The Atlas of Two Women:

A Methodological Exploration for Seeing and Interpreting the Symptomatic Visual Motif

A Master's Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts (120 credits) in Visual Culture

Tatuli Japoshvili

Abstract

This thesis explores the under-recognised yet symptomatic visual motif of two women, a recurring theme within a vast array of pictorial examples. Its primary objective is to construct a theoretical and methodological framework capable of comprehending the multiplicity of images in the form of an image collection: *The Atlas of Two Women.* This inquiry primarily draws on Walter Benjamin's concept of the constellation and Aby Warburg's unfinished project, *Mnemosyne Atlas.* These perspectives on cultural history are perceived as heuristic tools that enable a departure from the traditional linear progression of history, aiming to unveil the redemptive potential inherent in the aesthetic experience, emphasised by its significance for feminist critique and the reevaluation of female subjectivity. In contrast to the conventional narratives of art history and visual culture, which often remain trapped in a phallocentric reception of the female body and unchallenged preconceptions regarding the male gaze, this approach attempts to pursue an alternative trajectory. It does so by embracing the subjective perspective of the viewer as a vital facet of the analysis. As an essential methodological step in exploring the reciprocal interplay between the viewer and the atlas, Wolfgang Kemp's methodology of the aesthetics of reception is employed, recognising the inherent function of beholding embedded into the fabric of visual communication. By enhancing the discussion with critical modes of thought related to issues of femininity, particularly through Luce Irigaray's theory of sexual difference, this thesis argues that the motif of two women, as a symbolically complex mental image, not only challenges the conventional binary reception of pictorial phenomena but also alludes to the broader context of the oppression of *the feminine* within the Symbolic order.

Keywords: two women, female subjectivity, Irigaray, Benjamin, Warburg, Didi-Huberman

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

List of Illustrations

Introduction

Through a fascination with various pictorial representations over a considerable period of time, I have come to notice the repetitive, symptomatic, and highly contagious visual motif of two women — a discovery that has been completely involuntary, devoid of scholarly training, and initiated by mere curiosity. The aspect of *being two* is a visual key that renders the pervasive images of two women as something peculiar yet easily perceptible.[1] Regardless of the prevailing character of pictorial examples and their extensive temporal and spatial expansion, the motif has not yet been recognised, researched, and dogmatised by the dominant narratives of art history and visual studies, as other representations of women would be. For instance, a woman depicted alone is quite often analysed as being objectified by the male gaze — an open signifier or an object of desire for a presumed male spectator.[2] A scene featuring three women could be associated with the mythological motif of The Three Graces — a highly circulated motif both in popular culture and academic circles, exhausted within various associations.[3] Groups of women or one woman in a social context would raise questions about power dynamics, gender roles, and social identities.[4] In contrast, what renders images of two women intriguing is that, broadly defined, they depict a pure relation between feminine and feminine. The women depicted on their own might represent two distinct individuals, yet simultaneously symbolise two characteristic elements of a single woman. In this manner, the images represent not only motherhood, sisterhood, friendship, and intimacy, but also the enforced idea of *femininity*. In other words, I argue that the symptomatic motif of two women points to something else, through which a condition of the feminine psyche can be sensed.

Certainly, I acknowledge the risk of choosing to analyse a phenomenon that has been under investigated. However, I intend to view this circumstance as an opportunity to perceive representations of women differently from existing canonical receptions. Thus, this thesis does not shy away from the complexity and ambiguity of the subject matter. Instead, it strives to embrace its potential and ground the analysis through the construction of an effective theoretical and methodological framework that would enable such an endeavour.

---

[1] I hereby thank all my friends who have shared images of two women with me during the research.

[2] L. Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' orig. 1975, in C. Penley (ed.), *Feminism and Film Theory,* New York, Routledge, 1988, pp. 57–68.

[3] See J. Francis, 'The Three Graces: Composition and Meaning in a Roman Context,' *Greece & Rome,* vol. 49, no. 2, 2002, pp. 180–98. *JSTOR,* http://www.jstor.org/stable/826905. Accessed 15 Jun. 2022; E. J. Milleker, 'The Three Graces on a Roman Relief Mirror,' *Metropolitan Museum Journal,* vol. 23, 1988, pp. 69–81. *JSTOR,* https://doi.org/10.2307/1512847. Accessed 15 Jun. 2022; V. L. Goldberg, 'Graces, Muses, and Arts: The Urns of Henry II and Francis I,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* vol. 29, 1966, pp. 206–18. *JSTOR,* https://doi.org/10.2307/750716. Accessed 15 Jun. 2022.

[4] K. N. Johnson, 'Portraits of Modern Life: The Camden Town Group and Working-Class Women Subjects,' *The British Art Journal,* vol. 20, no. 1, 2019, pp. 74–81. *JSTOR,* https://www.jstor.org/stable/48617290. Accessed 15 Jun. 2022.

Research Imperative

By comprehending the depictions of two women, my intention is to address the issue of female subjectivity, the ambiguous disposition of the female subject, and the difficulty of theorising *the feminine* within the masculine Symbolic order. Throughout this thesis, the terms *feminine* and *masculine* are used relationally, signifying modes of the human psyche that form the foundation of the Symbolic order. This order constitutes a domain encompassing 'the dimension of language and the function of speech in general,' through which subjectivity is mediated within society and culture.[5] In other words, these terms do not directly correlate with social constructs of gender or biological sex. Rather, they indicate ways of comprehending and making sense of historical eras, present moments, and the virtuality of the future.

The philosopher and psycholinguist Luce Irigaray identifies the binary underpinnings of the Symbolic order, an intricate 'socio-economic-politico-cultural complex in historical time,' as a deep-seated issue for female exclusion, belittlement, and repression.[6] Within her theory of *sexual difference,* Irigaray critiques the masculine-centric conception of subjectivity which mirrors the viewpoints and interests of men. She contends that existing symbolic frameworks, in the broadest sense, do not sufficiently represent women.[7] Consequently, within the framework of hierarchical and dualistic power structures, there is no space for the female subject to emerge.[8] She states: 'Western philosophy, perhaps all philosophy, has been constructed around a singular subject. For centuries, no one imagined that different subjects might exist, or that man and woman in particular might be different subjects.'[9] Historically, the feminine has been constructed as the antithesis of the masculine, its Other, across cultural, philosophical, linguistic, psychoanalytic, and art-historical contexts.[10] Consequently, the sole remaining path for female subjects to articulate their own subjectivity and desire has been to endeavour for equality with the male subject and to assimilate frameworks established by Him.[11] Irigaray states:

[5] C. G. Jung and K. Kerenyi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology: The Myth of the Divine Child and the Mysteries of Eleusis,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series, 1969; F. Jameson, 'Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject,' *Yale French Studies*, no. 55/56, 1977, p. 350, https://doi.org/10.2307/2930443. Accessed 7 May 2022; S. Barzilai, 'Borders of Language: Kristeva's Critique of Lacan,' *PMLA*, vol. 106, no. 2, 1991, pp. 294–305. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/462664. Accessed 7 Jul. 2022.
[6] G. Pollock, 'To Inscribe in the Feminine: A Kristevan Impossibility? Or Femininity, Melancholy and Sublimation,' *parallax,* vol. 4, no.3, 1998, p. 97; L. Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One,* orig. 1977, trans. C. Porter and C. Burke, Ithaca and New York, Cornell University Press, 1985.
[7] Ibid.
[8] L. Irigaray and N. Guynn, 'The Question of the Other,' *Yale French Studies,* no. 87, Yale University Press, 1995, pp. 7–19.
[9] Ibid.
[10] See S. Freud, 'Female Sexuality,' orig. 1931, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXI (1927- 1931): The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents, and Other Works,* trans. J. Strachey, London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1961, pp. 221–244.
[11] Irigaray and Guynn, 1995.

