting tried to block out all natural lighting as well, but the New York building zoning didn’t allow for a museum or gallery to completely block off the windows, which may explain why Kiesler made the Kinetic Gallery, it allowed for natural light to stay out of the two main spaces in Art of This Century, the Abstract and Surrealist gallery.

¹¹⁰ Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 263.

¹¹¹ Fred Licht, “Remembering Peggy” in Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994) 16.

This Century to stand out in the art historical narrative, and gives Art of This Century a surrealist sensibility. A connection between Art of This Century and Surrealism is further established because innovative installation design was a crucial strategy for Surrealism.¹¹² This experience was not lost on critics, as art historian Valentina Songozi recognized, “Generally reviewers seemed to accept that the paintings, the sculptures, and the designs of the gallery were an inextricable unit.”¹¹³ Songozi’s observation reflects that the reviews understood Art of This Century as one, Surreal experience. Kiesler intentionally designed all of the ‘galleries’ in Art of This Century to function as a continuous, fluid unit. The Abstract Gallery and the Surrealist Gallery are the two largest rooms in Art of This Century and the architectural designs have been recognized by Quaintance as “complementary spaces”¹¹⁴. Quaintance reflects the fluidity between abstraction and surrealism rather than the barrier that architecturally divided the two rooms. Art of This Century was located in two previous tailor shops, so there was an existing architectural division already established between the Abstract and Surrealist galleries. Although Guggenheim and Kiesler ultimately decided that Art of This Century should have four ‘galleries’. Kiesler took advantage of this rare opportunity to create four visually distinct designs for each room.

¹¹² The 1938-39 Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art featured a peephole designed by Herbert Bayer, through the peephole, the visitor would view costumes designed by Oskar Schimmer. The unframed paintings began with Malevich’s Black Square and Tatlin’s counter reliefs at the end of 1915. See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001). See also Bruce Altschuler, *The Avant-Garde Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)

¹¹³ Valentina Songozi “‘You will never be bored within its walls’ Art of This Century and the Reaction of the Press” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 281.

¹¹⁴ Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 260.

Kiesler was concerned over authorship for *Art of This Century*. Kiesler is best known for his architectural designs in *Art of This Century*, although the Guggenheim-Kiesler collaboration was crucial in the success of *Art of This Century*, the two were often at odds, mostly over Kiesler's concern for credit for his architectural designs. In her memoir Guggenheim writes that, "He [Kiesler] told me that I would now be known to posterity for my collection of paintings, but for the way he presented them to the world in his revolutionary setting."¹¹⁵ This reveals Kiesler's concern over authorship which is further reflected by his issuing a separate "Press Release Pertaining to The Architectural Aspects of *Art of This Century*"¹¹⁶ and "Notes on Designing the Gallery"¹¹⁷, and the several additional publications in the following year that Kiesler submitted to *Architectural Forum* and *View and VVV*. When Dial Press published Guggenheim's memoir in March 1946, *Art of This Century* scholars Don Quaintance, Jasper Sharp, and Valentina Sonzogni recognized that "on March 12, Dial Press informs Kiesler of a mistake in the photo captions, misattributing the designs of *Art of This Century*'s Abstract and Surrealist galleries to Abbott, its photographer. Kiesler demands that an 'errata' appear in every volume issued to the public."¹¹⁸ This reflects Kiesler's concerns over authorship, and, as a result many subsequent publications on *Art of This Century* have failed to attribute any credit to Abbott for her photographs. While several

¹¹⁵ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 270.

¹¹⁶ Frederick Kiesler, "Press Release pertaining to the Architectural Aspects of *Art of This Century*" (October 1942) Archive of the Kiesler Foundation. Reproduced in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 176-177.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 178

¹¹⁸ Jasper Sharp, Don Quaintance, and Valentina Songozi "Chronology" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 378.

critics and art historians over time have failed to credit both Guggenheim and Kiesler to Art of This Century, there is no doubt that Kiesler's experimental vision was crucial to the critical acclaim and the iconic status of Art of This Century.

The Guggenheim-Kiesler collaboration was integral to making Art of This Century achieve its iconic status. Guggenheim's role in Art of This Century is often overshadowed by the architect she chose and his designs. Guggenheim first met Frederick Kiesler on November 22, 1941 when Kiesler and his wife, Steffi came to one of the many Guggenheim-Ernst townhouse gatherings.¹¹⁹ Although this was Guggenheim and Kiesler's first 'official' meeting, it is likely that she was aware of his past innovative projects. Guggenheim and Kiesler shared several mutual friends interested in avant-garde architectural designs; Kiesler had collaborated with Theo van Doesburg and it is most likely that Guggenheim heard about Kiesler through van Doesburg's widow, and Guggenheim's good friend, Nellie van Doesburg. Kiesler was an Austrian emigre, who had been living in New York since 1926; although he was not an official member of Surrealism, he had established himself within the avant-garde circles of New York, and when he designed Art of This Century, he was becoming increasingly immersed in and associated with Surrealism.¹²⁰ Kiesler was trained as an architect, and in New York was the Director of the Laboratory at the School of Architecture of Columbia University, and the Scenic Director of the Juilliard School of Music.¹²¹ This reflects Kiesler's experience

¹¹⁹ Philip Rylands, "The Master and Marguerite" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 23.

¹²⁰ Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001) 7.

¹²¹ Frederick Kiesler, "Press Release Pertaining to the Architectural Aspects of the Gallery" (October 1942) Archive of the Kiesler Foundation. Reproduced in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The*

with working in a multitude of disciplines including retail display, furniture design, and theater set designs, which would make him the ideal architect for Art of This Century (Figs. 33-34)aq. Guggenheim formally enlisted his help on February 26, 1942.¹²² Both Guggenheim and Kiesler shared an interest in creating innovative exhibition methods, and their interdisciplinary interests allowed for Art of This Century to function as an innovative, avant-garde space. Guggenheim wrote in her memoir that she gave Kiesler a “carte blanche”¹²³, and that the only request she made was for the paintings to be unframed. This reflects Guggenheim’s trust in Kiesler rather than her disinterest in the project. Guggenheim collaborated with Kiesler regularly during each phase of construction, generally through in-person and telephone conversations.¹²⁴ Guggenheim expressed concerns about both administrative issues and avant-garde innovations, such as adequate storage space for her collection, sufficient office space, and a small auditorium that could be used for musical performances.¹²⁵ Guggenheim also wished for the design

Story of Art of This Century, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 176-177.

¹²² Kiesler submitted proposals to Hilla Rebay to design the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. Rebay was the founding director and Guggenheim’s longtime rival. Kiesler’s design was never fully realized. See Don Quaintance “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of Art of This Century” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 209. See also, Karole Vail, “A Museum in the Making: Two Artists in Their Patron – Hilla Rebay, Rudolph Bauer, and Solomon R. Guggenheim” in *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009), 25.

¹²³ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005), 274

¹²⁴ *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 342

¹²⁵ Melvin P. Lader, “Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-garde, 1942-1947” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, 97. Lader points out that there is no evidence of any musical performances being held in Art of This Century. However, art historian Jasper Sharp writes that Guggenheim suggested that Paul Bowles make an album called “Art of This Century Recordings” and “A concert, held in the gallery celebrated the record’s release...it did not take place” Although in October 1944, “Paul Bowles-Art of This Century Recordings” was released and was well reviewed by the New Yorker and the New York Times. See Jasper Sharp “Chronology” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip

of the space be directly related to the styles of art represented in her collection.¹²⁶ In Kiesler's outline of the design, he makes it clear that he is following the requests of Guggenheim when, for example, in his second point he states "It is your wish that some new exhibition methods be developed for exhibiting paintings, drawings, sculptures, collages, and so called objects."¹²⁷ It is revealing that Guggenheim emphasized that she wanted to display multi-media artworks, and that the Surrealists were most associated with 'objects' and collage at this time, implying the integrative nature of Art of This Century. Without the financial support and creative freedom encouraged by Guggenheim, Kiesler may not have had the opportunity to create such an iconic space, that would serve as an inspiration to subsequent designs in museums, galleries, stage sets, window displays, and etc. Kiesler would go on to receive several commissions after Art of This Century, and Kiesler remains in the art historical narrative best known for his designs for Art of This Century.¹²⁸ However, Art of This Century's success was dependent on the collaboration between the two.

Art of This Century was not the first avant-garde gallery in New York, but its innovations were crucial in ushering in the next generation of galleries in New York. Although Guggenheim has been recognized by art historian and director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Philip Rylands as a "latecomer," to the New York avant-garde art world, Guggenheim recognized the earlier generation's contributions, and built on

Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 313.

¹²⁶ Melvin P. Lader, "Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-garde, 1942-1947" Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, 97.

¹²⁷ Correspondence from Kiesler to Guggenheim, February 1942. Reproduced in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 170.

¹²⁸ Lisa Phillips, "Architect of Endless Innovation" in *Frederick Kiesler* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1989) 11.

them.¹²⁹ Innovative installation design would play a crucial role in this next generation of avant-garde art galleries. The location Guggenheim chose for Art of This Century situated her gallery in the middle of the other galleries and museums. Not only was Art of This Century's proximity to other museums and galleries crucial to Guggenheim's numerous collaborations within the art world, but Guggenheim likely imagined her gallery to be in good company, alongside The Museum of Modern Art, the Julien Levy Gallery, and the Pierre Matisse Gallery which all presented avant-garde art to the New York public.¹³⁰ The Beaux-Arts facade of the building where Art of This Century was located served as a reminder of the stark contrast between the traditional exterior and innovative interior of Art of This Century. Guggenheim intentionally deviated from the Victorian living room style of display practiced not only by several other nearby galleries such as Knoedler & Co. and the Carroll Carstairs Gallery, but also at the home of avant-garde art collectors Walter and Louise Arensberg in Los Angeles. When Guggenheim visited their home in the summer of 1941, she writes in her memoir "One of the reasons I had come west was to visit Arensberg's collection of modern art. It was probably one of the finest in the world. Every room of his funny old Victorian house was crammed with magnificent paintings."¹³¹ This reflects Guggenheim's concern over distinguishing the

¹²⁹ Philip Rylands, "The Master and Marguerite" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 20.

¹³⁰ Levy and Guggenheim had a tense relationship when Guggenheim began planning Art of This Century, mostly because of personal reasons, since he was the New York representative of Max Ernst, he lost him as a client. Also note that around the time Art of This Century opened, Levy served in the army and temporarily closed his gallery. Levy closing his gallery during this time likely played a part in Art of This Century overshadowing the Julien Levy Gallery during this time. See *Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998)

¹³¹ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 255-256. Guggenheim also embarked on this trip to visit her sister Hazel, who was living in Santa Barbara at this time, in 1941.

architectural designs rather than the avant-garde artworks of Art of This Century from other collector's homes and galleries. Guggenheim was also familiar with New York City's art world, although she had not visited in fourteen years. Soon after her arrival, Guggenheim recalled meeting with friend and gallery owner Julien Levy, and "He told me all about the American art world."¹³² Guggenheim was entering into a close-knit, collaborative network of art dealers, collectors, museum curators, who supported avant-garde art. Many of the figures representing the galleries and museums of New York would quickly become Guggenheim's friends and trusted advisors. Among the most important were Alfred Barr Jr. and James Johnson Sweeney, who were crucial in advising her on young, unknown artists who would later be exhibited and promoted at Art of This Century.

Art of This Century may have been the best iteration of Guggenheim's Surrealist sensibility, but it was not the first time she had ventured into an avant-garde endeavor. We can trace Guggenheim's Surrealist approach in her avant-garde endeavors which began in 1926, with her interest in collaboration and interdisciplinary approach seems to begin with her marketing of Mina Loy in 1926. Art of This Century was the result of Guggenheim's longtime interest in promoting the avant-garde. Guggenheim had begun to sell avant-garde art in 1926 while living in Paris, 16 years before she opened Art of This Century. Mina Loy has been described by curators Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs as a "poet-artist."¹³³ Art historian Carole Burke refers to the Loy-Guggenheim collaboration

¹³² Ibid., 252.

¹³³ Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs, "Introduction" in *Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998) 11. Mina Loy was also Julien Levy's mother in law

as a “shop and gallery”.¹³⁴ In her memoir Guggenheim writes “About this time Mina Loy and I embarked on a great business venture.¹³⁵ With her usual genius she had invented three new forms of lampshade...I set her up in a shop on the Rue du Colisee...I ran the shop and she and Joella, her daughter, ran the workshop.”¹³⁶ The shop would occasionally hold art exhibitions. Early on in Guggenheim’s enterprise, she took advantage of the interdisciplinary nature of the avant-garde ‘shop’, and used it as a space to exhibit avant-garde artworks, among other avant-garde art forms.¹³⁷ In this photograph (Figure 35) of Loy and Guggenheim in the shop we see three collages on the wall, art historian Virginia Dortch wrote that “She [Loy] used frames bought at the flea market for her collages of cutout flower shapes, which Peggy sold in New York.”¹³⁸ Guggenheim recalls on her first trip to New York in her memoir, “Laurence gave them the wonderful title *Jaded Blossoms*. I arranged to have the exhibition in a decorator’s [shop] on Madison Avenue. They were to take one-third commission, which is normal, but I provided all the clients...The exhibition was a great success, and I sold the *Jaded*

¹³⁴ Carolyn Burke, “Loy-Alism” in *Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998) 63.

¹³⁵ Guggenheim first mentions Mina Loy in 1924. See Peggy Guggenheim *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 41. Where Guggenheim recalls Loy visiting her and Laurence while renting a summer house and paintings. “Mina Loy who was not only a poetess and painter, was always inventing something new by which she hoped to make her fortune. She had created a new, or old, form of papier colle- flower cut outs which she framed in beautiful old Lois Philippe framed she bought in the flea market. See Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 60.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 67. “When I went to America I took with me fifty of so of these shades with strict instructions from where where not to sell them. I am afraid I disregarded her instructions for I had not paid much attention to them...We also sold some hand-painted slippers made by Clotilde, and we gave Laurence and exhibition of his paintings. ...Laurence had not been influenced by the Surrealists who came to La Lavandou in the summer in large bands and wandered in and out of our house in their vague way with the artificial wives. Andre Masson and Gaston Louis Roux lived near us and they were very good friends. Also on this page Peggy recalls the lampshade shop being successful.

¹³⁷ Guggenheim was always supportive of Vails artworks, but since he primarily was a writer her life gets associated with literature around the time she lived in Paris.

¹³⁸ Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994) 51.

Blossoms everywhere. I looked up all my old friends, hoping to sell *Jaded Blossoms*. I became so obsessed by this I went all over New York carrying them.”¹³⁹ Guggenheim specifically tried to sell Loy’s works at various luxury fifth avenue boutiques, and Guggenheim’s¹⁴⁰ drive to sell Loy’s works reflects Guggenheim’s passion as promoter of the avant-garde. The Guggenheim-Loy collaboration lasted a little over a year; the two parted ways for personal reasons and because Loy disapproved of her works being featured in department stores. It is revealing that Guggenheim instinctually utilized department stores to exhibit and sell artworks, as department stores would become an important and resonant site for Surrealist exhibition strategies which Guggenheim continued to follow later in New York.¹⁴¹

Guggenheim is best known for being Jackson Pollock’s patron in the 1940s, however, she first was a patron since 1919, and continued to fund the avant-garde and progressive causes throughout her life. In 1919 Guggenheim received an inheritance which would allow her the financial freedom to contribute to various avant-garde and progressive causes.¹⁴² In the same year, 1919, Guggenheim gave \$500 towards *The Little Review*, which art historian Melvin P. Lader has recognized as “a progressive literary

¹³⁹ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 67. Benita bought who which she offered to the Metropolitan Museum, but they were refused. Rest of quote... “Carrying them on my fast growing stomach My poor daughter was perpetually buried under them” . “When it came to hanging them, Laurence assisted us. He was so Bohemian and temperamental that the lady in charge of the shop wanted me to send him away.”

¹⁴⁰ Susan Davidson, “Focusing an Instinct” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 83.