The rejection, the exclusion of a female imaginary certainly puts woman in the position of experiencing herself only fragmentarily, in the little-structured margins of a dominant ideology, as waste, or excess, what is left of a mirror invested by the (masculine) "subject" to reflect himself, to copy himself.[12]

The images of two women, similarly, serve as a means of experiencing the feminine self "only fragmentarily." Consequently, discerning their intrinsic meaning in the traditional sense becomes nonsensical. However, when viewed as figurative gestures, they operate as forms of communication that radiate female vulnerability. By revealing the absence of female subjectivity within the Symbolic order, Irigaray further highlights the exclusion of women from the socio-cultural sphere as autonomous subjects. According to her argument, this context presents an immense difficulty for women to perceive themselves adequately as their unconscious 'does not have access to the means for its self-expression, since it is given form by a discourse springing from the interests of male subjectivity.'[13]

The philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, refusing to equate woman with the Other, '[n]ot wanting to be "second" with respect to the masculine subject, [...] asks, as a principle of subjectivity, to be man's equal, to be the same as, or similar to, him.'[14] For Irigaray, such an understanding is highly problematic. While, on the one hand, de Beauvoir's critique of 'the devalorization of woman as "secondary" in culture is valid,' on the other hand, 'that position entails a return to the singular, historically masculine, subject, and the invalidation of the possibility of a subjectivity other than man's.'[15] Paradoxically, what de Beauvoir achieves is precisely the position of women as "the second sex." To acknowledge the uneven foundation of the Symbolic order, Irigaray embraces 'a philosophical scandal: the subject is not *one*, nor is it singular.' Regarding the difficulty of defining female subjectivity, she argues:

To get out from under this all-powerful model of the one and the many, we must move on to the model of the two, a two which is not a replication of the same, nor one large and the other small, but made up of two which are truly different. The paradigm of the two lies in sexual difference.[16]

Here lies precisely the reason Irigaray emphasises the significance of the ill-sounded concept of *sexual difference,* often infamously linked with the anatomical differences between the sexes, and

---

[12] Irigaray, 1985, p. 30.
[13] C. Sjöholm, 'Crossing Lovers: Luce Irigaray's Elemental Passions,' *Hypatia*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2000, p. 68, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810526. Accessed 5 Oct 2021.
[14] Irigaray and Guynn, 1995, p. 8; See S. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, orig. 1949, trans. C. Borde and S. Malovany-Chevallier, New York, Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 2011.
[15] Irigaray and Guynn, 1995, p. 8.
[16] Ibid., pp. 11–12.

accused of essentialism which in turn is sometimes mistaken for biological determinism.[17] However, Irigaray's philosophical perspective is far from equating sexual difference to biological sex. Instead, as stated earlier, she attributes this difference primarily to language as the highest form of culture. Proposing a resolution to overcome the inherent instability within the Symbolic order, Irigaray argues that the structures of language, psychology, and culture must undergo simultaneous transformation alongside society, as they mutually influence one another.

Considering the precondition of the issue of female subjectivity is critical for this thesis, as it delves into the ontological form of femininity that remains largely unexplored. This contrasts with prevailing Western feminist themes which focus on power dynamics between genders, the masculine interpretation of femininity, as well as critique of the male gaze, art institutions, and means of artistic production. As noted by the art historian and cultural analyst Griselda Pollock, studying pictorial representations can be explicitly effective in analysing

> the histories of subjectivity, but it is also a creative space where forms may emerge to imagine and thus shift the alignments and possibilities of the psychic that will then have social and political effects at both the level of the social and political collectivity, and at that of the Symbolic.[18]

For this reason, the thesis harnesses the power of intuition and imaginative speculation in its analysis, free from the dominance of 'the phallic logic of subject formation,' to recognise and embrace female desire.[19] It is worth noting that while the thesis seeks to explore *the feminine,* it refrains from further reinforcing a binary structure. Instead, it suggests a continuous flux between symbolic opposites.

Aim and Research Questions

This thesis aims to comprehend the interchanging forces, desires, and demands that occur between myself as the viewer and the images of two women. To achieve this, it establishes a framework that navigates the theoretical and methodological tensions between art history and visual culture discourses, providing the basis for analysing the multitude of images. By drawing connections among the images, I aim to discern an easily perceptible internal logic of the motif which perpetually repeats itself. It needs to be mentioned that the analysis departs from the homogenisation of artworks as physical objects, instead, it embraces the multiplicity of the images, seeking to unveil the fundamental unity that imprints a compelling mental image of two

---

[17] M. Hatt and C. Klonk, *Art History: A Critical Introduction to Its Methods,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006, p. 148.
[18] Pollock, 1998, p. 98.
[19] G. Pollock, 'WHITHER ART HISTORY?,' *The Art Bulletin,* vol. 96 no. 1, 2014, pp. 9–33, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43947704, Accessed 06 Jan. 2022.

women. Therefore, the thesis is not concerned with the individual history and context of the images, rather, it surveys the pictorial surface and identifies common tendencies, symptoms, and visual signals. In this approach, I strive to glimpse something that evades each individual representation but emerges when the collective movement of the images is sensed. By incorporating issues of philosophy, linguistics, and psychoanalysis into the discussion, I aim to explore ways to contribute to the reconstruction of female subjectivity within the fields of art history and visual culture. Vice versa, representations, as a significant part of this exploration, play an intrinsic role in constructing, reconstructing, or deconstructing the ontological meaning of the feminine.

To organise the chaotic behaviour of the images and lay the foundation for structural analysis, I will construct *The Atlas of Two Women* — combining the extensive empirical research material into a tangible form.[20] Additionally, it is important to emphasise that the thesis does not seek to establish another rigid visual paradigm. Rather, through careful and sensitive observation, it aims to propose an open and interpretive reading of the motif of two women.

Each chapter of the thesis will be guided by the following research questions:
1. What theoretical and methodological framework can effectively unify the multiplicity of images depicting two women as a cohesive constellation?
2. How can images be thoughtfully assembled in the age of digital reproduction, where the viewer is continuously exposed to their multiplicity and sheer volume?
3. What could the paradoxical visual logic of the symptomatic visual motif of two women signify?