¹⁴¹ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict*, (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 71. “This time [in the winter of 1927] I arrived [in New York] with fifty lampshades and fifty lamps. Laurence had also suggested using the southern glass wine bottles that we found at LaLavandou as the bases for the wonderful shades. I became efficient and soon found myself selling everything to all the shops Mina had told me to avoid...She was afraid her invention would be cheapened by the department stores.”

¹⁴² Ibid., 21 “In the summer of 1919 I came into my fortune. I was an heiress and I was independent.” Guggenheim’s cousin Harold Loeb was a frequent visitor of Sunwise Turn. Loeb was also involved in avant-garde literature circles and Hemingway used Loeb as a basis for a character in *The Sun Also Rises*.

magazine that first published *Ulysses* by James Joyce.”¹⁴³ Pollock has been recognized by art historian Susan Davidson as the only artist Peggy endorsed financially, providing him with monthly stipends. Pollock was importantly the only artist that Guggenheim contractually supported through one of her galleries. Some of the other figures Guggenheim patronized include Djuna Barnes, André Breton, and Berenice Abbott.¹⁴⁴ Guggenheim gave Berenice Abbott in 1926 a stipend for her to purchase her first camera and as Guggenheim writes in her memoir, “To pay me back she came to Pramoussiquier and took the most beautiful photographs of Sinbad, Pegeen, and me. I certainly was well reimbursed.”¹⁴⁵ Abbott had previously been an assistant for Man Ray and Guggenheim’s stipend was crucial in launching Abbott’s career. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. recognized Guggenheim’s important role as a patron, “For a patron is not simply a collector who gathers works of art for his own pleasure or a philanthropist who helps artists or founds a public museum, but a person who feels responsibility toward both art and the artist together and has the means and will to act upon this feeling.”¹⁴⁶ Barr’s complimentary words both distinguish Guggenheim from other patrons, and reflect the unprecedented role Guggenheim established as a patron.

Guggenheim’s interest in avant-garde art has been credited to her move to Europe, however, Guggenheim was first introduced to avant-garde art in New York. As a young adult Guggenheim took a clerical job at the avant-garde bookshop, Sunwise Turn,

¹⁴³ Melvin P. Lader, “Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-garde, 1942-1947” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, 16.

¹⁴⁴ Guggenheim was also a patron to Lucille Koh, her private school tutor among others.

¹⁴⁵ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 67.

¹⁴⁶ Alfred H. Barr, Jr. “Introduction” in *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) xvi.

in 1920 (Figure 36).¹⁴⁷ One of the owners, Mary Mowbray Clarke, frequently acquired reproductions of modern art for Sunwise Turn. Guggenheim was introduced to modern art in New York through the interdisciplinary, avant-garde setting of Sunwise Turn.¹⁴⁸ Clarke's husband was the Vice President of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, one of the key financial sponsors of the well-known Armory Show of 1913.¹⁴⁹ Clarke was an inspiration to Guggenheim, and in her memoir she writes, "I loved Mary Mowbray Clarke. She became a sort of goddess for me."¹⁵⁰ As Guggenheim recalls on Sunwise Turn, "The people I met at Sunwise Turn really fascinated me."¹⁵¹ Through Clarke and Sunwise Turn, Guggenheim also had her introduction to the Greenwich Village avant-garde circles, which would be influential to Guggenheim's future enterprise in Europe.¹⁵² Although Guggenheim's time at Sunwise Turn was brief, it did serve as a catalyst for her future avant-garde endeavors.

¹⁴⁷ Marsden Hartley was a frequent visitor of Sunwise Turn. "Sunwise Turn not only sold books; it exhibited and sold unusual art, including works by William Zorach, Hugo Robus and Martha Ryther, and several artists working in batik, then an experimental medium." See Mary V. Dearborn, *Mistress of Modernism: The Life of Peggy Guggenheim* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004) 23.

¹⁴⁸ Mary V. Dearborn, *Mistress of Modernism: The Life of Peggy Guggenheim* (New York: Houston Mifflin Company, 2004) 20. "The shop had reproductions of works by Cezanne, Gauguin, Monet, Picasso, Redon, van Gogh, Matisse, and Renoir among others." One of the founders, Marjorie Content said in an interview, "The writers, painters, and sculptures of that area around New York were a relatively small group relative to those of today that most everybody in the arts seemed to know everybody else."

¹⁴⁹ Although it is unlikely that Guggenheim saw the show herself, it is likely that she was aware of the show from press circulation and or Clarke herself. See Melvin P. Lader "Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-garde, 1942-1927" Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, 16

¹⁵⁰ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Ande Deutsch, 2005) 23.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Philip Rylands points out that through Peggy's patronage to Pollock, he was able to leave his job at her uncle Solomon's Museum of Non-Objective Painting as a janitor to pursue painting further. It's also worth noting that after Art of This Century closed in 1947, Guggenheim had a difficult time placing him under another contract, eventually Betty Parsons signed him. Further proving that Guggenheim felt strongly about providing ways for lesser known artists to create. See Francis V. O'Conner, "Jackson Pollock's *Mural* for Peggy Guggenheim: Its Legend, Documentation, and Redefinition of Wall Painting," in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 150-171.

While at Sunwise Turn, in 1920, in New York, another important event occurred for Guggenheim: she met Alfred Stieglitz, and likely learned about his innovative and highly influential gallery, 291. Leon Fleischman¹⁵³, a friend of Clarke, introduced Guggenheim to Alfred Stieglitz. As Guggenheim recalled in her memoir, “One day Leon took me to see Alfred Stieglitz. They put the first abstract painting I have ever seen in my hands. It was painted by Georgia O’Keeffe”¹⁵⁴ Stieglitz’s well-known gallery was a great inspiration to the subsequent generation of the avant-garde (Figure 37). Art historian Susan Davidson and Jacqueline Weld, one of Guggenheim’s biographers have mistakenly written that Guggenheim visited 291. The gallery had closed in 1917, however, Guggenheim was likely made aware of 291 by both Stieglitz and the regulars at Sunwise Turn, since 291 was located so closely to Sunwise Turn. 291 exhibited not only avant-garde art, but also featured photography, decades before there was a market for the medium. Stieglitz also founded the influential literary publication on photography, *Camera Work*, which was sold in 291. Though 291 looms large in the cultural imagination, it is significant that Guggenheim never experienced the space first hand. Many avant-gardists would go on to follow Stieglitz’s example at 291 because of the excitement generated by Stieglitz and the artwork he showed, but the gallery did not become legendary because of the way it looked.¹⁵⁵ 291 set an important precedent for future avant-garde galleries in New York.

¹⁵³ Helen Fleischman would eventually marry James Joyce’s son, Giorgio. And Fleischman was a witness at Guggenheim’s wedding to Laurence Vail. The Joyce and Fleischman would later be instrumental in helping move Guggenheim’s collection from southern France to New York.

¹⁵⁴ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of this Century: Confession of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 22.

¹⁵⁵ Stieglitz’s next gallery, An American Place also featured somber installation design from the Ansel Adams photographs that are part of the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Sunwise Turn and 291 represent the larger trend in avant-garde spaces of the intersection between literary and visual expression; this was especially the case in Paris, where Guggenheim moved in 1920. For example, it was common for a bookshop to also display art or for an art gallery to sell books and journal publications. Paris in the 1920s is well-known as the international center for the avant-garde in which many artistic and intellectual collaborations took place. Art journalist Valerie Bougault provides insight on the vast amount of transmission that took place between the United States and France, “It is estimated that in the 1920s, between 25,000 and 50,000 compatriots lived in France, attracted by the advantageous exchange rate, and the absence of prohibition, and the atmosphere of creating liberty to be found in Paris.”¹⁵⁶ The Parisian cafe culture that was filled with artists, students, writers, musicians, and various other intellectuals. Avant-gardists utilized various commercial spaces as an interdisciplinary place to exchange ideas. Several cafes even served as the setting for avant-garde art exhibitions in Paris.¹⁵⁷

When Guggenheim moved to Paris in 1920, she became immersed in avant-garde circles and cafe culture (Figure 38). In her memoir, Guggenheim writes, “We generally spend every night in cafes in Montparnasse.”¹⁵⁸ Guggenheim reveals that frequenting cafes was an important part of her life while in Paris, and as art historian Michael Richardson has recognized, the café was an important territory for surrealism.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Valérie Bougault, *Paris Montparnasse: The Heyday of Modern Art, 1910-1940*, ed. Jean-Claude Dubost (Paris: Terrail, 1997) 76. Bougault also recognized that there was the “American tradition of fine arts students travelling to Paris to study.”

¹⁵⁷ Some painters even sold their paintings in exchange for their bill. See Valérie Bougault, *Paris Montparnasse: The Heyday of Modern Art 1910-1940* ed. Jean-Claude Dubost (Paris: Terrail, 1997) 132

¹⁵⁸ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 51. The Montparnasse region was important in specifically to the emergence of modern art.

¹⁵⁹ Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski, “Introduction: Surrealism as a Collective Adventure” in *Surrealism Against the Current: Tracts and Declarations*, ed. and trans. Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski (London: Pluto Press, 2001) 5.

Guggenheim's experiences in Paris also provided her with extensive exposure to avant-garde art, which is where as art historian Melvin Lader recognizes Guggenheim became well integrated into the Surrealist milieu.¹⁶⁰ The Surrealists choice to utilize the cafe is revealing because cafes are commercial spaces, which were utilized by artists but also for writers, students, musicians, and various other intellectuals.¹⁶¹ It is likely that Guggenheim was initially interested in the collaborative, interdisciplinary nature of Surrealism. In her memoir, Guggenheim writes that she was frequently in the company of avant-garde artists at both her apartment gatherings and in the cafes; despite her lifelong assertion that she had no interest in avant-garde at that time. Guggenheim writes in her memoir, "In the spring of 1924, Comte Etienne de Beaumont organized and financed the Soirees de Paris. He rented the Cigale, a famous music hall in Montmartre, and engaged all the best talents of Paris to write music, dance, and paint scenery for him...Picasso, Ernst, Picabia, Chirico and Miro did decors for him. It was exciting because the artists collaborated with the Comte de Beaumont instead of the Russian Ballet."¹⁶² Guggenheim's statement reveals that Surrealist artists appealed to her much earlier than she later admits. At this time, in 1924, in Paris it was becoming common for avant-garde

¹⁶⁰ Melvin P. Lader, "Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-garde, 1942-1947. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, Lader's dissertation argues this point specifically.

¹⁶¹ Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski *Surrealism against the Current: Tracts and Declarations*, ed. and trans Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski (London: Pluto Press, 2001) 4. "Symbolically' the surrealists sought out unpretentious cafes in which to gather, generally on the right bank, well away from areas where other intellectuals traditionally congregated. The Dada and later surrealist 'headquarters' was the Certa, in the Passage de L'Opera, which, being in the centre of the Paris business and shopping centers, was frequented by a nondescript crows of office workers, shoppers, and strollers. If the café had an enormous importance in the daily life of the surrealist it was in a different way to those of other Parisian intellectuals. The surrealist café was not primarily a place for intellectual discussion but a place of encounter. Surrealists sought out places where clientele would be congenial, comprising preferably a mixed bad of the working class, the dispossessed and various marginals."

¹⁶² Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 51.

artists, especially the Surrealists, to design stage sets for various modes of artistic performances. For example, Miro collaborated with Ernst, and designed the stage backdrops for *Romeo and Juliet* in 1926, and de Chirico designed both the stage designs and the costumes for *La Bal*, in 1929 (Figs. 39-40).¹⁶³ Surrealism was a conflicted movement from the beginning, although Surrealism is most associated with the expanded interdisciplinary and collaborative strategies that shifted the movement in the 1930s. It was shortly after the *First Manifesto of Surrealism* that members of the movement began expanding their visual style beyond painting. It is likely that the experimental visual strategies of Surrealism attracted Guggenheim and continued to influence her enterprise throughout her life.

Paris was also the first city in which Guggenheim began to use her home as a gathering place for avant-garde circles, possibly following the example of Gertrude Stein.¹⁶⁴ It is unlikely Guggenheim visited Gertrude Stein's house in Paris, though it is likely that she was aware of Gertrude Stein's salons. Art journalist Valerie Bougault has recognized the importance of Stein's home, writing "Visitors came as if to a museum."¹⁶⁵ and was an "obligatory port of call for young American art lovers that had recently arrived in Paris."¹⁶⁶ Stein was an American that had been living in Paris since 1904, and collected modern art which was displayed alongside various antiquities, and functioned as a salon. Stein's salon also played host to Saturday night gatherings which included

¹⁶³ Alexander Klar, Thimo te Duits, and Ghislaine Wood "Object Enties" in *Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design*, ed. Ghislaine Wood (London: V&A Publications, 2007) 248-252.

¹⁶⁴ In 1922, Guggenheim married the writer and artists, Laurence Vail. Their apartment on the Boulevard St. Germain. In his memoir, Julien Levy also recalls attending these parties. See also Julien Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1977)

¹⁶⁵ See Valérie Bougault, *Paris Montparnasse: The Heyday of Modern Art 1910-1940*, ed. Jean-Claude Dubost (Paris: Terrail, 1997)

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

artists, writers, musicians, and intellectuals. Guggenheim writes in her memoir: “We took an apartment on the Boulevard Saint-Germain...We had fantastic Bohemian parties in this flat.”¹⁶⁷ Although ‘Bohemian parties’ is not the best description of what Guggenheim’s parties were like, we now know that Guggenheim’s parties in Paris were frequently attended by various avant-gardists such as Man Ray, James Joyce, and etc. Stein’s treatment of her house as a museum remained resonant for Guggenheim and influential later to Guggenheim’s approach to opening her house to the public when she moved her collection to Venice in 1951.

Art of This Century was not the first time in which Guggenheim established her lifelong dedication to promoting and displaying avant-garde art to the public. Four years earlier in London, in 1938, Guggenheim opened an art gallery, Guggenheim Jeune (Figure 41).¹⁶⁸ Guggenheim Jeune, importantly, was direct a predecessor to Art of This Century.¹⁶⁹ The collecting strategies and exhibition methods practiced as director of Guggenheim Jeune served as a nearly identical model for Guggenheim while she directed Art of This Century. Guggenheim Jeune featured exhibitions of surrealism, abstraction, collages, and art by children, similar exhibitions would also be held at Art of This

¹⁶⁷ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 48. Also note that Comte de Beaumont was a known art collector and dealer in Paris at this time.

¹⁶⁸ Guggenheim began planning her gallery shortly after the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Gallery in London which was held from June 11 - July 4, 1936, which had 20,000 visitors. As Lewis Kachur recognized, “[Roland] Penrose remembered that is stirred a lot of publicity. See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001)

¹⁶⁹ The name Guggenheim Jeune was both a pun directed at her uncle Solomon Guggenheim, since the Guggenheim name was now associated with art collecting and he was old in Peggy’s mind at this point. The “Jeune” is also a pun towards the Paris gallery, Bernheim Jeune which was integral in displaying post-Impressionism and Fauvist art. Bernheim Jeune also showed works by Hilla Rebay. Also note that while directing Guggenheim Jeune, Guggenheim began published lavish press releases to advertise her exhibitions. This was a practice that Julien Levy also carried out and that Guggenheim carried out later while directing Art of This Century.

Century. Guggenheim also exhibited several solo shows and group exhibitions of many artists she would continue to feature in Art of This Century. While directing the gallery, Guggenheim simultaneously became an art collector by strategically purchasing one or two works from every exhibition, another practice she continued as director of Art of This Century.¹⁷⁰ Guggenheim also began publishing a colorful press releases and catalogue for her exhibition, another practice carried out later while she directed Art of This Century.¹⁷¹ Guggenheim strategically opened her gallery on 30 Cork Street, next to The Mayor Gallery and The London Gallery, which also displayed avant-garde art styles, including Surrealism. Instead of viewing the galleries as competition, Guggenheim frequently collaborated with the other gallerists, including Roland Penrose and E.L.T. Mesens, the owner and director of the London Gallery. Guggenheim regularly collected and negotiated with Mesens, while Penrose occasionally helped install exhibitions at Guggenheim Jeune.¹⁷² This collaborative effort in promoting and selling of avant-garde art to the public would also be a device Guggenheim utilized while directing Art of This Century.