Background and Relevance

Since the period of the most radical questioning of Western thought in the late 1960s, the prevailing disciplinary paradigms of art history and visual studies have faced scrutiny through phenomenologically informed approaches. The art historian Keith Moxey introduces the tension between two fundamentally distinct ways of understanding the image: While 'a predominantly Anglo-American tradition approaches the image as cultural product filled with significance that needs to be deciphered,' the 'other perspectives originating in the English-, French-, and German-speaking worlds view it as an agent that provokes meaningful responses in its viewers.'[21] Spanning from semiotics to phenomenology, these perspectives make for a wide range of interpretations, highlighting both the potential of visual studies and its compatibility with the more established discipline of art history.

---

[20] I emulate Aby Warburg's method of constructing atlases that will be further discussed in the following sections of Theory and Method.
[21] K. Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History,* Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2013, p. 6.

Following the same reasoning, the art historian W. J. T. Mitchell distinguishes between the status of artwork from the status of image, stating that the latter refers to not only a physical object but also a mental image — something that cannot be easily eradicated.[22] This characteristic serves as a prerequisite for Mitchell to draw parallels between images and living organisms, discussing their intrinsic behaviour: how they persist, survive, multiply, expand, vanish, resurface, and regain prominence.[23] The contemporary behaviour of images, coupled with the rapid pace of viewership, establishes a significant context for Mitchell which he terms the "pictorial turn."[24] Within this context, Mitchell advocates for particular attention to the pictorial meaning and power, thereby shifting the conventional question of desire from artists and spectators to the images themselves.[25] As Moxey states,

> [b]ored with the *linguistic turn* and the idea that experience is mediated through the medium of language, many scholars are now convinced that we may sometimes have unmediated access to the world around us, that the subject/object distinction, so long a hallmark of the epistemological enterprise, is no longer valid. [...] In art history and visual studies, the disciplines that study visual culture, the terms *pictorial* and *iconic turn* currently refer to an approach to visual artefacts that recognizes these ontological demands.[26]

The problematisation of the binary paradigm runs much deeper than the viewer-image relation in art history and visual culture, holding significant importance for feminist cultural analysis. Concurrently, the creation of a critical counter-discourse against male-dominated realms within the social, political, and symbolic spheres gained considerable relevance. This indicates that structures of colonialism, sexual difference, sexuality, and language were subject to scrutiny through a substantial array of feminist and queer theories and practices. The Feminist Art Movement sparked an inevitable interest in exploring female artists and representations of women, while simultaneously criticising the social, cultural, and economic obstacles they encountered.[27] As a result, a solid framework capable of examining not only the cultural history and its iconography, but also, given their substantial interconnection, the prevailing discourses of philosophy, linguistics, and psychoanalysis was established.

---

[22] W. J. T., Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 2.

[23] Ibid., pp. 76–106; W. J. T. Mitchell, *Image Science: Iconology, Visual Culture, and Media Aesthetics,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2015, pp. 18–21.

[24] W. J. T., Mitchell, *Picture Theory,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 11–34; Mitchell, 2005, p. 28.

[25] Mitchell, 2005.

[26] Ibid., p. 54.

[27] The Feminist Art Movement refers to the efforts and achievements of feminists to create art that reflects women's lives and experiences while also aiming to transform the basis for producing and perceiving contemporary art. Additionally, it sought to increase the visibility of women within the realms of art history and artistic practice.

In the contemporary moment, as Pollock points out, feminism navigates the complex territory between trauma and cultural memory, remembrance and iconography, and memory and virtuality.[28] Pollock perceives the current feminist undertaking as a profoundly urgent concern and insists on using the term "feminist," entangled with and critically examined in relation to issues of class, race, sexuality, and gender. This approach also seeks to transcend the marginalisation of the concept of sexual difference feminism. Furthermore, Pollock critiques the conventional linear progressive model that often characterises the study of feminist theory, represented metaphorically as waves. Instead, she perceives this process as a dynamic and fertile space filled with numerous, each essential, theoretical engagements. She insists on understanding feminism not as a nostalgic memory but as a compelling critique that cannot be easily condensed by those who are its subjects. Thus, for women, apart from the social objective of deconstructing the phallocentric and patriarchal order, feminism represents a space for navigating trauma, continual self-overcoming, and vague virtuality of the future.

Building upon Pollock's agenda, this thesis aims to underline the ellipsis within prevalent art-historical and visual narratives. Its objective is to offer an alternative perspective on the representations of women, thereby challenging conventional approaches to interpreting history, memory, and the virtuality of female subjectivity.

Empirical Material and Delimitation

The primary empirical material investigated in this thesis is a self-assembled collection of images portraying two women. The gesture of *being two* appears to traverse from one image to another, spanning diverse locations and persisting across historical periods to the present.[29] This collection encompasses various forms of artistic expression, including painting, drawing, and sculpture, as well as fashion, documentary, and ethnographic photography.[30] Among a few commonly recognised examples are paintings such as *The Travelling Companions* by Augustus Leopold Egg, *The Two Fridas* by Frida Kahlo, *Five* by Lubaina Himid, *Zwei Mädchen am Fenster* by Georg Schrimpf, *L'abandon: Les Deux Amies* by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *The Sisters on the Balcony* by Caspar David Friedrich, *Two Tahitian Women* by Paul Gauguin. The collection also includes sculptures such as

---

[28] G. Pollock, 'Is Feminism a Trauma, a Bad Memory, or a Virtual Future?,' *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies,* vol. 27, no. 2, 2016, pp. 27–61; *The Holberg Symposium in honour of Griselda Pollock: "Is Feminism a Bad Memory?,"* [online video], 2021, https://youtu.be/LChmeAPhpUs, (accessed 12 March 2022).

[29] Due to the fact that I have collected images through digital platforms and did not have a chance to visit physical archives within the scope of this research, the images in the collection are mostly Western-influenced, reflecting the extensive documentation and digitisation efforts surrounding Western art.

[30] The thesis does not concentrate on cinematic examples; however, it is worth mentioning that the motif also appears in several films, including *Persona* and *The Silence* by Ingmar Bergman, *Mullholand Drive* by David Lynch, *La Notte* by Michelangelo Antonioni, *Parallel Mothers* by Pedro Almodóvar, *Swimming Pool* by François Ozon, *The Double Life of Véronique* by Krzysztof Kieślowski, among others.

Crown Princess Louise of Prussia and her Sister Frederica of Mecklenburg-Strelitz by Johann Gottfried Schadow and *Two Women* by Henri Matisse. Additionally, the collection incorporates fashion editorial campaigns by photographers such as Helmut Newton, Ellen Von Unwerth, Steven Meisel, Mario Sorrenti, Harley Weir, and more, as well as documentary and ethnographic photographs from online archives of various museums and galleries.

As previously mentioned, the extensive empirical material will be comprehended through the construction of an atlas as a way to transform the seemingly chaotic behaviour of the images into a structured, tangible, and perceptible form. *The Atlas of Two Women,* comprising 20 panels and 213 images, will serve as the second volume of this thesis. The process of selecting, categorising, and arranging images against a black background has been guided by two primary reciprocal signals: *Glances* and *Gestures*. Both categories gather images based on their formal visual communication properties which are visible on the surface of the atlas. However, instead of solely concentrating on individual gestures, signals, or postures, the analysis aims to trace the movement of interrelation between the depicted figures and the viewer.