Although Guggenheim utilized a nearly identical model while directing Art of This Century of Guggenheim Jeune, Guggenheim Jeune does not stand out in the art historical narrative in comparison because Guggenheim Jeune did not feature innovative architectural designs. It is likely that Guggenheim Jeune featured somber architectural

¹⁷⁰ Guggenheim credits Duchamp to this idea. By the time Guggenheim Jeune closed, in the summer of 1939, Guggenheim's collection had about 15 artworks. Note that there was not a strong market for avant-garde art while Guggenheim directed Art of This Century. Also note that the taxes on shipping modern artworks in London were also causing Guggenheim to lose money while she directed Guggenheim Jeune.

¹⁷¹ This may have been inspired by the *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme*, which was published by André Breton and Paul Eluard in conjunction with the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme in 1938.

¹⁷² Penrose and Mesens were among several figures in London that were promoting Surrealism. There were several Surrealist publications in London during this time, which allowed for art and literature to be more integrated than in the United States.

designs. This is assumed because there are no pictures in circulation of Guggenheim Jeune, and Guggenheim kept extensive scrapbooks of press clippings, catalogues, and ephemera.¹⁷³ This has contributed to Art of This Century's higher prominence in the art historical narrative, and although Art of This Century had a short life-span, Guggenheim Jeune's was even shorter, closing after only a little over a year. In an interview with Virginia Dortch Guggenheim refers to the gallery "as a social success but a financial failure."¹⁷⁴ This reflects the press attention that avant-garde art received, but lack of a market for avant-garde art in London in the late 1930s. While Guggenheim recognized that she did not profit from the gallery, it is important to recognize that she was not forced to close Guggenheim Jeune, nor was it seen as a complete failure.¹⁷⁵ After deciding to close her gallery in June 1939 Guggenheim writes in her memoir, "I felt that if I were losing that much money, I might as well spend a lot more and do something more worthwhile."¹⁷⁶ This reflects the various ideas for Guggenheim's next string of projects, which includes both collecting art and planning a to open a museum of modern art.¹⁷⁷

While directing Guggenheim Jeune, Guggenheim started following the Museum

¹⁷³ Reproduced in Angelica Zander Rudenstine, *Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice* (New York: Abrams, 1985)

¹⁷⁴ Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan, Bruno Alfieri, 1994) 11.

¹⁷⁵ The amount of money Guggenheim lost during the first year of her gallery is small compared to her recent inheritance of \$500,000. This shows that she was thinking critically about how best to spend her inheritance through promoting the avant-garde Guggenheim also faced many difficulties in planning her exhibitions, many of the works were shipped from France and in London at the time, the Tate Gallery director, J.B. Manson had the authority to charge an arbitrary customs fee based on what his decision of what is considered to be art, complicating the organizing of avant-garde art exhibitions.

¹⁷⁶ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 142.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 142. "It seemed stupid to go on with the gallery, which was suffering a loss of about six hundred pounds a year."

of Modern Art's model.¹⁷⁸ In her memoir Guggenheim reveals that she began planning to open a museum in March of 1939, asking Herbert Read, art theorist and critic, who was the editor of Burlington Magazine in 1939, whom Guggenheim met through her gallery, to be the founding director of her museum.¹⁷⁹ Guggenheim writes in her memoir that "We were going to New York after the opening of the museum to raise money and to study the workings of the Museum of Modern Art."¹⁸⁰ Guggenheim reveals that she was closely following the Museum of Modern Art's model while planning her museum in London. In the announcement of the Guggenheim Jeune's closing, Guggenheim's next project, which was to open a museum of modern art in London, was announced in the same press statement that her next project, which was to open a museum of modern art in London. This is the first time that Guggenheim's institutional interest is publicly announced. The *Sunday Times* reporter writes in the article "London has lagged behind New York in providing a permanent exhibition centre for modern art. This state of affairs is shortly to be remedied. At a time when New York's well-known Museum of Modern Art is opening in a bigger and better building comes news that a similar museum is to be established in London. The promoters of this scheme are Herbert Read and Mrs. Peggy Guggenheim"¹⁸¹ The mission statement of Read and Guggenheim's museum planned to open in the fall of 1939 is then announced. The *Sunday Times* reporter writes that "the new museum, will not be limited in its scope by any narrow definition of modern art,

¹⁷⁸ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 196.

¹⁷⁹ Guggenheim likely chose Read over Duchamp because she was hoping Read would provide her with connections around the London art world to help fund and organize temporary exhibitions.

¹⁸⁰ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of this Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 198.

¹⁸¹ -- *Sunday Times* (21 May 1939). Reproduced in Angelica Zander Rudenstine, *Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice* (New York: Abrams, 1985) 759.

though special attention is to be paid to those movements that have grown out of Cubism. Nor will it necessarily confine itself to painting, but will aim at showing the interrelation of all the modern arts, including architecture, sculpture, and music. The basis of its activities will be educational in the widest sense of the word. With this new view a permanent collection is to be formed as a background for temporary exhibitions of a special nature, as well as for a regular program of lectures, recitals, and concerts.”¹⁸² This mission statement is strikingly similar to the Museum of Modern Art which also took an expansive view of the arts and was focused on educating the public, and had international resonance for not only Guggenheim, but also to anyone promoting modernism.¹⁸³ This is also a reflection of Guggenheim’s devotion to making art accessible to the public and her inspiration from the experimental interdisciplinary approach of the Museum of Modern Art.

The mission statement for Guggenheim and Read’s modern museum was likely inspired by Alfred H. Barr Jr., the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, whose example Guggenheim closely followed (Figure 42). In 1939, when the new building was unveiled, and in an interview with Edward Alden Jewell of the New York Times, Barr said that the Museum of Modern Art is “a laboratory; in its experiments the public is invited to participate. The museum’s photography and motion-picture departments both participate, as does, in an especially impressive way the department

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Although Guggenheim and Read visited the Museum of Modern Art, New York around this time – it is important to recognize that the Museum of Modern Art, New York was receiving international press coverage at this time because of the opening of the new building and the tenth anniversary. See *Art in Our Time: A Chronicle of the Museum of Modern Art*, ed. Harriet S. Bee and Michelle Elligott (New York: Museum of Modern Art, New York Publications, 2004)

concerned with architecture, housing, and industrial design.”¹⁸⁴ Barr would later become a close advisor to Guggenheim soon after her return to New York and while she directed *Art of This Century*. In the foreword to the catalogue *Art of This Century* Guggenheim writes, “I wish especially to acknowledge my indebtedness to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., whose work has been my great inspiration”¹⁸⁵ Guggenheim met Barr shortly after her arrival to New York, in her memoir she writes, “I heard a great deal about Barr from Nellie van Doesburg and other people. His books on modern art had been my Bible for years, so I was naturally longing to meet him.”¹⁸⁶ There is further evidence of Guggenheim’s inspiration from the Museum of Modern Art and Barr, as art historian Susan Davidson recognized that “once she [Guggenheim] had the idea of the museum she went to New York specifically to see the modern art museums and the Worlds Fair.”¹⁸⁷ This provides evidence that Guggenheim’s institutional aspirations began years before *Art of This Century* opened, and was greatly influenced and inspired by Barr and the Museum of Modern Art.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Edward Alden Jewell, “Museum of Modern Art looks Ahead: Tenth Anniversary Exhibition ‘Art in Our Time’ Celebrates Rounding out of a Decade – The New Building Opened Calder Mobiles” *New York Times* (4 May 1939)

¹⁸⁵ *Art of This Century*. (New York: Arno Press, 1942) 9. Arno series of contemporary art, No. 18. This is a reprint edition, published as an exact reproduction from the 1942 first edition of printing. For the first edition, 2,500 copies were printed.

¹⁸⁶ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 259.

¹⁸⁷ Susan Davidson, “Focusing an Instinct: The Collecting of Peggy Guggenheim” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 57. In the 1939 New York Worlds Fair, Julien Levy and Salvador initially collaborated on the Birth of Venus Pavilion – which initially was an attempt to popularize Surrealism to the masses. See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001)

¹⁸⁸ Herbert Read also closely follows Barr’s model for the Museum of Modern Art writing “At the present I cannot think of anything better than the Museum of Modern Art. There objections to words like “Contemporary” (which is too wide in its implications) and “Living” (which is too American) and the alternative to Museum (Institute, Centre, etc) are not attractive.” This is reflective of the ongoing dialogue in the twentieth century over categorizing avant-garde spaces. See Susan Davidson, “Focusing an Instinct:

Peggy Guggenheim shared similar institutional aspirations with her uncle Solomon R. Guggenheim (1861-1949), who also was promoting avant-garde art while Peggy directed Guggenheim Jeune (Figure 43). Peggy Guggenheim followed her uncle Solomon R. Guggenheim's various museum projects in New York. Solomon Guggenheim had also been promoting modern art in New York through establishing the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation on June 25, 1937. The Solomon R. Guggenheim foundation was made "as an educational corporation for the mental or mental health or mental improvement of men and women, the promotion and encouragement of art and education in art and the enlightenment of the public, especially in the field of art."¹⁸⁹ The education concern was reflected later in Guggenheim's approach while directing *Art of This Century*. By 1937, Solomon Guggenheim hired Hilla Rebay, German artist and theorist as the curator for the foundation (Figure 44). Though Solomon Guggenheim had been collecting artworks since the 1890s, he collected primarily old masters.¹⁹⁰ In 1927, the same year Solomon Guggenheim met Rebay, she began to advise him on collecting modern art. While planning to open a museum, Solomon used several suites he owned in the Plaza Hotel in New York to display his collection, and opened to a very limited public (Figure 45). The Guggenheim family historian ... writes, "Once a week they

The Collecting of Peggy Guggenheim" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004)

¹⁸⁹ Karole Vail, "A Museum in the Making: Two Artists and Their Patron – Hilla Rebay, Rudolph Bauer, and Solomon R. Guggenheim" in *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009). "Absolute Charter of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Foundation" June 25, 1937 by the Regents of the University of the State of New York.

¹⁹⁰ See *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009). Solomon Guggenheim primarily collected French Barbizon school, landscapes, Audobon prints, and manuscript illuminations. Also in 1927 when Solomon started collecting non-objective painting Solomon Guggenheim followed Rebay's advise and sold his initial collection of old masters sometime in the late 1930s and made \$340,000. By the time the Museum of Non-Objective Painting opened, there were 600 artworks in the collection.

[Solomon and Rebay] opened their collection to viewers who applied for admission.”¹⁹¹ This implies that Solomon Guggenheim would have likely filtered the visitors to include upper class society figures and the cultural elite. A New York Times article confirms the exclusive access of the Plaza Hotel suites. Reporter Thomas C. Linn writes, “Two large groups of students in composition and design from the Teachers College, Columbia University have attended these evening discussions, as have students from Hunter College, Cooper Unions, the New York Art Students League, and the New York School of Fine and Applied Art.”¹⁹² Peggy Guggenheim further clarifies this by writing in her memoir: “there existed in the Plaza Hotel a really fine collection of modern paintings owned by my uncle, Solomon Guggenheim, but accessible to the public only by special invitation.”¹⁹³ Since Solomon’s Plaza Hotel collection was seen by such an exclusive ‘public’, it is likely that Peggy Guggenheim was inspired to reach a more expansive public while directing *Art of This Century*.¹⁹⁴

Plans for a museum were also announced in the press release for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting* was a precedent for featuring avant-garde art in an innovative setting (Figs. 46-47). Nearly two years after the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was inaugurated, *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting* opened on June 1, 1939, on East 54th Street in New York, with Hilla Rebay as

¹⁹¹ Irwin Unger and Debi Unger, *The Guggenheims: A Family History* (Harper Collins ebooks, 2005) 62.

¹⁹² Thomas C. Linn “Guggenheim’s Art Collection on Exhibition at His Home: 350 Paintings, Mostly of an Objective Approach Leading to Non-Objectivity; On View” *New York Times* (August 13, 1939)

¹⁹³ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch), 251.

¹⁹⁴ It was also at this time, in the 1937-8, that Solomon Guggenheim’s collection travelled outside of New York for several exhibitions, while he planned the opening of his museum. Guggenheim and Rebay attended and purchased works from the 1937 Exhibition of Degenerate Art, in Munich, Germany.

the founding director¹⁹⁵ William Muschenheim, and American modernist architect was commissioned to design the interior of the museum and make minor changes to the exterior of the building, which was designed by the innovative modern architectural firm Cross & Cross. Muschenheim studied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, which followed the Bauhaus tradition.¹⁹⁶ Although Muschenheim designed an innovative setting, he primarily followed Rebay's specific instructions in his designs. The Museum of Non-Objective Painting, featured paintings, most placed in large silver framed and installed below eye level on thick, grey velour pleated wall panels. The floor was grey carpet and there were oversized velvet fabric tufted ottomans for seating. This is reflective of the contemplative setting that Rebay desired that Muschenheim followed, Rebay insisted on the below eye level installation of paintings so they would ideally be viewed while seated (Figure 33).¹⁹⁷ The mission of the Museum of Non-Objective Painting was to "deed contemplation of the spiritual and utopian aspects of non-objective art."¹⁹⁸ The integration of music and mission to reach a general public is similar to Peggy Guggenheim's approach as director of her enterprise. Peggy Guggenheim visited The Museum of Non-Objective Painting upon her arrival in New York in the summer of 1941 with Max Ernst: "We went to see my uncle's museum. It really was a joke."¹⁹⁹ Music by Bach and Beethoven played, reflecting Rebay's wish that: "all elements were meant to

¹⁹⁵ Don Quaintance, "Illustrated Architectural History" in *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009), 160.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 162.

¹⁹⁷ Don Quaintance, "Erecting the Temple of Non-Objectivity: The Architectural Infancy of the Guggenheim Museum" in *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009) 179-223.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of this Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 251.

enable the general public to ‘live’ with these works.”²⁰⁰ Peggy Guggenheim was distracted by this experience, writing in her memoir: “From the walls boomed forth music by Bach—a rather weird contrast.”²⁰¹ Guggenheim concludes her opinion writing, “The museum was a beautiful little building completely wasted in this atrocious manner.”²⁰² Although Peggy Guggenheim found the music distracting, she importantly compliments the Museum of Non-Objective Painting’s architectural designs. The exterior was strikingly similar to Bauhaus and De Stijl architectural, and likely inspired her choice to commission an avant-garde architect to design Art of This Century.

The Museum of Non-Objective Painting and its innovative architectural designs were generally well reviewed by critics, likely making Peggy Guggenheim even more aware of the importance of innovative architectural designs to display art.²⁰³ Art critic Emily Genauer writes, “They’re [the paintings] immensely improved by a setting that’s so exhilarating”²⁰⁴ Genauer reflects the increasing importance being placed on innovative museum architectural settings. The inaugural exhibition of the Museum of Non-Objective Painting was titled the “Art of Tomorrow”, which was inspired of the World Fair theme of 1939 “The World of Tomorrow” held in New York, and is reflective of the larger trend of borrowing language from the Worlds Fair.²⁰⁵ For example, the Museum of Modern Art

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Karole Vail, “A Museum in the Making: Two Artists and Their Patron – Hilla Rebay, Rudolph Bauer, and Solomon R. Guggenheim” in *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009) 47-48.

²⁰⁴ Emily Genauer, “The Art of Tomorrow” New York World-Telegram (2 June 1939). Republished in *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009) 55.

²⁰⁵ *Art in Our Time: Tenth Anniversary Exhibition* was the title of the Museum of Modern Art, New York exhibition held in conjunction with the 1939 Worlds Fair. Solomon and Rebay considered displaying their

held its tenth anniversary exhibition titled “Art in Our Time: Tenth Anniversary Exhibition” in conjunction with the opening of its new modern building designed by architects Edward Durell Stone and Philip Goodwin Stone and the Worlds Fair of 1939. The new building deviated from the Beaux-Arts style museum tradition of the nineteenth century. Peggy Guggenheim certainly played at this word choice with *Art of This Century* which served as the name of both her catalogue and the gallery. Both Solomon and Guggenheim and Peggy Guggenheim reflected the burgeoning trend of modern art or avant-garde institutions Through the Museum of Non-Objective Painting and *Art of This Century*.