Within the category of *Glances* (**Panels. 1–8**), priority is given to images where corporeal gesturality is somewhat restrained, and the visual connection between internal figures and the viewer holds greater prominence. The category of *Gestures* (**Panels. 9–20**), on the other hand, encompasses images that feature dynamic gesturalities, showcasing everyday activities and the intricate physical and mental interplay between women. By choosing *Glances* and *Gestures* as the sole categories, the thesis seeks to challenge ocularcentrism, a tendency within art-historical and visual studies to privilege sight over other senses, by incorporating a tangible dimension of seeing into the analysis. That is to say, just as gestures are forms of bodily non-verbal communication, glances are perceived as corporeal responses that the body involuntarily performs.

Given the thesis's focus on the mental image evoked by observing the flow of images, the atlas becomes a paradoxical object — containing hundreds of images while precipitating as a singular mental impression. The choice of excluding artwork titles and artist names, reserving them for the appendix, is not accidental as harnessing the aesthetic quality and seductive materiality is of crucial importance for grasping the reciprocal drive that interchanges between the viewer and the image collection.[31] To some extent, the creation of the atlas involves imaginative speculation which contributes to understanding the internal logic of the symbolic feminine.

The discussion presented in the thesis will not delve into the socio-political implications of the images in question. This includes varied conceptions of class division, female beauty

---

[31] It needs to be indicated that some images are not even traceable on Google Lens. Consequently, in the Appendix, figures 42, 81, 138, 181 and 197 are referenced as "Information unknown."

standards, gender of the artists, gender roles, means of artistic production, and other related aspects. Instead, the analysis strives to comprehend the images as symbolic representations wherein the idea of femininity is materially articulated, offering insight into the state of the feminine psyche.

Theory

The forthcoming discussion introduces a theoretical framework aimed at investigating the manifold, fluid, and complex object of seeing — the atlas. As a heuristic phenomenological tool for perceiving the multiplicity of images, I draw upon the concept of constellation proposed by the philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892–1940). This concept offers an open approach to reading, offering a possibility to interpret the insatiable object.[32] It considers two phases of the viewing experience: firstly, a chaotic, presence-driven, and unstructured mode of engaging with images fueled by curiosity; and secondly, the structural grouping of images into constellations that establishes analytical distance to discern their connections.[33] The thesis treats both phases of viewing as equally essential and integrates them into the construction of the theoretical and methodological framework. Additionally, in Chapter I, I present three self-constructed models to vividly illustrate both modes of seeing and the intricate spatiotemporal dimensions inherent in the process of reception. This practice does not claim to offer an exhaustive and comprehensive interpretation of the image constellation. Instead, it proposes an open mode of seeing that emerges through negotiation among the viewer, the images, and theoretical knowledge.[34] Such a way of seeing cannot provide a detailed description of each individual example, but instead, it will demonstrate the collective performance of the images as a constellation. In this manner, the constellation becomes a paradoxical concept, designating a tool of seeing and an object of seeing at the same time.[35] The boundless potential it offers also highlights the limitations of historical-theoretical knowledge, which holds particular relevance for the feminist endeavour to perceive representations of women from a renewed perspective and to dare articulate what the thesis calls the *feminine.*

Through the act of imaginative interpretation of the atlas as a dialectical object, the potential for retrospective redemption of ignored, oppressed, or neglected femininity emerges.

[32] A. Rabinbach, 'Introduction to Walter Benjamin's "Doctrine of the Similar,"' *New German Critique,* no. 17, 1979, p. 62, https://doi.org/10.2307/488009. Accessed 21 Apr. 2022; W. Benjamin, 'On the Mimetic Faculty,' orig. 1933, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part 2, 1931–1934,* trans. R. Livingstone, ed. M. W. Jennings et al., Cambridge & London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999a, p. 720; A. Krauß, 'Constellations: A Brief Introduction,' *MLN,* vol. 126, no. 3, 2011, p. 439, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23012670. Accessed 12 Apr. 2022.
[33] Krauß, 2011.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

For the philosopher Giorgio Agamben '[t]he historical condition of human beings is inseparable from their condition as speaking beings.'[36] Therefore, 'the problem of the unsayable (as a "conflict . . . between what is expressed and expressible and what is inexpressible and unexpressed"), which is characteristic of human language, cannot exist in pure language.'[37] To navigate this, the analysis deliberately avoids conventional categorisations and linguistic expressions commonly employed in traditional art history. Instead, it aims to reach an interpretation that acknowledges the kaleidoscopic impact of visual perception. The analysis approaches the images with a wandering glance across the pictorial surface and demonstrates the inherent incompleteness of each image. Through this method, it endeavours to unveil the untold history and future of femininity — the memories and potentialities that remain unrecognised, particularly by women themselves.

Certainly, the image atlas could have taken a different form due to its inherent openness. However, the focus on optical and tactile cues, *Glances* and *Gestures,* is far from accidental. The intention is to direct attention toward the non-linguistic, unspoken yet palpable essence that gleams through the tangible representations under scrutiny. As a result, traditional categories, vocabularies, and terminologies commonly employed in art history — such as the female nude, the naked body, the landscape, the sublime, the uncanny, scale, layers of foreground and background, atmospheric and linear perspective, lines, primary colours, lights and shadows, tones, textures, and patterns — are intentionally sidestepped. This avoidance stems from the thesis's aspiration to unveil something different, something underexplored, something that eludes each individual image.

The theoretical and methodological gesture of surveying the surface finds its origins in the work of the art historian and cultural theorist Aby Warburg (1866–1929), who introduced the problem of memory into art history, aiming to explore the objective and subjective psycho-historical forces that have shaped Western culture. Throughout the thesis, the term "Warburgian tradition" is employed to refer to a specific perspective on cultural history influenced by his iconological approach and the expansion of art history as a discipline.[38] The reflections presented in this thesis are guided by the leverage of the philosopher and art historian Georges Didi-Huberman who reinterprets the Warburgian practice, incorporates it within a broader context, and complements it with other theoretical frameworks.[39] Warburg's latest

---

[36] G. Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy,* ed. and trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 51.

[37] Ibid., p. 52.

[38] H. Bredekamp, 'A Neglected Tradition? Art History as *Bildwissenschaft,*' *Critical Inquiry,* vol. 29, no. 3, 2003, pp. 418–28. *JSTOR,* https://doi.org/10.1086/376303. Accessed 17 May. 2022; M. Iversen, 'Retrieving Warburg's Tradition,' *Art History,* vol. 16, no. 4, 1993, pp. 541–553.