While planning Guggenheim Jeune, in 1937, Guggenheim first began to collaborate with her most influential advisor, Marcel Duchamp, whose ideas were integral to several enterprises of early promoters of the avant-garde.²⁰⁶ In an interview Guggenheim said that Duchamp was “the greatest influence of my life.”²⁰⁷ The two had met in 1923 in Paris.²⁰⁸ Duchamp made invaluable contributions in the development of avant-garde art during the twentieth century, and as a frequent international traveler, he is credited with having facilitated the international transmission of the avant-garde. Duchamp was also influential in Guggenheim’s collecting strategies and education of modern art while she planned Guggenheim Jeune. In her memoir Guggenheim writes, “...he taught me the difference between Surrealism, Cubism, and abstract art. Then he

works at the Worlds Fair in 1939.

²⁰⁶ Art historians such as Philip Rylands, Susan Davidson, and many other have listed Duchamp as Guggenheim’s most influential advisor.

²⁰⁷ Interview with Guggenheim and Susan Heller Anderson, published in the *New York Times* (April 1975)

²⁰⁸ Guggenheim and Duchamp met through Mary Reynolds, see Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 28. Reynold’s importance as an avant-garde book binder has been recently recognized by scholars. See Susan Glover Goldlewski “Warm Ashes: The Life and Career of Mary Reynolds” *The Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Mary Reynolds and the Spirit of Surrealism (1996), 102-129, 196.

introduced me to all the artists. They all adored him and I was well received wherever I went. He planned shows for me and gave me lots of advice.”²⁰⁹ Duchamp remained an advisor to Guggenheim and was influential throughout Guggenheim’s life. Duchamp helped install the opening exhibition for Guggenheim Jeune, on January 24, 1938, Guggenheim Jeune opened with an “Exhibition of Drawings, also Furniture, designed for “Les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde” by Jean Cocteau.”²¹⁰ Cocteau was one of the many artists also featured later in *Art of This Century*.

While finalizing Guggenheim Jeune with Duchamp, Guggenheim closely witnessed the planning of the exhibition Duchamp was organizing, the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme in 1938 in Paris (Figs. 48-50). The exhibition was held at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts in Paris (held from January 24 - February 22 of 1938) and was a pivotal moment for the avant-garde movement. The Paris Exposition importantly was the first time the Surrealists extended their visual style into an exhibition environment with innovative installation designs. The Paris Exposition installation was a precedent for *First Papers*. As art historian Lewis Kachur recognized, the exhibition marks when “The Surrealists shifted their energies towards curating subjective exhibitions.”²¹¹ Like *First Papers*, the exhibition was co-organized by Duchamp and André Breton, who collaborated with Surrealist artists and writers with the mission of creating a fantastic exhibition environment and simultaneously historicizing the

²⁰⁹ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005)

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²¹⁰ Angelica Zander Rudenstine, *The Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice* (New York: Abrams, 1985)

747.

²¹¹ Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001) 7. “The international exhibition of Surrealism in Paris was immediately a high-water mark for Surrealist exhibition installation.”

movement. The exhibition was accompanied by the publication of the *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme*, published by Paul Eulard and André Breton, and was intended to serve as a catalogue to the exhibition.²¹² Upon entering the Galerie Beaux-Arts the visitor encountered a narrow hallway of sixteen female mannequins, which were provocatively ‘dressed’ or designed by various artists and writers.²¹³ After passing the mannequins, the visitor enters the central and largest space of the exhibition, where Duchamp installed a conceptual predecessor to the *Mile of String*, the *1200 Coal Sacks*, which consisted of burlap bags attached to the ceiling around four beds and a wide variety of multimedia artworks (Figure 38).²¹⁴ The floor was covered in sand and leaves and furniture while various objects by the Surrealists were placed throughout the exhibition space while performer Hélène Vanel danced around a portable heater, which served as one of the only light sources for the exhibition.²¹⁵ Vanels ‘performance’ in a white nightgown caused reporters to draw comparison to hysteria, echoing the Freudian psychoanalysis inspiration of the Surrealists.²¹⁶ Although Guggenheim did not attend the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme Guggenheim said in an interview, “I did not go to the vernissage of the

²¹² Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001) 24. The Wildenstein Firm sponsored the exhibition, the Wildenstein family owned the Galerie des Beaux Arts.

²¹³ Andre Masson’s mannequin is the most iconic and received more attention from the press than the other mannequins. “Mannequin Street” was one of the most photographed parts of the exhibition, it was covered by *Vogue*. See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001) 38. Rose Sélavy, Marcel Duchamp’s female alter ego also takes form in a mannequin by Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp later “utilized a headless mannequin in the bookstore window to advertise Breton’s *Arcane 17* in 1945, which was featured in Brenanto’s bookshop.

²¹⁴ The coal sack motif would later appear all over in Paris that year, specifically in the realm of fashion, where models were photographed in front of coal sacks around the Place de la Concorde and the Place Vendôme, See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001) 73.

²¹⁵ Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001) 86. The floor was installed by artist Woolfgang Paalen.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 88.

Exposition Internationale du Surrealisme, at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts. But while it was under construction in January 1938, I went there every day with Marcel.”²¹⁷ She explains why she did not attend the Exposition, “I had to go back to London because my gallery, Guggenheim Jeune, opened a few days later.”²¹⁸ Guggenheim’s statement reflects her burgeoning interest in not only Surrealism but also the Surrealist strategy of innovative installation design, and the inclusion of multimedia artworks into the exhibition space.

The Internationale Exposition du Surréalisme received international press coverage accompanied by black and white photographs that presented the Surrealists’ innovative display methods to a broad public for the first time. The Paris Exposition was covered in the press extensively, and was featured in *Life*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, and several other publications. Guggenheim closely followed the press coverage of the Paris exhibition from London. The extensive, international press coverage of the Paris exhibition featured black and white photographs of the installation. Through the Paris Exposition of Surrealism Guggenheim became aware of the importance of reaching an extensive audience through black and white photography. Like the Paris Exposition, Art of this Century would also reach a broad audience and its circulation would be facilitated by reproductions in newspapers -- thus, distinctive black and white images of the galleries were key. The installation of Exposition likely inspired Guggenheim to include innovative installation design later in Art of This Century.²¹⁹ As art historian Lewis

²¹⁷ Interview with Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994) 10. Both Guggenheim and Duchamp left for London together before the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme. For Guggenheim Jeune’s exhibition, Duchamp hung the Cocteau drawings for the inaugural show of Guggenheim Jeune.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 10

²¹⁹ Guggenheim saw the Parisian Exposition of 1937, which borrowed several motifs from the Surrealists exhibitions previously held in Paris. See Susan Davidson, “Focusing an Instinct: The Collecting of Peggy

Kachur recognized: “The Surrealist displays do have a two-dimensional afterlife in photo-documentation, of a type now familiar after three decades of site specific installation sculpture.”²²⁰ Guggenheim certainly understood how important it was for Art of This Century to have a legacy in black and white photography.

Through Art of This Century, Guggenheim utilized her role as an international liaison between the European and American avant-gardes. Guggenheim was fluent in both French and Italian, making her a crucial figure in communicating between the Europeans and Americans.²²¹ The European artists that had emigrated to the United States in 1940-42 primarily spoke French; André Breton is notorious for allegedly refusing to learn English. As art historian Isabelle Devraux has recognized, “less than 30% of the American population at that time had any knowledge of French.”²²² And that “Few Americans spoke French.”²²³ This importantly draws attention the point that the majority of the American public would not have been able to communicate with the European avant-garde artists, making Guggenheim’s bilinguality crucial in communicating European avant-garde ideas in Art of This Century. In her memoir Guggenheim writes that she translated for Max Ernst for reporters after their arrival in New York.²²⁴ Robert Motherwell, who was fluent in French, provided great insight into

Guggenheim” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 54.

²²⁰ Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001) 187.

²²¹ Alfred Barr’s wife Margaret Barr was also a crucial multi-lingual liaison, during this time. She helped communicate between the surrealists when the two visited France while Barr planned Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism in 1936.

²²² Isabelle Devraux, “Introduction” in *Surrealism: USA* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publications, 2005), 16.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 16. Devraux writes that Motherwell was the exception to her assertion that few Americans spoke French.

²²⁴ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005)

the dynamics of interacting with the European avant-garde artists in New York in an interview saying: “People nowadays have very little sense of how little intermingling there was...Everybody now knows that the European artists in exile were here during the war and they all assume that these artists were everywhere and the everybody saw them. It wasn’t that at all. The Europeans mainly saw the Museum of Modern Art and society people.”²²⁵ Motherwell reflects the importance of avant-garde spaces such as Art of This Century and figures such as Peggy Guggenheim that spoke English as well as French to communicate avant-garde ideas to young American artists. Art of This Century would also serve as a setting for similar interactions and gatherings that took place in the Guggenheim-Ernst townhome and in Paris, but would create more of an art historical impact as it became a center for little-known American artists to interact with the more established European avant-garde while displaying art to the public. Art of This Century would extend these interactions further in that it would also be an inspirational environment to young future gallerists and curators such as Fred Licht, Leo Castelli, and others.²²⁶

Art of This Century was the culmination of Guggenheim’s institutional aspirations, which began in Europe. After Guggenheim closed Guggenheim Jeune, she was eagerly awaiting her next avant-garde endeavor from 1939 to 1942. After the modern

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²²⁵ Melvin P. Lader, “Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu and the American Avant-garde, 1942-1947” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, 77.

²²⁶ Peggy Guggenheim played an important role as a liaison to help finance artists emigrating to the United States. The Museum of Modern Art, New York was also crucial in helping European artists emigrate to the United States. Roberto Matta also opened up his studio to the young American artists, and played an important role in the development of the New York School. Stanley William Hayter’s studio was also an important contributor to this artistic transmission. See the Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, The Museum of Modern Art. See also Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997)

art museum project in London she started with Herbert Read fell through, Guggenheim shifted her energy solely towards collecting. From January – June 1940, Guggenheim vastly expanded her collection, a time Guggenheim refers to as when she collected “picture a day.”²²⁷ When Guggenheim began to collect, she relied heavily on advice from Duchamp, Nellie van Doesburg, and Herbert Read. During this time, she continued to hope to establish a museum to feature her collection, but World War II made this impossible. While taking refuge in southern France, Guggenheim also briefly had the idea of creating an artist’s colony there.²²⁸ Guggenheim writes in her memoir: “I would build my collection with works of art from artists faced with the onslaught of war in exchange for providing them food and shelter”²²⁹ This further reveals that Guggenheim had been actively engaging in ideas about various institutions, galleries, and avant-garde spaces. The last project she began in France was publishing a catalogue of her collection, which was her greatest achievement up to this point, in 1941. The catalogue project, which also began in 1941 was intended to serve as a guide to her collection once it could be exhibited. Although forced to pause this project after the Nazi occupation of France, and prepare to move back to New York, Guggenheim and her collection’s mobility would play a key role to the development of her enterprise in the following months, and the various institutional ideas that she began in Europe would be realized in New York,

²²⁷ “Picture a Day” is a chapter title in *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict*, and is a phrase she repeats throughout her life to describe this time of collecting.

²²⁸ This museum project was the shortest lived of all the projects Guggenheim started during this time. Guggenheim had the intent of hiring an avant-garde, De Stijl architect to design her museum, a which was to be in the property she bought in the Place Vendome in Paris. Part of why this project was so short lived is because the property she purchased in the Place Vendome would have soon been taken by the Nazi’s since the property was owned by Guggenheim, who was Jewish. Also interestingly, Duchamp offered to use the glass door he designed from Andre Breton’s gallery Gravidia for her potential museum in Paris.

²²⁹ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 205.

through Art of This Century.

While Guggenheim had originally intended to open a museum, she recognized the advantages and freedom of opening a space that would exhibit her permanent collection to the public, while also serving as a commercial gallery.²³⁰ In a letter to Djuna Barnes, Guggenheim wrote that she thought the word museum was too snobby of a word, revealing that she was interested in creating a space that was accessible to all forms of the public. Shortly after Guggenheim's arrival in New York on July 14, 1941 -- her collection had arrived safely shortly before her thanks to the Musée de Grenoble, Guggenheim began strategically planning for the unveiling of her personal collection of avant-garde art to the public.²³¹ Although Guggenheim considered various other

²³⁰ Guggenheim's account, Bernard Reis advised Guggenheim to label Art of This Century officially as a gallery, so that it could be billed for tax purposes.

²³¹ Guggenheim took an airplane with Max Ernst, Laurence Vail, Kay Boyle, the four Vail children and a friend of Peegen's. "The minute we landed Max was whisked away and imprisoned. I spent the next three days from nine until five on the Island waiting to be called as a witness in Max's hearing... Luckily Julien Levy came out the first two days and helped me while away the dreary hours. I had not seen him for years and he had very much changed during that time, He was quite fascinating and wonderful company. He had greatly improved since the days when, as a young man in Paris, he had married Mina Loy's oldest daughter. From him I found out all about America." 242 "Ernst was refused admission into the country. He would have to be clearly by immigration officials on Ellis Island the next day...Peggy asked Julien Levy, the art dealer who first showed Ernst in America, to join her, in case there was need for him to testify on Ernst's behalf."..."Alfred Barr wrote a letter of recommendation outlining Ernst's importance as a painter and urging his admission into the country." 245 "Various lawyers, Peggy, representatives of American Smelting and Refining, Julien Ley, and museum trustees were waiting in a forbidden chamber to testify on Ernst's behalf. See Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andrel Deutsch, 2005) 245-246. Giorgio Joyce, son of James Joyce and husband of longtime friend Helen Fleishman (whom she met at Sunwise Turn and was previous married to Leon Fleishman, and newly married to Giorgio Joyce) helped Guggenheim transport her collection specifically. He had quickly arranged storage with Peegen's former teacher, Maria Jolas (who was an important literary translator). Jolas had rented a chateau at La Chapelle, a hamlet near Saint-Gerand-Le-Puy in the Allier. Six crates arrived there in the first weeks of June 1940 and were placed in a dry freezer of the chateau's grounds. Davidson 64. One of van Doesburg's old friends, the director of the Musee Grenoble, Andry-Farcy agreed to take Peggy's six cases of art on long term storage provided that he keep its whereabouts a secret. The Parisian shipping agency, Lefebvre-Foinet with whom she had worked with in London offered help shipping her collection safely to America. The collection would be re-exported to America and labeled as household goods. The collection arrived four months after her arrival in New York. See Susan Davidson "Focusing an Instinct: The Collecting of Peggy Guggenheim" in *Peggy Guggenheim and Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 66.

locations in the United States, New York proved to be an ideal environment for her gallery, since it was strengthened in the 1940s by the growing population of European artists emigrating to the city. Although Guggenheim was not initially settled on New York as the setting to display her collection, she eventually chose New York once she realized that “to create a true center for art and artists it was necessary for there to be an art public.”²³² Guggenheim was aware of the power of the platform of New York, and anticipated that New York was on the cusp of being the new international art center.

Art of This Century played an integral role in the development of new art styles through its innovative temporary exhibition program, which was dedicated to exhibiting young, unknown artists (Figure 40). The second exhibition held in Art of This Century was the first of many groundbreaking exhibitions that took place in the Daylight Gallery of Art of This Century. The *Exhibition by 31 Women* was held from January 5 - February 1943. In agreement with Marcel Duchamp’s idea, Guggenheim held a group exhibition dedicated only to women artists, as Guggenheim recognized that women artists were underrepresented in the art historical narrative. *31 Women* was juried by Breton, Duchamp, Max and Jimmy Ernst, Putzel, James Thrall Soby, James Johnson Sweeney, and Guggenheim among others.²³³ Shortly after *31 Women* closed, another influential exhibition opened. The *Spring Salon for Young Artists* was held From May 18 - June 1943, and ended the first exhibition season of Art of This Century. This was another

²³² Peggy, Max Ernst, and Peegen went on a cross country road trip in search of a settling for her gallery. Her sister Hazel was now living in Santa Monica, California. “One reason I had come west was to visit Arensberg’s collection of modern art. It was probably one of the finest in the world. Every room of his funny old Victorian house was crammed with magnificent paintings. Even the corridors and the bathrooms were like the best rooms of a museum.” Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of this Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 255-256.