[39] G. Didi-Huberman, 'Artistic Survival: Panofsky vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time,' *Common Knowledge,* vol. 9, no. 2, 2003; G. Didi-Huberman, *Atlas, or the Anxious Gay Science,* trans. Shane Lillis, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

endeavour, the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne,* encompasses 63 panels and 971 images, including photographic reproductions of artworks, newspaper clippings, coins, astrological charts, stamps, and advertisements, stretching from Antiquity through the Renaissance to contemporary culture. By delving into etymology, mythological foundations, historical context, and the role of atlases as educational tools, this discussion offers a deeper understanding of the Warburgian practice and its potential to organise material in the image-saturated era of digital reproduction.[40]

Additionally, I intend to incorporate Warburgian concepts such as *Nachleben* — the survival or afterlife of images, and *Pathosformeln* — the corporeal gestures of human emotions. This integration serves the purpose of diagnosing the symptomatic recurrence of the yet-unknown visual motif of two women in a psycho-historical context. It also aims to highlight the potential for exploring the ontological implications of the feminine through pictorial representations of female relationships.[41] Gestures, as Didi-Huberman points out, lack a fixed cultural, geographic, or national dimension.[42] They travel the world through images without boundaries, relating to the dynamic anthropology of corporeal forms in which the dialectics between the psychic and corporeal are revealed.[43] By analysing their pictorial surface through internal glances and gestures, I aim to illustrate how the realm of the feminine has been overlooked, ignored, and even oppressed within predominant masculine structures. However, in examining the image atlas in question, the discussion not only emphasises the aspects of ignorance towards women but also the latent potentialities that can be strengthened to address the issue of female subjectivity.

The interpretative reading, nonetheless, constitutes a complicated mnemonic operation that necessitates a reimagining of the past. To penetrate through the homogenous course of history and retrospectively reinvent it, I utilise the Benjaminian concept of historical materialism. This framework focuses on the present moment within a historical instance, treating the revision of history as an imaginative, creative, and redemptive act.[44] This redemptive function enables the reconstruction of radically fragmented historical instances, enabling the reimagining of a different future while disrupting the linear, impure, and progressive mode of time. Such an approach to

[40] G. Didi-Huberman, *Atlas, or the Anxious Gay Science,* trans. Shane Lillis, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2018; J. Sprung, *Bildatlas, åskådning och reproduktion: Aby Warburgs Mnemosyneatlas och visualiseringen av konsthistoria, kring 1800/1900,* Diss., København, Københavns Universitet, 2011.

[41] G. Didi-Huberman, 'Dialektik des Monstrums: Aby Warburg and the symptom paradigm,' *Art History*, vol. 24, no. 5, 2001, pp. 621–645.

[42] *Georges Didi-Huberman: Discharged Atlas: Uprising as 'Pathosformel,'* [online video], 2016, https://youtu.be/wPbzta4zVqE, (accessed 23 November 2021).

[43] Ibid.

[44] R. Beiner, 'Walter Benjamin's Philosophy of History,' *Political Theory,* vol. 12, no. 3, 1984, p. 424, http://www.jstor.org/stable/191516. Accessed 1 Dec. 2021; V. R. Schwartz, 'Walter Benjamin for Historians,' *The American Historical Review,* vol. 106, no. 5, 2001, p. 1740, https://doi.org/10.2307/2692744. Accessed 01 Dec. 2021; C. Cappelletto, 'Trace and Source in Walter Benjamin's Thought: About a Polarity,' *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics,* no. 63/64, 2013, p. 161, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23647761. Accessed 17 Nov. 2021.

history disentangles images from their individual temporal contexts and unites them in the anachronistic mode of time.[45] Consequently, the atlas becomes an anachronistic object where heterogeneous temporalities of the images coexist in the current instant. In this manner, the thesis complicates the notion of a progressive historical time and attends to a multi-temporal object that is saturated with memorable symbolic figurations of the feminine. This aspect holds utmost importance as it provides fertile ground to understand the complex behaviour of the images of two women in the current moment and to reimagine their prior art-historical receptions.

Method

The cultural theorist Mieke Bal, while discussing the significance of interdisciplinarity as a challenging scholarly research practice, argues that the foundation for heuristic and methodological exploration should be sought in concepts rather than in methods that have become dogmatised paradigms.[46] She posits that concepts are inherently fluid and dynamic — similar to images — constantly in flux, traversing between historical periods, geographical regions, academic disciplines, and scholars who employ them. These *travelling concepts* possess a methodological potential, serving as dynamic analytical tools and acting as 'the sites of debate, awareness of difference, and tentative exchange.'[47] In the context of this thesis, this perspective holds high relevance as it underlines the connection between concepts and methodology — a hallmark of Warburgian thought. This proximity, in turn, offers a flexible framework with boundless potentialities for emerging modes of seeing, research practices, and critical inquiries. Therefore, the analysis of the image atlas, informed by travelling concepts, transcends 'the rigid separation of knowledge and experience, thought from affect.'[48] As Bal states, such practice

> is *not* a call for subjectivism, however: the relation between objectivism and subjectivism is not a simple binary opposition. It requires taking the subjective nature of seeing or "reading" images into account: as an objective fact, that is. It entails the need to do something quite difficult: simultaneously to analyze the object and the reading, the relation between the two [...], and the anchoring of the one in the other and the reverse.[49]

---

[45] G. Didi-Huberman, 'Before the Image, Before Time: The Sovereignty of Anachronism,' in C. Farago and R. Zwijnenberg (eds.), *Compelling Visuality: The Work of Art in and out of History,* Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 37.

[46] M. Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide,* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2002; M. Bal, 'Working with Concepts,' *European Journal of English Studies,* vol. 13, no. 1, 2009, pp. 13–23.

[47] Bal, 2002, p. 13; Bal, 2009, pp. 16–18.

[48] G. Pollock, 'Writing from the heart,' in J. Stacey and J. Wolff (eds.), *Writing Otherwise: Experiments in Cultural Criticism,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2013, p. 23.

[49] Bal, M. et al., 'Art History and Its Theories,' *The Art Bulletin,* vol. 78, no. 1, 1996, p. 6, https://doi.org/10.2307/3046154. Accessed 1 May 2022.

This shift in methodology, as previously introduced through the epistemology of constellations, reinforces the departure from a simplistic binary structure of the relation between the viewer as subject and the image as object. The art historian Susanne von Falkenhausen introduces a tension between art history and visual culture, proposing the term *seeing* as a bridge between both methodological vocabularies.[50] This term serves as an alternative to the concept of *visuality* present in visual culture, which 'refers to how vision is constructed in various ways,' and the typical modus operandi of art history, which often remains unaware of its own practices of seeing.[51] This proposition opens up the possibility of approaching images from a subjective perspective and respecting the otherness of the visual per se.[52] The subjective perspective of my own, therefore, guides the practice of seeing, influenced by the contemporary image-saturated culture, and simultaneously, takes female subjectivity into consideration.