²³³ Guggenheim collaborated with Alfred Barr in the planning of the exhibition, with Barr’s help getting a loan from the Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim was able to feature Meret Oppenheim’s *Object* in the *Exhibition by 31 Women*. See Alfred H. Barr Jr. Papers, the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

juried exhibition, which included Piet Mondrian, Duchamp, James Thrall Soby, James Johnson Sweeney, Putzel, and Guggenheim. Artists such as Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, William Baziotes, and Irene Rice Piera stood out to critics. Although Guggenheim hosted another notable juried exhibition of only women artists, *The Women*, it is important to recognize that women artists were not excluded from the juried salon exhibitions held at Art of This Century. Art of This Century's temporary exhibition program assisted in launching the careers of many artists that would go on to figure prominently in the New York art world.

Jackson Pollock's career was significantly shaped through both the innovative exhibition program of Art of This Century and Guggenheim's patronage. Guggenheim began to give monthly stipends of \$150 to Pollock shortly after the Spring Salon for Young Artists closed in July 1943.²³⁴ Art historian and director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Philip Rylands has importantly recognized that Guggenheim's monthly stipends allowed Pollock to quit his job as a custodian at her uncle Solomon's Museum of Non-Objective Art and focus solely on his own career. Rylands also recognized that, "the first year of his contract with Art of This Century was the most productive in Pollock's life up to that point - sales were becoming more frequent."²³⁵ This provides evidence that Guggenheim's patronage was a catalyst for Pollock's maturity as an artist. It should be clarified here that Pollock's works did not begin to sell for such inflated prices until the 1960s, and that when Guggenheim was representing Pollock, his works typically sold for \$200-\$600. The first solo exhibition by Pollock was held from November 9 - 27, 1943,

²³⁴ Philip Rylands, "The Master and Marguerite" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 26.

²³⁵ Ibid., 23

shortly after the Spring Salon for Young Artists. Jackson Pollock: First Exhibition- Paintings and Drawings is now recognized by art historian Jasper Sharp as one of the landmark exhibitions of twentieth century art.²³⁶ Art of This Century featured more solo exhibitions of Pollock than any other young American artist during its exhibition program, and was integral to promoting Pollock. At the same time Guggenheim began providing Pollock with monthly stipends, in the summer of 1943, she also commissioned him to design a painting for the entrance hall of her new apartment.²³⁷ The result was *Mural*, and as art historian Francis V. O’Conner has recognized, “Pollock’s redefining achievement in *Mural* was to take all these precedents and influences and fuse them into the first major large-scale, painterly (as opposed to geometric) abstraction created in America” (Figs 52-53).²³⁸ O’Conner reflects how Pollock’s *Mural* was integral to both Pollock’s artistic development and the maturity and development of the New York School.

Guggenheim published her catalogue *Art of This Century: Objects, Drawings, Photographs, Paintings, Sculpture, Collages, 1910 to 1942* in May 1942, before the gallery had its opening, and took a curatorial approach throughout this project. Though Guggenheim began planning her catalogue in 1941 while still in France, New York would be the setting in which the majority of the project would be carried out – having a

²³⁶ Jasper Sharp, “Serving the Future: The Exhibitions at Art of This Century, 1942-1947” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 298.

²³⁷ Guggenheim had recently moved from her townhome on Beekman Place that she shared with Max Ernst following their divorce, and per Marcel Duchamp advised her to ask Pollock to do a commission.

²³⁸ Francis V. O’Conner, “Jackson Pollock’s Mural for Peggy Guggenheim, Its Legend, Documentation, and Redefinition of Wall Paintings” in *The Story of Art of This Century: Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 165

significant effect on the resulting catalogue.²³⁹ In the Foreword to *Art of This Century* Guggenheim writes: “As most things change unexpectedly during the course of their development this catalogue has, to my great surprise, become an anthology of non-realistic art covering the period of 1910-1942. Its limitations are due to the fact that it contains only reproductions of paintings and sculptures owned by me. I do hope that the next edition will be more complete and that I shall be able to acquire several other important works that represent phases of the evolution of this art.”²⁴⁰ Guggenheim’s foreword implies that Guggenheim framed existing scholarship around the specific artworks in her collection, which she intended to be viewed as the best selection of artworks from 1910-1942. Guggenheim’s curatorial approach is further revealed by her collaborations with Andre Breton, Mondrian, Max Ernst and several other artists in this process. In Guggenheim’s memoir she writes: “We [Guggenheim and Breton] included these photographs of their [the artist’s] eyes.” This reflects Guggenheim’s Surrealist sensibility, which ultimately compliments her curatorial approach while making her catalogue. The visual and literary motif of the eye(s) had been part of the Surrealist vocabulary and strategies since Surrealist writer George Bataille published the well-known essay “Eye” in 1929.²⁴¹ Breton importantly provided a text, translated from French to English, presumably by Guggenheim, that emphasized the Surrealist vocabulary of automatism, which was key in facilitating the emergence of Abstract

²³⁹ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005). 263

²⁴⁰ Peggy Guggenheim, “Forward” in *Art of This Century* (New York: Arno Press, 1942), 9

²⁴¹ Georges Bataille, ‘Eye’ originally published in *Documents*, September 1929, reproduced in *The Sources of Surrealism: Art in Context*, ed. Neil Matheson (Burlington, VT.: Lund Humphries Publishing, 2006) 571.

Expressionism.²⁴² The catalogue was published with a bright yellow hard covered accompanied by an illustration by Max Ernst, which was printed on the cover (Figs. 54-55). Guggenheim writes in her memoir: “In the end, the book turned out exceedingly well, being an anthology of modern art rather than a catalogue.”²⁴³ Further revealing that Guggenheim took a curatorial approach while making *Art of This Century*.

The catalogue *Art of This Century* promoted Guggenheim’s collection and advertised her gallery of the same name, while simultaneously functioning as a virtual representation of her collection, and allowed for her collection to reach a wider audience. *Art of This Century* was published by Arno Press in New York in May 1942, with 2,500 copies printed in the first edition. Guggenheim’s motivation to advertise her catalogue it is because she anticipated that it would generate more excitement before *Art of This Century* opened. Art historian and director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Philip Rylands has recognized that Guggenheim lent works to be displayed in a window for Brentano’s Bookstore in June of 1942, where works by Mondrian, Ernst, Kandinsky, Klee, Arp, Moore, and Duchamp’s *Boite* and a Laurence Vail bottle were part of the window display.²⁴⁴ Rylands does not point out that this was also likely an effort on Guggenheim’s behalf to advertise and promote her catalogue *Art of This Century* that had recently been released. In a letter to Barr, Guggenheim wrote, “By the way they

²⁴² See Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 212.

²⁴³ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 262-263.

²⁴⁴ Philip Rylands, “The Master and Marguerite” in *Peggy Guggenheim and Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004)

[works in her collection] are now in Brentano's fifth avenue arcade. Do drop by."²⁴⁵

Guggenheim's utilization of window display is revealing, she views the both design of the window display and her catalogue as a works of art.

Guggenheim utilized Art of This Century as an institutional hybrid. Art of This Century was not just a museum for her private collection or Surrealism, it was also a space to exhibit emerging artists. There was some confusion among the press as to whether Art of This Century was a museum or gallery, and Art of This Century is now understood as a museum-gallery hybrid.²⁴⁶ In her memoir Guggenheim writes about the Museum of Modern Art: "I didn't and never will understand the dynamics of that institution."²⁴⁷ This reveals that Guggenheim was aware of the experimental advantages of a gallery, Guggenheim could plan exhibitions and buy works of art at a much quicker pace with the gallery aspect of Art of This Century. By closely examining the way Art of This Century functioned, it functioned in a way that is much more similar to what Lewis Kachur refers to as an "ideological exhibition space...a company of like-minded avant-gardists."²⁴⁸ Guggenheim was inspired by the type of Surrealist exhibition strategies that began in the mid 1930s, but Art of This Century functioned with a more permanent, museum inspired approach. Art of This Century presented a wide range of artworks to the public, Guggenheim made it clear in the press release for Art of This Century that she intended for the space to function experimentally: "Miss Guggenheim hopes that Art of

²⁴⁵ Alfred H. Barr Jr. Papers, the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Letter from Guggenheim to Barr, Alfred H. Barr Jr.'s advised Guggenheim in his response, "I don't think it would cheapen your enterprise if you got a window at Bonwit Teller or Saks."

²⁴⁶ Many reporters refer to Art of This Century as a museum or gallery, few such as Edward Alden Jewell of the New York Times recognized the hybrid nature of Art of This Century

²⁴⁷ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of this Century, Confessions of An Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 250.

²⁴⁸ Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dali, and Surrealist Exhibition Installation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001) 4.

This Century will become a center where artists will be welcome and where they can feel that they are cooperating in establishing a research laboratory for new ideas... The undertaking will serve its purpose only if it succeeds in serving the future instead of recording the past.”²⁴⁹ This reflects Guggenheim’s interest in serving the public through an institution, and the choice to use the word “center” instead of “museum” or “gallery” reveals her interdisciplinary approach as director of Art of This Century.²⁵⁰ Guggenheim advantageously took advantage of the of the word ‘center’ to describe Art of This Century. Guggenheim utilized Art of This Century as an experimental, interdisciplinary “center” to serve the public and promote the avant-garde. “Center” implies that Art of This Century is also a space to exchange ideas, rather than a museum or gallery that is solely focused on the display of objects. Surrealism is inherently interdisciplinary, and inherently collaborative, which is why Guggenheim’s choice of a ‘center’ associates Art of This Century and Guggenheim with Surrealism.

Over the course of the exhibition program, Guggenheim collaborated closely with Alfred H. Barr Jr. and James Johnson Sweeney, which allowed them to promote artists and artworks for acquisition by the Museum of Modern Art.²⁵¹ Though Marcel Duchamp is recognized as Guggenheim’s most important advisor throughout her enterprise, Alfred H. Barr Jr., and James Johnson Sweeney are arguably the most important advisors Guggenheim collaborated with throughout the exhibition program Art of This Century.

²⁴⁹ -- “Peggy Guggenheim to Open Art Gallery-- Art of This Century” (October 1942). Reproduced in Angelica Zander Rudenstine, *The Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice* (New York: Abrams, 1985) 771.

²⁵⁰ Also note that the use of “center” was also a reflection of the wider trend of using “center” to describe an interdisciplinary institution was common by the time Art of This Century opened, in 1942, – for example Helena Rubenstein’s “New Art Center” for a further discussion on Helena Rubenstein’s presence in the New York art world during this time see Marie J. Clifford, “Helena Rubenstein’s Beauty Salons, Fashion, and Modernist Display,” *Wintherthur Portfolio*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer/Autumn, 2003): 83-108.

²⁵¹ Guggenheim also made similar arrangements with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Guggenheim, Sweeney, and Barr utilized the experimental, institutionally hybrid nature of Art of This Century to test artists and artworks for potential acquisition by the Museum of Modern Art. The ‘gallery’ aspect of the Daylight Gallery in Art of This Century in which exhibitions could be planned and open at a much quicker pace than the Museum of Modern Art. Barr and Sweeney were judges in the annual Spring Salon for Young Artists, which began in the spring of 1943, and frequently wrote the catalogues to the exhibitions, including for the first solo exhibitions of young artists. This undoubtedly played an integral role in the acquisition process at the Museum of Modern Art, Barr and Sweeney both shared the goal of the acquiring works by American artists, but had trouble getting approval from the board.²⁵² Sweeney and Barr visited artists’ studios and the American Abstract Artists group and would regularly report to Guggenheim with opinions on the young artists. By taking advantage of the gallery-critical response-museum system, Sweeney was crucial in confirming and getting approval of the acquisition of *She-Wolf* by Jackson Pollock before his first solo show in Art of This Century closed. James Thrall Soby, at the Museum of Modern Art was also in Guggenheim’s group of Museum of Modern Art friends and advisors.²⁵³ While art historians have argued that Guggenheim focused her attention less on the Surrealists and towards American artists as a result of her divorce from Max Ernst, it is important to recognize that Guggenheim had been working closely with Alfred H. Barr Jr. since

²⁵² Letter from Barr to Dick Abbott, “I would like to propose that 10% commission which we now make on the sale of works of art in our American exhibitions be used for the purchased of American pictures for the Museum Collection. We need money badly for American purchased and I think publicizing this use of the commission would put the Museum in a better light than if it went simple into the general budget. It does not amount to very much anyway, but even a small amount counts when we have no purchase fund other than the strictly limited Guggenheim money.” In the response, Abbott rejects Barr’s proposal. March 29, 1943. Alfred H. Barr Jr. Papers, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (AHB 2167; 402)

²⁵³ See James Johnson Sweeney Papers, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

shortly after her return to New York in 1941.

By taking advantage of the institutional hybridity of Art of This Century, Guggenheim, Barr, Sweeney, and other collaborators were integral in the development of the New York School. The exhibition program allowed for the young American artists' works featured in Art of This Century to be held in higher esteem because of the institutional hybridity of Art of This Century, which gave Art of This Century a platform that a museum would. Artworks by young artists were displayed in such close proximity to established European avant-garde artworks, and even though they were exhibiting in what is officially billed as a gallery, many critics referred to Art of This Century as a museum, further causing the artists in higher esteem by critics. In his inaugural review of Art of this Century, critic Edward Alden Jewell writes, "She does not call it a museum. She calls it Art of This Century."²⁵⁴ Jewell recognizes the hybrid nature in which Art of This Century functioned but concludes his review writing, "If all of this doesn't add up to a museum, then I think the term requires overhauling."²⁵⁵ Jewell reflects that although 'gallery' or 'center' were used to describe Art of This Century, its formula was more like a museum. This reflects the rare institutional advantage that Art of This Century had by displaying both Guggenheim's impressive collection and hosting temporary exhibitions to promote young, unknown artists.

Guggenheim utilized the institutional hybridity of Art of This Century to make her collection mobile and accessible to the public in ways museums cannot do. Art of This Century not only received national attention, but the artworks it exhibited went outside the gallery and beyond New York. The majority of the exhibitions Guggenheim

²⁵⁴ Edward Alden Jewell, "Our Hemisphere Posters" *New York Times* (25 October 1942)

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

organized with the intent to be travelling shows, and those exhibitions could be organized and travel at a much quicker pace than museums. Jean Helion's exhibition of 1943 was the first of several travelling shows. Exhibitions by Robert Motherwell, Alice Rahon Paalen, Picasso, Pollock, Pereira, travelled to the Museum of Art, San Francisco and The Arts Club of Chicago.²⁵⁶ Museums and galleries in Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and Seattle were also occasionally involved.²⁵⁷ This reflects Guggenheim's interest in presenting art to an American public, beyond New York. Director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection and art historian Philip Rylands has drawn attention to Guggenheim's generosity and dedication towards making her collection as accessible as even as she planned to close *Art of This Century* writing: "Guggenheim placed a number of artworks by Hare, Pereira, Pollock, Rothko, Seliger, Janet Sobel, and Still in the hands of public collections, such as The San Francisco Museum of Art, The University of Iowa Museum of Art, and Yale University Art Gallery. Guggenheim's dedication to making avant-garde artworks accessible to the public continued throughout her life, and continued to donate her artworks to various institutions throughout her life. Art historian and Director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Philip Rylands recognized this and brought attention to what had been a little-known fact about Guggenheim's beneficence for several decades, "She [Guggenheim] made more than 150 donations by almost 70 artists to 25 institutions, mostly in the United States."²⁵⁸ Guggenheim intentionally donated to cities that did not

²⁵⁶ Philip Rylands, "The Master and Marguerite" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 26. The San Francisco Museum was directed by Dr. Grace McCann Morely and the Arts Club of Chicago was directed by Rue Winterbotham Shaw, two progressively minded women.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 26. That year, works were donated to the San Francisco Museum of Art (Ernst, Pereira, Rothko, Sobel, and Still), the University of Iowa, Iowa City (Pollock Mural and Seliger), Yale University Art

have avant-garde art that was accessible to the public. Guggenheim's most notorious donation was of Jackson Pollock's *Mural* to the University of Iowa.²⁵⁹ Although it is unclear how frequently Guggenheim's collection appeared in window displays, she makes it clear in her memoir and correspondence that she intended for her collection to be as accessible as possible and reach a broad public, which was intended to regularly be a part of window displays and travelling exhibitions.

Part of why Guggenheim was able to create such an institutional hybrid through Art of This Century was that she utilized the platform of her name. The Guggenheims had an established tradition of supporting the arts by the time Art of This Century opened in 1942. The Guggenheim family had established itself as one of the wealthiest and most prominent families in New York in the late nineteenth century. This allowed Art of This Century to be associated with some of the most influential art patrons, prominent museums, and art collections. Unlike the rest of her family, Peggy Guggenheim had to be more strategic in the way she spent her money in comparison to her relatives.²⁶⁰ Peggy Guggenheim's father, Benjamin Guggenheim was a passenger on the Titanic, which led to his death when Peggy was 14 years old.²⁶¹ Avant-garde art collector, friend, and accountant for Peggy Guggenheim, Bernard Reis, puts Peggy Guggenheim's financial situation in perspective writing: "If Benjamin Guggenheim, Peggy's father had remained

Gallery, New Haven (Hare and Pollock)" See also Valentine Sonzogni "'You will never be bored with these walls' Art of This Century and the reaction of the Press" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 273.

²⁵⁹ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) "But the worst mistake of all was giving away eighteen Pollocks. However, I comfort myself by thinking how terribly lucky I was to have been able to buy all wonderful collection at a time when prices were still normal, before the whole picture world turned into an investment market." 317.

²⁶⁰ Most of the Guggenheim's collected old masters, including her parents.

²⁶¹ Dore Ashton confirms that Guggenheim was taken often taken advantage of financially because most people assumed that she was as wealthy as the rest of the Guggenheims.

an active partner in M. Guggenheim & Sons, Peggy would have inherited around two hundred million dollars. Instead, he withdrew from the family business before the Chilean Chuquicamata copper mine was developed by his brothers. This is why she had much more less money than her Guggenheim uncles.”²⁶² Peggy Guggenheim received one inheritance from both her mother and father, each was around \$450,000.²⁶³ These inheritances importantly gave Peggy Guggenheim the financial freedom to collect artworks and establish herself as a promoter of the avant-garde. The platform of the Guggenheim name greatly contributed Art of This Century’s prominence in the art historical narrative in relation to other avant-garde galleries in New York.

Peggy Guggenheim was the first woman in the Guggenheim family that was both patron and the head of their enterprise at a time when it was uncommon for women to assume such a role. Peggy Guggenheim was neither the first woman to support the arts in the Guggenheim family, nor was she the first woman to collect modern art.²⁶⁴ Her aunt, Mrs. (Olga) Simon Guggenheim was also a collector of modern art and she donated several important works as was a longtime trustee to the Museum of Modern Art.²⁶⁵ Art historian and founding director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Thomas Messer has

²⁶² Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri 93

²⁶³ Also when one of her father’s many mistresses would pass - Peggy would receive the money the Guggenheim family was giving the mistresses each month - it was like a strange form of alimony

²⁶⁴ Her uncle Simon established the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation in 1925. “He endowed the foundation with three million dollars to provide scholarships, grants-in-aid to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding and the appreciation of beauty.”

²⁶⁵ Mrs. Simon (Olga) Guggenheim neé Olga Hirsch, she was the daughter of a diamond dealer. Guggenheim family historians book on how Mrs. Simon Guggenheim helped acquire Picasso’s *Girl Before a Mirror* for the Museum of Modern Art. Letter reproduced in Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 171. Also see *Art in Our Time: A Chronicle of the Museum of Modern Art*, ed. Harriet S. Bee and Michelle Elligott (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York Publications, 2004) 50. Mrs. Simon Guggenheim became a trustee in 1940. She donated *Girl Before a Mirror* (1932) by Picasso in 1938. *Girl Before a Mirror* was purchased for \$10,000.00 and was the first of a series of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim’s donations to the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

recognized: “Peggy was the only one of the Guggenheims that had a personal relationship of any intensity with art.”²⁶⁶ Messer reflects Guggenheim’s unprecedented role among the Guggenheim family as a patron of the arts.

²⁶⁶ Thomas Messer “Peggy – A Postmortem” in Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994) 177.

The Legacy of Peggy Guggenheim

Through *Art of This Century*, Peggy Guggenheim became associated with Surrealism, however, Guggenheim would disassociate and reclaim the movement throughout her life. This is reflective of the pendulum of Surrealism's reputation that continues to exist in the art historical narrative. Guggenheim writes in her memoir: "In the spring of 1936 the French Surrealists gave a huge exhibition at the Burlington House. It was their first showing in London and it had a great success. Garman was excited about it and tried to get Djuna [Barnes] and me to go. We were both blasé and refused, saying Surrealism was over long ago, and that we had had enough of it in the twenties."²⁶⁷ It is revealing that in 1936, a year before Guggenheim admits to having any interest in Surrealism and several years before she opened *Art of This Century*, Guggenheim had already associated and renounced herself from the movement. Guggenheim also inserts a negative tone on the Surrealists throughout her memoir, which she wrote from 1945-46. Guggenheim's disowning at this time, in 1945-46, of Surrealism also coincides with the rise of the New York School, and the larger trend of negative reception of Surrealism by art critics and scholars. The disowning and reclaiming of Surrealism was solidified with the rise of the New York School and through critic Clement Greenberg's famous articles such as, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch."²⁶⁸ Art historian Sandra Zalman has recognized that in Greenberg's article he "condemned commodity culture – and with it, many aspects of Surrealist production—to the kitsch side of his now notorious dialect."²⁶⁹ Greenberg

²⁶⁷ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of An Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 149-150.

²⁶⁸ Clement Greenberg, *The Nation*, 1944.

²⁶⁹ Sandra Zalman, *Consuming Surrealism in American Culture: Dissident Modernism* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2015) 2.

denounces Surrealism primarily because it is so heavily bound to consumerism, which is reflective of his formalist approach. Greenberg was close friends with Guggenheim while she directed *Art of This Century*, he even encouraged Guggenheim to write her memoir.²⁷⁰ Through “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” Greenberg undoubtedly significantly influenced the art world’s disassociation with Surrealism, which Guggenheim echoes in her memoir.

Art of This Century was featured as a backdrop for fashion magazine photoshoots, providing *Art of This Century* a legacy in fashion. As art historian Valentina Songozi recognized, “Between 1943 and 1945, *Art of This Century* provided the backdrop for at least seven different photo essays in the reigning fashion magazines of *Vogue*, *Glamour*, and *Town & Country*.”²⁷¹ Almost immediately after *Art of This Century* opened, in January 1943, the *Art of This Century* served as a backdrop for a fashion magazine spread. The Abstract and Surrealist galleries were featured in *Vogue* in an article titled, “Short Dresses...Long Season,”²⁷² (Figure 56) promoting trendy new dinner outfits for new year. As art historian Valentina Sonzogni recognized, “This may indicate that *Art of This Century* was acknowledged as a fashionable spot in the New York art scene and the gallery surely gained wider notoriety thanks to its publication in a

²⁷⁰ Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994) “Sidney G. Phillips, a principal of Dial Press writes: “Mr. Greenberg was responsible for bringing Miss Guggenheim’s manuscript to me at Dial originally He read it for us, and made a number of suggestions for revisions that were extremely valuable.” 108. Although Guggenheim was close friends with Greenberg and there’s a slight possibility he edited some of the negative tone towards Surrealism, this is general is unlikely, since we know Guggenheim took such care of the editing process, it is unlikely that Greenberg submitted a manuscript without her having seen any final edits. See Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers where she corresponds with Barr and rejects his suggestions for edits on her catalogue.

²⁷¹ Don Quaintance, “Modern Art in a Modern Setting: Frederick Kiesler’s Design of *Art of This Century*” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 208.

²⁷² -- “Short Dresses...Long Season” *Vogue* (1 January 1943). Photographs by John Rawlings.

magazine not specialized in art.”²⁷³ This reflects not only Guggenheim’s concern to make her collection as accessible as possible to a broad public but also contributes to Art of This Century’s legacy in fashion, which compliments Surrealism’s legacy in fashion as well. Many of the Surrealists were conflicted by the movement’s integration with fashion that began in the 1930s.²⁷⁴ The Surrealists participated in the merging between Surrealism and fashion, some unwillingly and some with intent. This is reflected by the inclusion of the Surrealist Gallery in the Vogue shoot, which implies that Surrealism and Art of This Century are fashionable.

Guggenheim’s integration of architecture and design in Art of This Century borrows from department store window displays, in which fashion participates as well.²⁷⁵ On multiple occasions, Guggenheim lent works in her collection to department stores be featured in window displays, further contributing to Art of This Century’s integration and legacy in fashion. Surrealism was an important strategy for both window display and fashion, the designs, evoking the Freudian notion of the uncanny by rendering the familiar strange. Window displays function as a threshold and intersection that integrates the realms of fine art and fashion, which are inherently bound with consumerism.²⁷⁶ An instance of Guggenheim’s collection being part of the window display tableau was in 1945, when *Very Rare Picture on Earth* (1915) by Francis Picabia and a Correalist Rocker were displayed next to a stylishly dressed mannequin in a window display at

²⁷³ Valentina Sonzogni, “‘You will never be bored within in its walls.’: Art of This Century and the Reaction of the Press.” in *The Story of Art of This Century: Peggy Guggenheim and Frederick Kiesler*, ed. Susan Davidson (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 283.

²⁷⁴ The curved walls of the Surrealist Gallery were sold to Franklin Simon’s department store on 5th Avenue to be used for window displays. See *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art Of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 243.

²⁷⁵ See Richard Martin, *Fashion and Surrealism* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987)

²⁷⁶ Window display had been an important exhibition space for Surrealism, beginning in the 1930s

Bonwit Teller, a department store on Fifth Avenue (Figure 57). Kiesler was likely involved in the design since he was known for doing window display for Saks Fifth Avenue in 1928, when he was commissioned to do a series of window displays.²⁷⁷ Kiesler subsequently published *Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and Its Displays* in 1930,²⁷⁸ and it is known that he submitted proposals for Gimbels department store sometime between 1943-1946, to further incorporate Art of This Century into window displays.²⁷⁹ This has further contributed to Art of This Century's legacy in both window display and fashion.

Guggenheim's involvement with department store window displays reflects the wider trend of gallery and museum collaborations for window displays. Window display was not only an important exhibition strategy for Guggenheim and Surrealism, art historian Andrew McClellan recognized, "For an extended period in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s there was a significant overlap between the spheres of all retail and high culture. Store windows were likened to frames and significant artists, architects, and designers lent their talents to the enhancement of commercial spaces."²⁸⁰ To elaborate, this artistic collaboration of window displays continued through the 1940s, and in New York, museums and galleries lent their artworks to be featured in department store window displays. Some artists and gallerists collaborated with the department store in the

²⁷⁷ See Cynthia Goodman "The Art of Revolutionary Display Techniques" in *Frederick Kiesler* (New York: Whitney Museum Publications, 1989)

²⁷⁸ Kiesler's book was published by Brentano's, where Peggy Guggenheim displayed works in her collection to advertise her catalogue *Art of This Century*. Brenatos is the same publishing house that published Andre Breton's novel *Arcane 17*.

²⁷⁹ Kiesler also wrote to Gimbels proposing a window display to show works from Guggenheim's collection. Philip Rylands also makes this speculation.

²⁸⁰ Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum: From Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2008) 204. "Department stores displayed and sold contemporary art, often of the highest quality." It is interesting that artworks were also sold in department stores, and a reminder that artworks are a commodity.

window display design process. Like Art of This Century, The Museum of Non-Objective Painting also collaborated in window displays with Bonwit Teller in the 1940s (Figure 58). These window displays suggest that non-objective art is fashionable, while also advertising the collection of the Museum of Non-Objective Painting.²⁸¹ These window display are as art historian Karole Vail recognized, “not only inviting shoppers to purchase the latest fashions, but also enticing them to visit the nearby Museum of Non-Objective Painting.”²⁸² Vail makes an important point – that the majority of the museum and galleries in New York at this time were in close proximity to the high-end department stores of Manhattan. As art historian Andrew McClellan recognized, “For a while art and design installations at museum and departments stores were virtually indistinguishable.”²⁸³ Therefore, it is unsurprising such extensive integration between museums, galleries, department stores, and fashion was in existence.

Art of This Century had a short lifespan, closing after only four and a half years on May 31, 1947, however, Guggenheim has maintained a prominent art world legacy, by moving her collection to Venice.²⁸⁴ In 1948 the Venice Biennale reopened after closing as a result of World War II, and Guggenheim was key in the success of its revival, by displaying her collection, which was the focal point of the Bienale that year.

²⁸¹ Karole Vail, “A Museum in the Making: Two Artists and Their Patron – Hilla Rebay, Rudolf Bauer, and Solomon R. Guggenheim” in *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation Publications, 2009) 48.

²⁸² Ibid., 49

²⁸³ Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum: From Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) 207

²⁸⁴ Guggenheim explains her reason for moving to Venice in her memoir, “I decided Venice would be my future home. I always had loved it more than any place on earth and felt I would be happy alone there.” See Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005), 320. Guggenheim’s first interests in art were artists such Titian and the Venetian masters, and enjoyed travelling there both as a child and throughout her adulthood.

As art historian director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Philip Rylands recognized, “Guggenheim’s impressive collection made its first European debut by being featured in its own pavilion of the 1948 Venice Biennale, the works by the American artists were showed the first time in Europe at the 1948 Biennale.”²⁸⁵ Guggenheim helped bring international modern art to Italy and several other European countries, by organizing travelling shows of her collection in Milan and Amsterdam after her arrival in 1948.²⁸⁶ Guggenheim’s move to Venice had a regenerated excitements around the Biennale and in 1985, the Guggenheim Foundation began to oversee the U.S. pavilion of the Venice Biennale.²⁸⁷

In Venice, Guggenheim continued her role as international liaison between the European and American avant-gardes; many avant-garde figures made trips to visit her in Venice, some visiting numerous times. In 1949 Guggenheim purchased the unfinished eighteenth century Palazzo Venier die Leoni²⁸⁸, located on the Grand Canal in Venice (Figs. 59-62). Soon after, as art historian Susan Davidson recognized, Guggenheim opened her palazzo to the public in April of 1951, “Peggy often greeted visitors herself, welcoming them into her home and sharing with them the central passion of her life, her collection.”²⁸⁹ This reflects Guggenheim’s unprecedented role as a patron and collector of

²⁸⁵ Philip Rylands, “The Master and Marguerite” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 28

²⁸⁶ Correspondence from the Alfred H. Barr Jr. Papers shows that she stayed in frequent contact with museum officials, especially regarding exhibitions, and Barr continued to ask her advice on avant-garde Italian artists. See Alfred H. Barr Jr. Papers, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

²⁸⁷ See *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009)

²⁸⁸ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of this Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 333. The original palazzo was designed by architect, Lorenzo Boschetti.

²⁸⁹ Susan Davidson, “Focusing an Instinct: The Collecting of Peggy Guggenheim” in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York:

art that differentiates her from others such as Gertrude Stein and her uncle Solomon Guggenheim, who opened their houses to visitors, but to a limited public. Eventually Guggenheim's palazzo would be named the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, which has been recognized by art historian and director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Philip Rylands: "The Peggy Guggenheim Collection has become a port of call for the international cultural elite."²⁹⁰ Rylands has articulated Guggenheim's legacy that continues to remain in Venice today.