The thesis primarily emulates Warburg's method of assembling images on a black background. This approach demonstrates the incomplete character of each image and creates a formal spatial quality where exploration, discovery, and invention take place.[53] To conduct an analysis driven by intuitive, imaginative, and interpretative modes of seeing, one that embraces the unfamiliarity of the images, the thesis focuses on the reciprocal recognition between *The Atlas of Two Women* and the viewer, employing the art historian Wolfgang Kemp's methodology of the aesthetics of reception.[54] Kemp's approach delves into the reception process of any representation which involves the interrelation between an image and a viewer. He contends that the image stimulates the viewer because the function of beholding is already embedded within visual forms of communication — *forms of address*.[55]

To trace and interpret the signals of visual communication directed at the viewer by the image collection, I will employ Kemp's five analytical levels which will be extensively discussed in Chapter III. However, since this method is intended for individual artworks, images, or visual phenomena, it necessitates modification to render it effective for the multiplicity of images, specifically the mental image of two women. Through this adaptation, the thesis aims to bridge the significance of the viewer-image relationship with the Warburgian practice and comprehend the reciprocal interplay of forces, drives, and demands between the viewer and the images.

---

[50] S. von Falkenhausen, *Beyond the Mirror: Seeing in Art History and Visual Culture Studies,* trans. Nicholas Grindell, Berlin, transcript publishing, 2020, pp. 10–11.
[51] G. Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials,* Fourth Edition, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016, p. 2.
[52] Falkenhausen, 2020, p. 72.
[53] Didi-Huberman, 2018, pp. 4–5.
[54] W. Kemp, 'The Work of Art and Its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception,' in M. A. Cheetham, M. A. Holly, and K. Moxey (eds.), *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 180–196.
[55] Ibid.

Moreover, I intend to demonstrate that by twisting and folding ideas, concepts, and methods, unconventional interpretations of the feminine can be attained.

Previous Research

The art-historical discourse of the nineteenth century revolved around a tension 'between the optical and the tactile senses' which 'was in part continued, but to a large extent replaced by the term "gaze."'[56] The gaze, often utilised as a means of dissecting formal, social, and political aspects exploring matters of power, manipulation, and desire, gained prominence through the feminist critique, initially pioneered by the film theorist Laura Mulvey.[57] According to Mulvey, cinematic viewing involves a power dynamic wherein the female is subject to narcissistic identification with an eroticised object, while the male spectator, as the 'bearer of the look,' derives voyeuristic pleasure and holds dominion over her.[58] Despite the validity of Mulvey's ideas in certain cinematic contexts, her conception has remained relatively stagnant, failing to evolve into a productive framework; instead, it has 'preserved in the form in which it first emerged,' still confined within the subject-object paradigm due to idealisation.[59] In contrast, the art historian Margaret Olin recontextualises gaze theory and expands it beyond the notion that 'all human relations are power relations,' offering the possibility to perceive the gaze as a socially affirmative act.[60] In the context of this thesis, the glance is conceived as a counterpoint to the gaze in the sense that it introduces a corporeal dimension of vision.

The tension between the gaze and the glance further emphasises the contrast between movement and fixation. Canonical practices of observing pictorial representations typically aim to capture a phenomenon initially, firmly fixate it, and then reflect on it. However, when the subject of seeing is in constant motion, flashing, and flickering with irregular rhythm, the act of fixing the gaze becomes both impractical and illogical. As articulated by the art historian Norman Bryson, when compared to the gaze, 'the glance addresses vision in the durational temporality of the viewing subject; it does not seek to bracket out the process of viewing.'[61] Instead, seeing is performed as *übersicht* in Warburgian terms — overlooking and surveying, scanning the surface to grasp the essential elements that form the mental image. In this regard, delving into discussions

---

[56] M. Olin, 'Gaze,' in R. S. Nelson and R. Shiff (eds.), *Critical Terms for Art History,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 208.
[57] Ibid., p. 209.
[58] Mulvey, 1988.
[59] V. Burgin, 'Perverse Space,' in *Sexuality & Space,* ed. B. Colomina, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton Architectural Press, 1992.
[60] Olin, 1996, p. 216.
[61] N. Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1983, p. 94.

about brushstrokes, the hidden intentions of an artist, and the enigmatic character of an artwork's true meaning becomes preposterous in itself.

This perspective is further reinforced in Chapter II through the presentation of Benjamin's analysis of mechanical reproduction — a substantial technological shift occurring around the 1900s that rendered 'outmoded concepts, such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery,' obsolete.[62] Benjamin argues that in the process of copying and disseminating, the aura and authority of the original object diminish, leading to challenges in determining authenticity.[63] This emphasis has become even more relevant in the era of digital reproduction where the viewer is constantly bombarded with a multitude of images.[64] The Warburgian art-historical practice, I argue, becomes increasingly relevant, habitual, and urgent when viewed against the backdrop of rapid image expansion and the technological context of contemporary viewership. Furthermore, the second chapter delves into exploring the plurality of image use through various art-historical and visual practices.

Further theoretical perspectives that I present include explorations by Griselda Pollock, who approaches Warburg's agenda from a feminist and gendered standpoint.[65] She discusses the potential of Warburg's proposition of a different concept of time in art history to comprehend issues related to femininity. Pollock argues that contemporary feminist considerations often adopt a killing-of-the-past mentality and approach — disregarding the significance of investigating the contradictive history of the oppression of femaleness, along with its potential for emancipatory and critical inquiries.[66] The empirical material at hand indeed encompasses both the history of repression and the potential for transformation. The representations of two women are full of apparent contradictions, yet paradoxically, they radiate harmony and stillness. Their gestures carry not only connotations of oppression, disaster, and pain, but also hope, love, and joy.

Thesis Outline

Chapter I aims to provide an exposition of how images can be approached from a fresh standpoint, rooted in theories that engage with the difficulties, complexities, and potential challenges of interpreting a multiplicity of images as a cohesive flow. It delves into the inception of image constellations and further explores the encounter between the viewer and the recurring

---

[62] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* orig. 1936, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt, Berlin, Schocken: Random House, 1998b.
[63] Ibid., p. 6.
[64] D. Douglas, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction (An Evolving Thesis: 1991–1995),' *Leonardo,* vol. 28, no. 5, 1995, pp. 381–86, https://doi.org/10.2307/1576221. Accessed 13 Apr. 2022.
[65] G. Pollock, *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive,* London and New York, Routledge, 2007.
[66] Pollock, 2014.

patterns of visual material within the vast array of images prevalent in the digital age. The concept of the image itself intentionally diverges from the conventional notion of the artwork, signifying not only a physical object but also a mental and psychological entity that can be retained in memory, recollected, and revived. Consequently, the act of seeing images fundamentally departs from established art-historical practices of observing and analysing artworks. It embraces the viewer's curiosity, fascination, and spontaneous associations that transpire in the fleeting moments of encountering images that convey, communicate, and express.

Chapter II introduces the Warburgian concept of the atlas — a non-linear approach to comprehending connections between a set of images. This framework enables the intricate examination of image constellations, countering the linear and positivistic methodologies of traditional art-historical practices. From this vantage point, the motif of two women within the expansive history of pictorial representation recovers redemptive and emancipatory potential that extends beyond the confines of conventional visual narratives. The Warburgian approach, when strengthened with Benjamin's theorisations of the unprecedented proliferation of images due to their mechanical reproducibility, appears far more habitual. In the digital realm, where artworks undergo constant copying, modification, manipulation, or even forgery, images begin to mimic living organisms inasmuch as they acquire the ability of mutation, transformation, and evolution. In response, the need to adapt to this new environment within practices of art history and visual studies resulted in the emergence of hyperimages — an ever-evolving practice of arranging visual artefacts synchronically and anachronistically. Consequently, the image atlas disrupts linear structures while simultaneously reimagining them retrospectively — liberating images and visual narratives from the tendency to acquire fixed, contextually embedded meanings and interpretations.