The innovative architectural designs of *Art of This Century* by Frederick Kiesler anticipate the fantastic museum architecture trend that is often credited to beginning with Frank Lloyd Wright's designs for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Eight months after *Art of This Century* opened, in July of 1943, Peggy's uncle Solomon and Rebay commissioned the well-known architect Frank Lloyd Wright to design a new permanent museum for Solomon's collection. Although the construction of the new Wright building was not completed until 1959, a model of the building was unveiled in 1945 and images of the model were provided accompanying the article titled "Spiral Shaped Art Center Proposed for the City" in the *New York Times* (Figure 63)²⁹¹ The model looks nearly identical to the building when it opened in 1959, and the designs of the Wright building was integral in ushering in an era of fantastic monumental museum architecture. As art historian Andrew McClellan recognized, "Wright insisted he had achieved 'a new unity

Guggenheim Museum Publications) 2004, 81 Guggenheim opened her home to the public for three days a week and would regularly receive familiar visitors.

²⁹⁰ Philip Rylands, "The Master and Marguerite" in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 28.

²⁹¹ -- "Spiral Shaped Art Center Proposed for the City" *New York Times* (21 September 1945)

between the beholder, painting and architecture”²⁹² Wright borrows nearly identical language from Kiesler’s approach in the architectural designs of *Art of this Century*. Kiesler’s designs also likely served as an inspiration to Wright’s designs and architectural and theoretical approach to the new building. The *New York Times* reporter quotes Wright in the article, “The construction will apply a logarithmic spiral for the first time and will be completely plastic.”²⁹³ Kiesler utilized the spiral motif as part of the Space Stage for the “International Exhibition of New Theater Techniques” in Konzerhaus, Vienna in 1924 (Figure 64). Interestingly, Kiesler collaborated with Rebay in 1931, and proposed plans to Rebay for the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. Rebay wrote to Adolph Bauer in 1931, “Kiesler showed me his plans for a museum that has no windows, and is 14 stories tall, very, very interesting.”²⁹⁴ Kiesler’s ideas reflect that Kiesler was not only actively engaging in museum architectural discourse, and it is likely that Kiesler’s plans stayed with Rebay as she prepared for both the Museum of Non-Objective Painting and the new building now known as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.²⁹⁵

Kiesler and Wright’s architectural approaches to *Art of This Century* and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum are reflective of the wider trend of modern museum architecture that had been emerging throughout the twentieth century. Although Edgar Kaufmann Jr. argued that Kiesler’s designs for *Art of This Century* overwhelmed the

²⁹² Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum: From Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) 80

²⁹³ -- “Spiral Shaped Art Center Proposed for the City.” *New York Times* (September 12, 1945)

²⁹⁴ Hilla Rebay in a letter to Bauer, March 30, 1931. Reproduced in *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009)

²⁹⁵ Rebay also collaborated with Bauer for the architectural designs of the Museum of Non-Objective Painting, and in Bauer’s sketches there is a spiral form that looks similar to Kiesler’s Space Stage, and also Frank Lloyd Wright’s designs for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

viewing experience in “The Violent Art of Hanging Pictures”²⁹⁶ Art historian Valentina Songozi recognized that Kaufmann ultimately concluded that “Peggy Guggenheim’s gallery demonstrated the beginning of a series of unconventional efforts to display contemporary paintings.”²⁹⁷ To elaborate on Kaufmann and Songozi, Kiesler’s innovative, experimental designs for Art of This Century certainly gestures towards the forthcoming trend of spectacular museum architecture. Like Kiesler’s designs for Art of This Century, Frank Lloyd Wright’s architectural designs for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum were critiqued by some for overwhelming the artworks. However, both Wright and Kiesler, as well as several other modern architects that made plans and built models that were seen at the 1939 Worlds Fair and reproduced in various architecture journals shared similar approaches during the 1930s. This is reflective of the wider museum display and architectural discourse that anticipated institutional critique which served as an inspiration to both Wright and Kiesler, as well as many other progressive architects.

The name Guggenheim has become synonymous with the franchise museum, which is the culmination of the Guggenheim franchise “brand.” The Guggenheim “brand” has continued its legacy through the fantastic architecture and franchise museums. The first franchise museum has typically been credited to the opening of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain in 1997. The Bilbao Guggenheim was designed by Frank Gehry. The impressive building has been recognized by some critics as a work of art in itself. The “Bilbao effect” has been coined as a result of the Guggenheim model

²⁹⁶ Edgar Kaufmann Jr. “The Violent Art of Hanging Pictures” (1946)

²⁹⁷ Valentina Songozi, “‘You will never bored within its walls’ Art of This Century and the Reaction of the Press” in Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004) 282-283.

of hiring an architect that has a celebrity status, or “starchitect” to design a monumental museum in an economically depressed city hoping to revive the city’s livelihood.²⁹⁸ Art historian Andrew McClellan critiqued the “Bilbao effect”, writing, “It is not so much that they dislike the Guggenheim [Guggenheim Bilbao Museum] as a piece of architecture; rather, they take it as a sign of the ‘Disneyfication’ or ‘spectacularization’ of the museum at the expense of traditional commitments to high art, aesthetic contemplation, and scholarship.”²⁹⁹ That did not discourage the Guggenheim Foundation from opening six more franchise museums.³⁰⁰ The commercial interests of the Guggenheims can be traced back to the beginning of both the enterprises of Solomon Guggenheim and Peggy Guggenheim.

Although Solomon Guggenheim and Peggy Guggenheim disliked each other, it is important to recognize that Peggy never distanced herself from the Guggenheim name.³⁰¹ Art historian Melvin Lader recognized that Peggy and Solomon had “strained relations because he considered her social behavior amongst the bohemians unfitting for a Guggenheim.”³⁰² The difficult relationship between Peggy and Solomon worsened when he began to work Hilla Rebay, whom he hired as an advisor and curator of his collection while Peggy directed Guggenheim Jeune, in 1937.³⁰³ Hilla Rebay wrote a letter to Peggy in response to Peggy’s offer to sell them a Kandinsky painting, “First of all we do not

²⁹⁸ See Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum: From Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) 55.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ See *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009)

³⁰¹ Peggy Guggenheim did not change her name when she was married to Laurence Vail or Max Ernst.

³⁰² Melvin P. Lader “Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century: The Surrealist Milieu in the American Avant-garde” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981, 35.

³⁰³ Solomon and Rebay met in 1927. Almost immediately, Rebay began helping Solomon build his collection. See *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009)

ever buy from any dealer, as long as great artists offer their work for sale themselves & secondly yours [Guggenheim Jeune] will be the last one for our foundation to use...It is extremely distasteful at this moment, when the name Guggenheim stands for an ideal in art, to see it used for commerce so as to give the wrong impression, as if this great philanthropic work was intended to be useful to boost some small shop.”³⁰⁴ Rebay’s insults towards Peggy Guggenheim ironically do not reflect the way Solomon Guggenheim purposefully participated in commerce to promote his foundation and the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. Although Peggy Guggenheim said insulting things about Solomon Guggenheim throughout her life, she strategically utilized the Guggenheim name to her advantage as much as possible. For example, Guggenheim Jeune was intended as a pun towards her uncle, presumably because he was thirty-seven years older than Peggy. Solomon died in 1949 and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation began to dissociate with Hilla Rebay, and soon after in 1952, changed name from the Museum of Non-Objective Painting to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Figure 65).³⁰⁵ Peggy Guggenheim’s use of her name in Guggenheim Jeune may have been a precedent for the Guggenheim “brand”.

Peggy Guggenheim not only utilized the Guggenheim name, she intentionally allowed her enterprise to be a part of the Guggenheim “brand.” Later in Peggy Guggenheim’s life, in 1976, she entrusted her collection to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. In an interview with art historian Virginia Dortch shortly before she donated her collection in 1976, Peggy Guggenheim said, “I worry what will happen to all my

³⁰⁴ Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2005) 171.

³⁰⁵ 1952, Peggy’s close friend and advisor James Johnson Sweeney was appointed the director and the name changed from the Museum of Non-Objective Painting to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

paintings after I am gone. I dedicated myself to my collection. A collection means hard work. It was what I wanted to do and I made it my life's work. I am not an art collector. I am a museum."³⁰⁶ Guggenheim reveals that she ultimately identifies her collection with the museum institution, and wished for her legacy and collection to remain in Venice, and to be a part of the Guggenheim institutional "brand" (Figure 66). After Guggenheim's death in 1979, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation appointed Thomas M. Messer to be the founding director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, who opened the Peggy Guggenheim Collection year-round beginning in 1980.³⁰⁷ The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation's decision to name her home, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection is the first example of the Guggenheim franchise museum, and marks the beginning of the Guggenheim "brand".

³⁰⁶ Virginia M. Dortch, *Peggy Guggenheim and Her Friends* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1994) 15. Peggy wrote in her memoir that she initially hoped that her daughter Pegeen could be the curator of her collection in Venice. One of the reasons she turned towards the Guggenheim name for help is because although Peggy wanted to leave her museum to Pegeen, after Pegeen died and in Peggy Guggenheim's old age turning to the Guggenheim foundation was the best choice. Also since Solomon Guggenheim died, in 1949, the Guggenheim Foundation had been attempting to mend the stained relationship between the two.

³⁰⁷ See *The Museum of Non-Objective Painting: Hilla Rebay and the Origins of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, ed. Karole Vail (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2009)

Figures

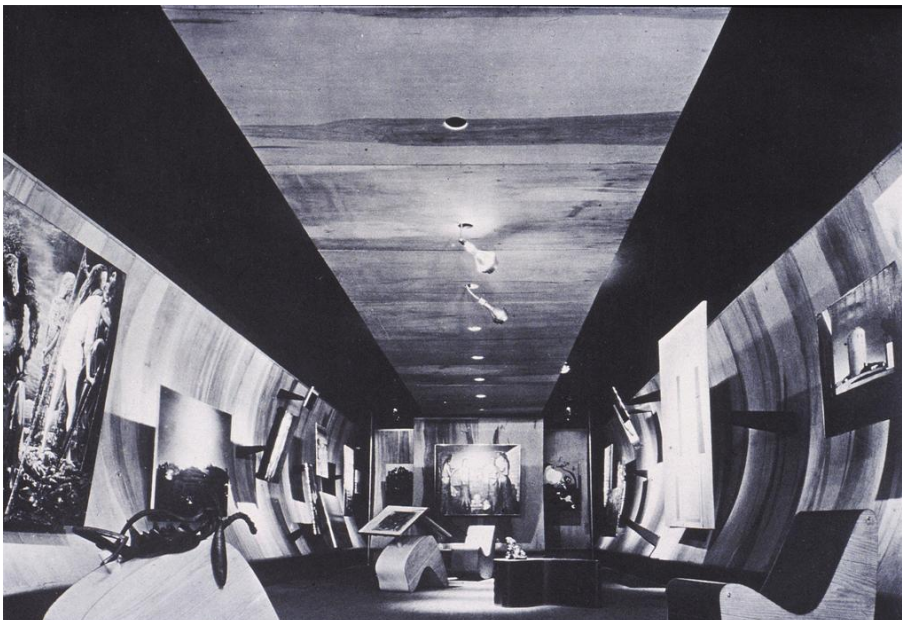
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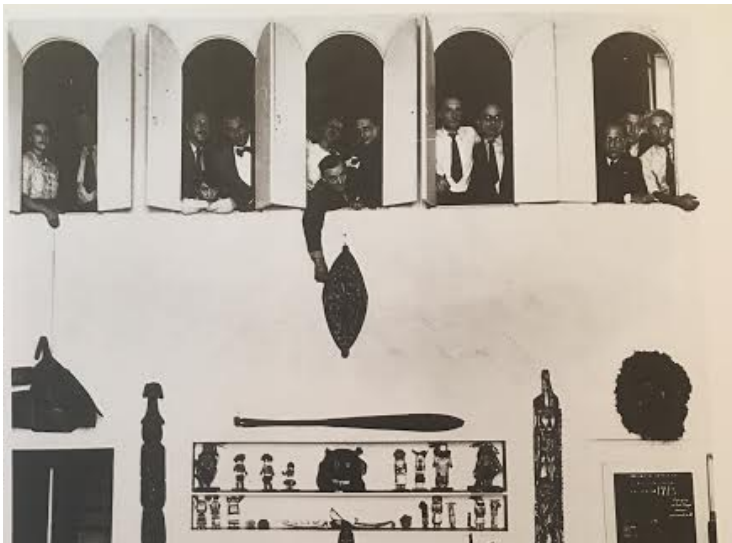
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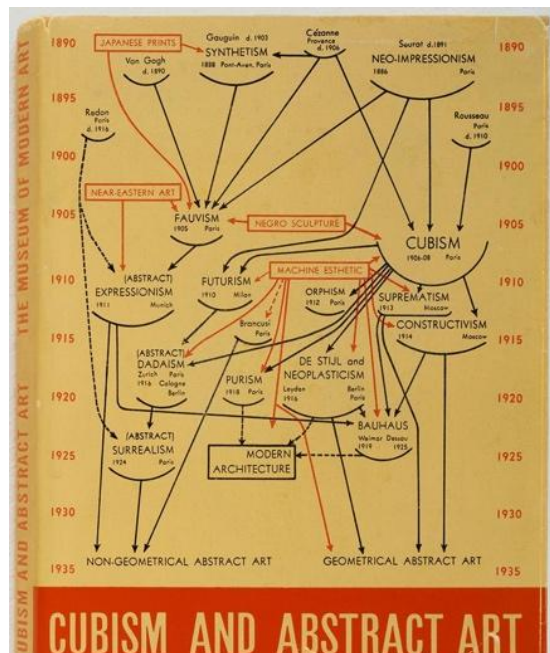
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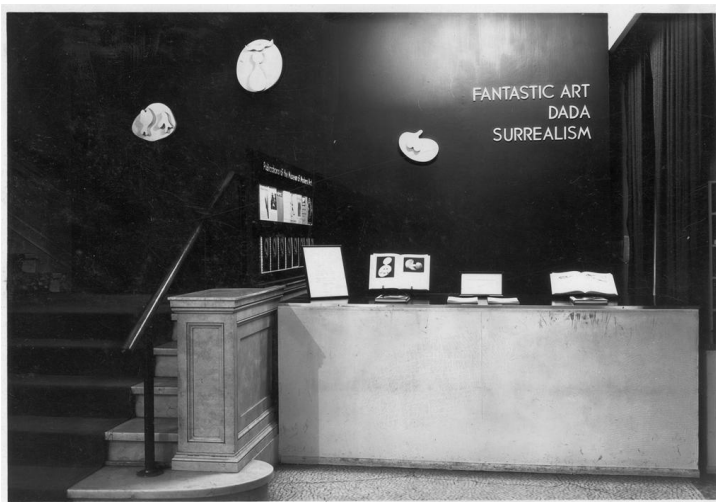
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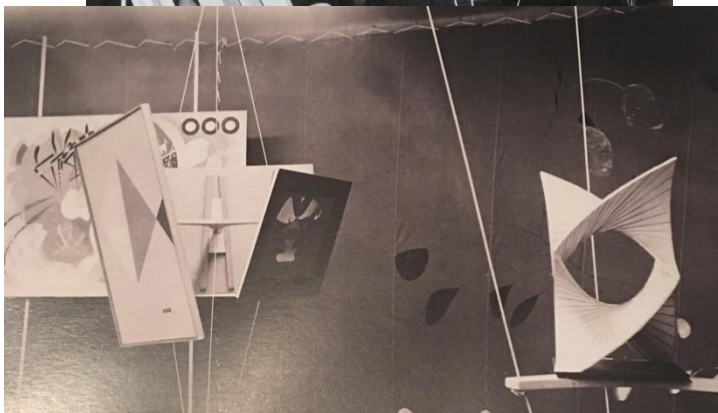
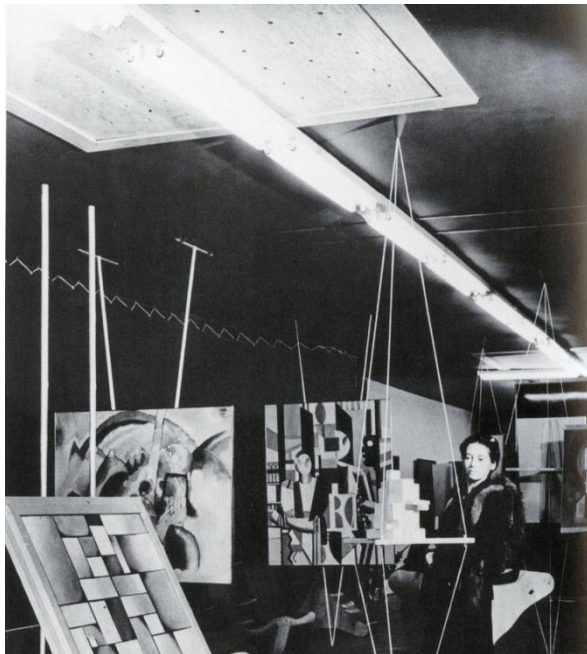
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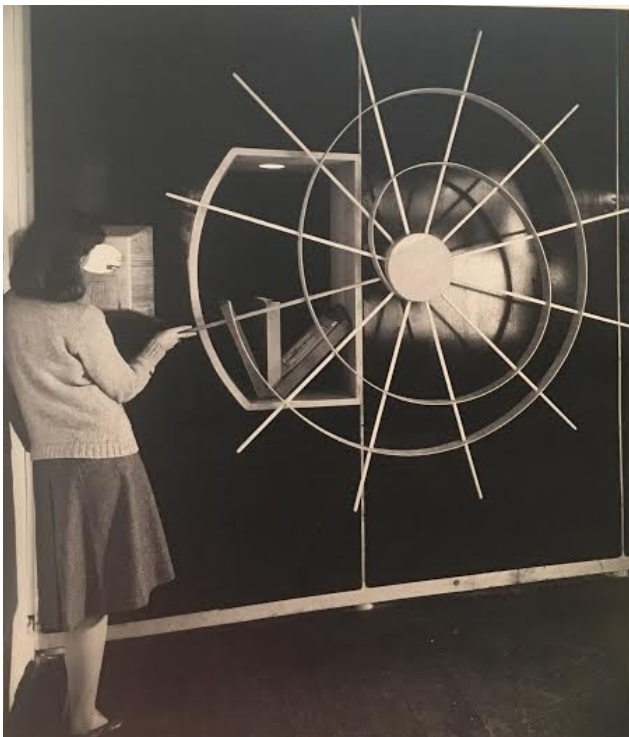
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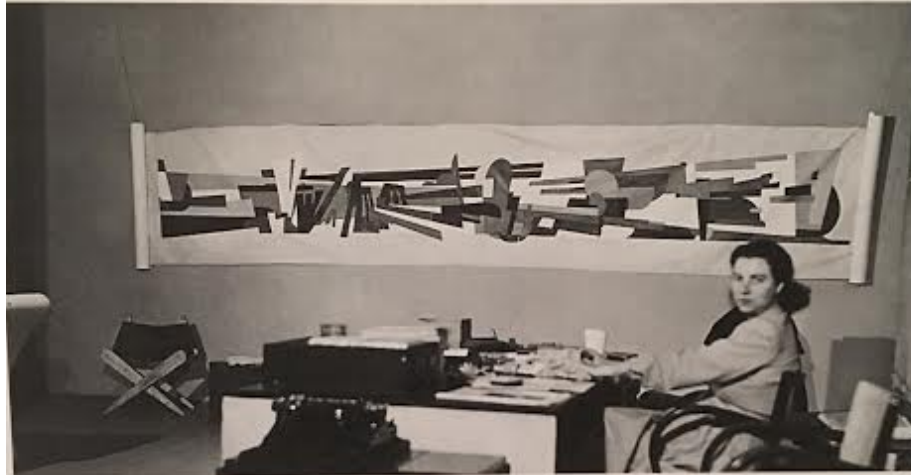


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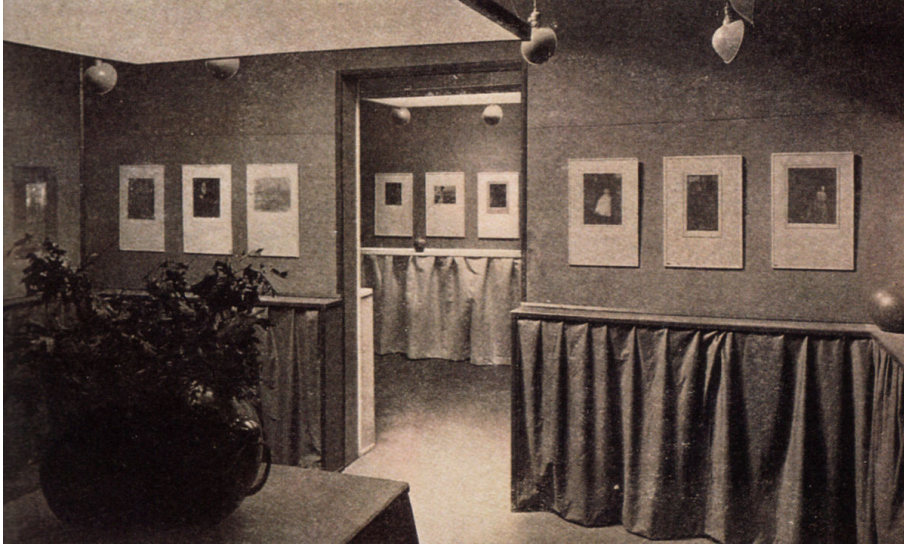
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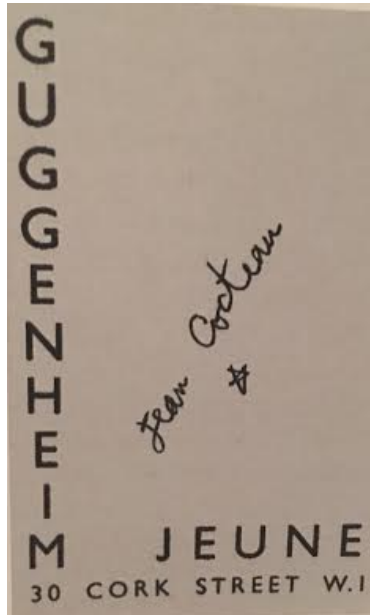
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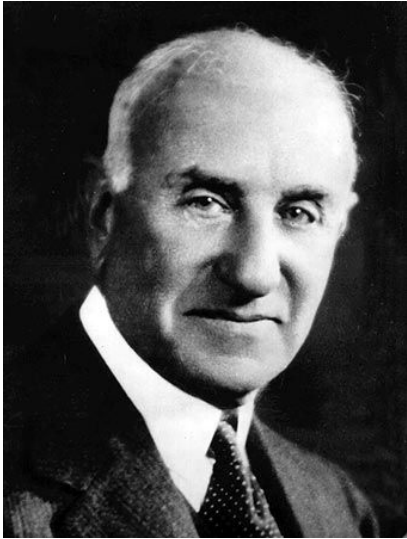


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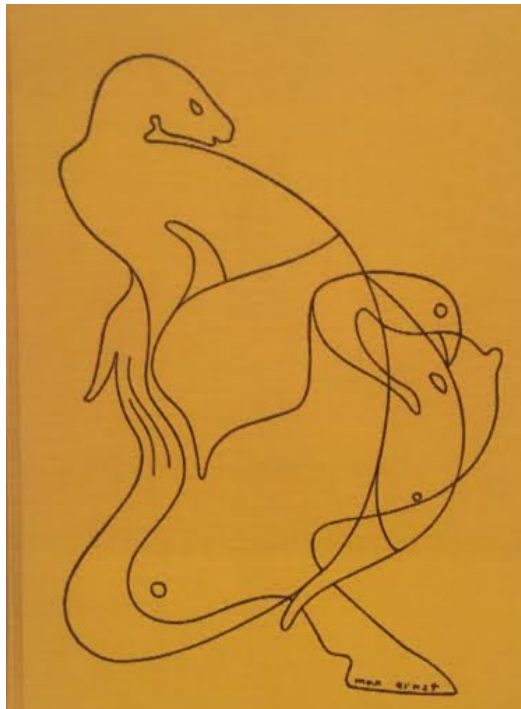


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GENESIS AND PERSPECTIVE OF SURREALISM

Like Christopher Columbus who, on the verge of discovering the Antilles, believed he was on the road to India, so in the twentieth century the painter found himself confronted by a new world before it occurred to him that he could depart from the old.

This old world was the reproduction of nature in accordance with visual perception, influenced more or less by the emotions. With some rare exceptions, most of them inspired by occult tradition or by religious mysticism, the artist remained the prisoner of external perception and envisaged no means of escape.

To be sure, a few voices inviting escape had been raised in the past. Giordano Bruno, already in possession of the dialectical key (the necessary union of opposites) was the first perhaps to lay the foundations of what was to become the *Surrealist* position. "It is inconceivable," he wrote, "that our imagination and our thought should surpass Nature, and that there should be no reality corresponding to the *continuous possibility* of new visual manifestations." The eye and its satellite, the mirror, soon to be accused of *despotism*, once Diderot had opened them to suspicion.* The hero of Balzac's *Unknown Masterpiece*, who was supposed to have learned "the secret of

* "I asked the blind man of Le Pausanias, exactly what he meant by a mirror. 'A machine,' he replied, 'which situates things in relief at a distance from themselves provided these things are suitably placed in relation to it. It is like my hand which I must place upon (and not behind) an object if I wish to feel it. . . . 'And in your opinion,' M. de . . . asked him, 'what are eyes?' 'They are an organ,' the blind man replied, 'on which air produces the same effect that my staff produces on my hand.' This reply astounded us, and while we looked at each other in admiration, he continued, 'This is so true that when I place my hand between your eyes and an object, my hand is present to your sight but the object is absent from it. The same thing happens to me when I seek one object with my staff and, instead I find another.'"

LETTER ON THE BLIND

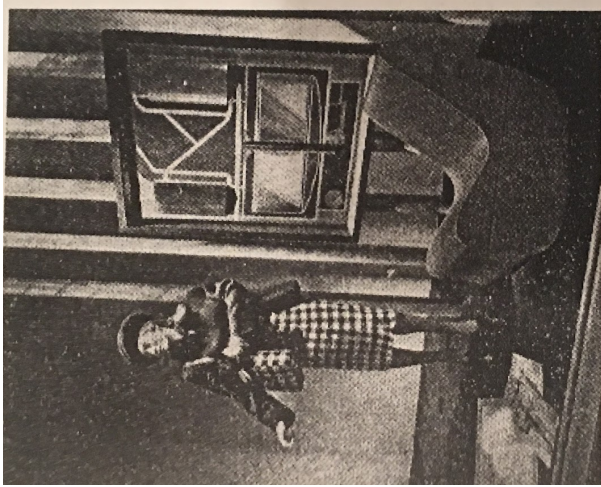
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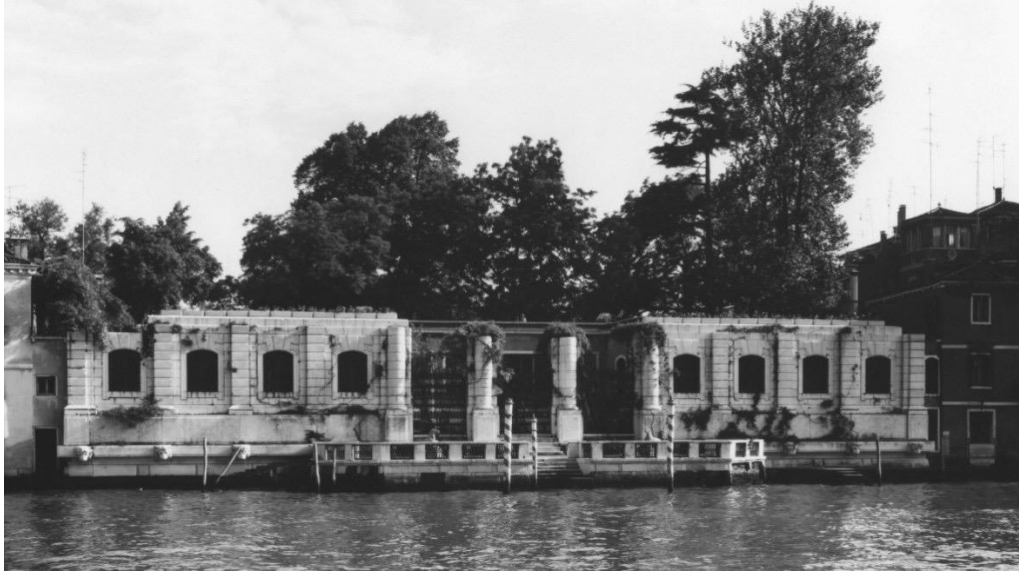
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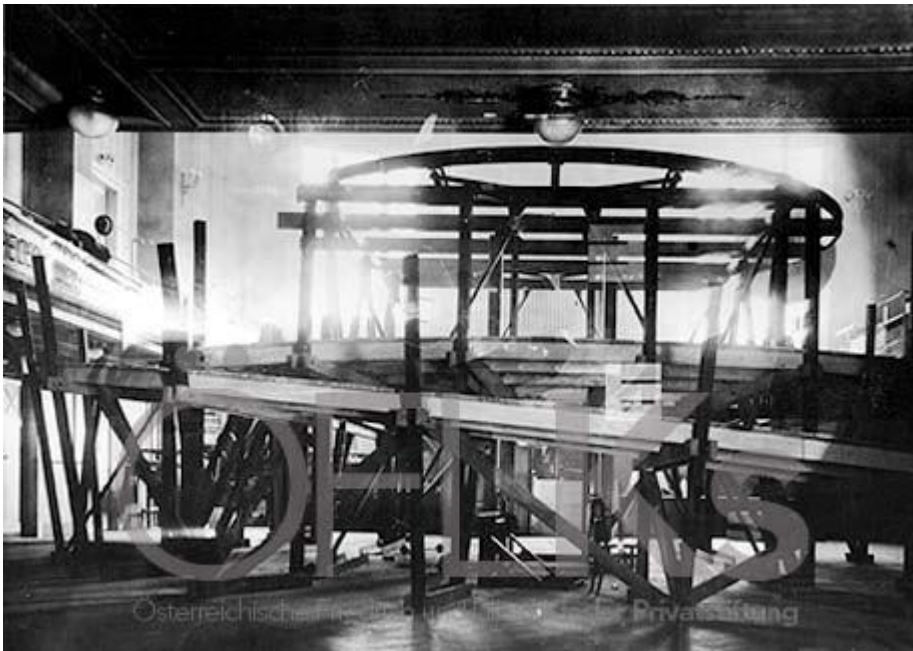


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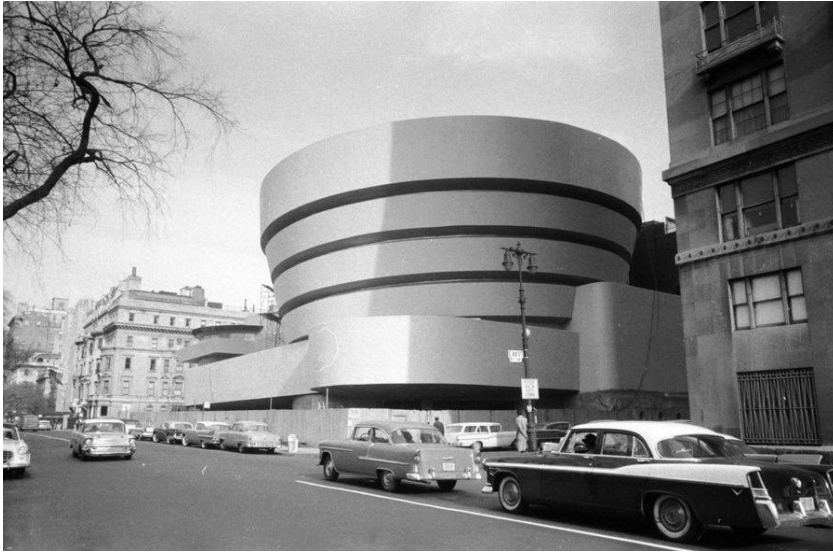


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