In Chapter III, *The Atlas of Two Women* is examined from a feminist standpoint, aiming to critique the dominant hegemonic modes of thought that revolve around the male gaze as the dominant paradigm for perceiving femininity. This chapter also seeks to challenge the conventional portrayal of history as a linear progression devoid of ruptures or catastrophes. Employing Kemp's methodology of the aesthetic of reception, the viewer-image relationship is further scrutinised — asserting that their reciprocal interaction has the potential to offer fresh and unconventional perspectives on perceiving visual representations. By substituting the rigid gaze paradigm with the fleeting concept of the glance, along with its inherent gestural instability, this approach foregrounds the corporeal, material, and tangible nature of encountering images. It also highlights the involuntary and often unconscious connection between the image and the viewer. In doing so, the symbolic gesture of *being-two* unveils the possibility of transcending oppressive binary paradigms.

CHAPTER I

Seeing the Constellation of Images

Emergence of the Image Constellation

Thousands and thousands of images as if they were shimmering stars in the midst of the night, constantly enfold fascinated observers — moving, floating, and dancing around them — carrying miscellaneous messages, associations, and information.[67] Catching a glimpse depends on the correlation between the chaotic presence of images and the contingency of an observing vision. This frivolous glancing, to represent the visual experience graphically, can be seen as a coincidental, turbulent, and complex spatio-temporal trajectory of movement from one image to another (**Figure. 1**). From a subjective viewing perspective, due to multiple reasons, some images might attract the viewer more forcefully than others. Such images have a tendency either to return and reoccur or repeat themselves in various other pictorial forms. Precisely by noticing the repetitive recurrence of images, the *encounter* between the viewer and a resembling pattern of images takes place.[68] The more frequently one encounters similar image types, the more vigorously they embed themselves in both conscious and unconscious memory. This is how I have come to discern the symptomatic, prevailing, and ubiquitous visual motif of two women and developed a particularly enduring interest in it. Now, judging the intuitive fascination with the motif retrospectively, as I investigate the phenomenon from a scholarly point of view, I happen to realise that it has not been simply a matter of chance, but rather, the weight of certain circumstances that had necessitated attending to the vast array of pictorial examples which depict two women on their own. Understanding the interrelatedness of forces, desires, and demands that interchange between me, as a beholder, and the images themselves is one of the main intentions of the research.

This perspective aligns with the legacy of W. J. T. Mitchell, who has argued that the contemporary world bears witness to a fundamental shift in art history and visual culture, as he terms it — a "pictorial turn."[69] According to Mitchell, while questions surrounding pictorial representation have long been intertwined with philosophy, psychoanalysis, the history of religion, and other disciplines, the advent of the modern digital age, 'often characterized as a

---

[67] Aby Warburg also discussed how images move or fly through the term *Bildträger,* image carrier, which refers to the material support that conveys the mental image into the world, making it visible and transferable; I. B. Fliedl and C. Geissmar (eds.), The *Einleitung* to *Mnemosyne,* in *Die Beredsamkeit des Leibes: Zur Körpersprache in der Kunst,* Salzburg, Rezidenz Verlag, 1992, pp. 156–173.

[68] I am drawing on Deleuzian theory which posits that the genesis of the act of thinking does not arise from an object of recognition but rather from an object of encounter that does not provide the comfort of familiarity compared to the former; G. Deleuze, 'The Image of Thought,' In *Difference & Repetition,* trans. P. Patton, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 129–167.

[69] Mitchell, 1994, pp. 11–34; Mitchell, 2005, p. 28.

"postmodern" era,' has made these questions impossible to evade.[70] This transformation underscores the need to pay particular attention to 'the question of pictorial meaning and power.'[71] In other words, to scrutinise the realm of visual representations, their meaning and behaviour in contemporary culture, Mitchell shifts the conventional question of desire from artists or spectators to images themselves. In this way, the viewer acquires a humble position, growing attentive, open, and receptive to the sensations the images may evoke. The set of inquiries into the power of images, as presented in Mitchell's thought-provoking work *What Do Pictures Want?,* aptly exemplifies the thesis's previously mentioned objective of comprehending the implications of the interdependence between the beholder and the images of two women:

> What do the images want from us? Where are they leading us? What is it that they *lack*, that they are inviting us to fill in? What desires have we projected onto them, and what form do those desires take as they are projected back at us, making demands upon us, seducing us to feel and act in specific ways?[72]

To explore this multifaceted set of inquiries, several particularities of the images, the viewer and their interrelation need to be considered. Let me begin with the images first. Each image under study has its own date and place of emergence, scope of expansion, and duration of existence. Thus, from the historical past to the immediate moment of encounter, they have spread across the globe. These factors significantly contribute to forming a unique historical background and an ever-changing cultural context for each image under examination. Within the theoretical framework that the thesis aims to construct, providing a detailed description of each image's historical background or present context could lead to contradictions. What remains relevant, however, is establishing connections between the images to contemplate an undisclosed internal logic that continuously causes the visual pattern to reappear, making it readily perceptible even without the need for extensive visual literacy.

When envisioning the intricate scheme of connections among images in three-dimensional space, a structure akin to a constellation becomes apparent (**Figure. 2**). The extent of this configuration, depending on newly emerging points of encounter with similar image types, is ever-expanding. This growth, however, does not hinder the viewer from investigating the complexity of the obtained structure, as it would remain essentially unvaried regardless of expansion. That is to say, within the confines of the thesis, the details of dissimilarities between the images are of minimal importance. What truly matters is the element that unifies all the images — the essential logic that links and binds them together as a

---

[70] Mitchell, 1994, pp. 15–16.
[71] Mitchell, 2005, p. 28.
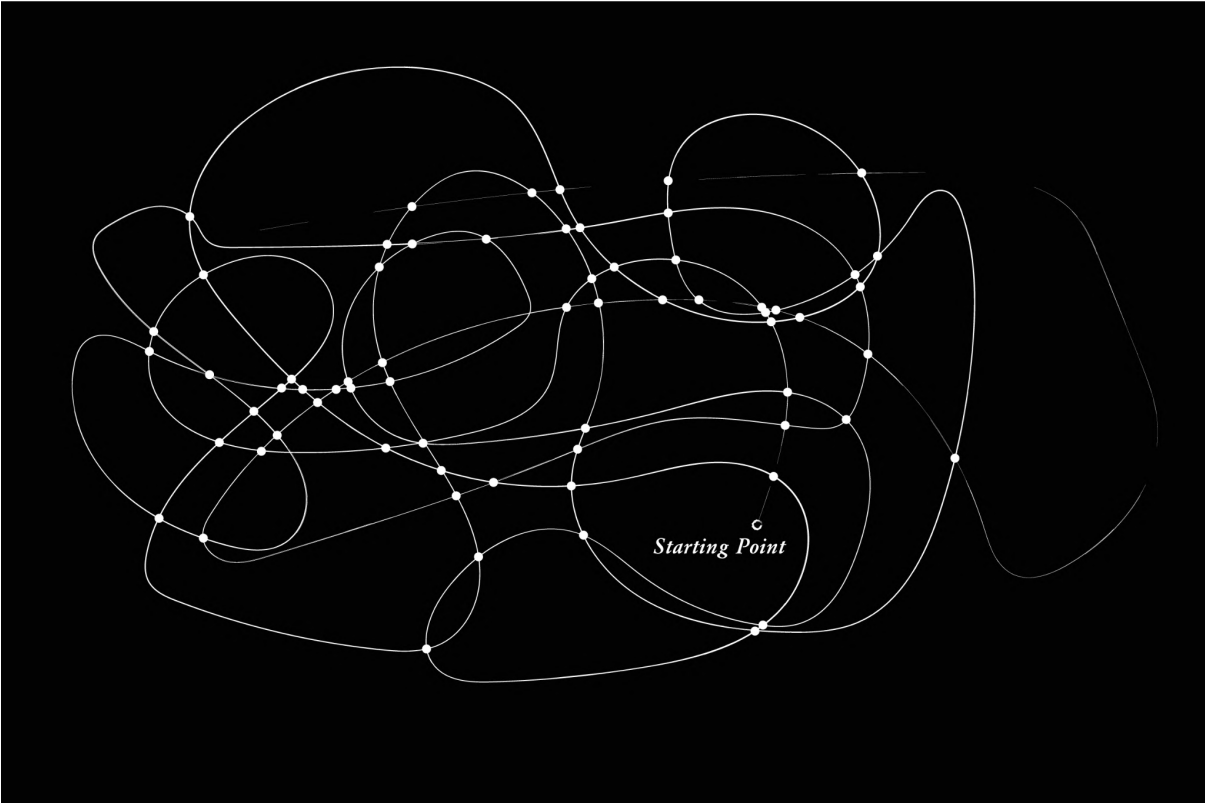[72] Ibid., p. 25.
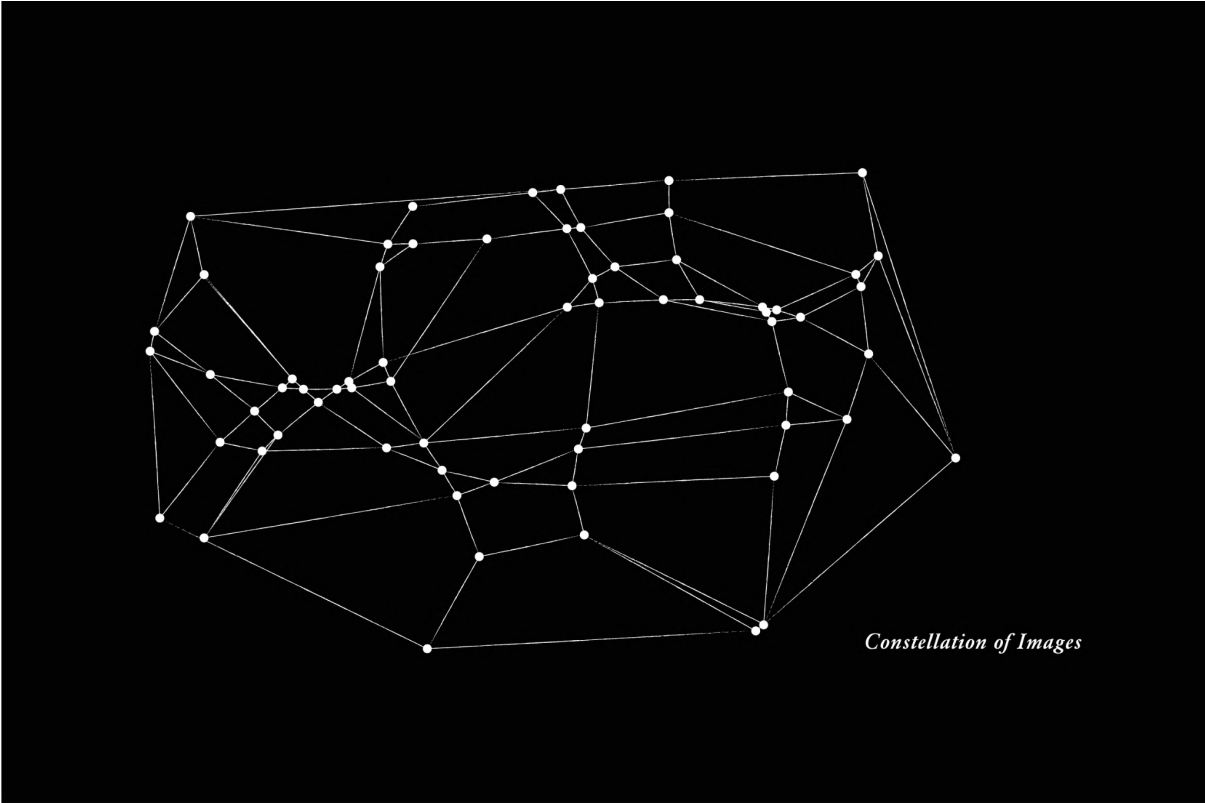
Figure. 1 The Trajectory of Movement

Figure. 2 The Structure of Image Constellation

constellation. This prompts the first research question: What theoretical and methodological framework can effectively unify the multiplicity of images depicting two women as a cohesive constellation?

Before delving into the exploration of theoretical and methodological capacities, I will once more examine the presented models and emphasise a dual-layered experience of engaging with the motif of two women. The first model displays a chaotic, fluid, presence-driven, unconscious, and yet-unstructured everyday perception of the images guided by curiosity (**Figure. 1**). The second model represents the constellation, an analytical framework that introduces a critical distance from the images, facilitating the comprehension of their interconnectedness (**Figure. 2**). The points of intersection where encounters with the image type occur are denoted by white dots. In both models, the number and arrangement of these dots remain consistent. What alters is the experience of perception — demonstrating the difference between chaotic and structured modes of seeing. The thesis treats both phases of this experience equally significant and aims to integrate them into the foundation of a theoretical and methodological framework which in turn will underpin the subsequent analysis of the motif.[73]

The reference to a constellation is not accidental. Walter Benjamin perceived '[t]he emergence of constellations as configurations on the surface of the sky' as the beginning of any reading.[74] In his own words: '"To read what was never written." Such reading is the most ancient: reading prior to all languages, from entrails, the stars, or dances.'[75] In Benjaminian philosophy of language, the genesis of language formation, and therefore knowledge per se, is closely connected to imaginative and creative practices that were formerly occult and hermetic.[76] The dynamic foundation of such practices, both anthropologically and historically, is the mimetic faculty — the highest human capacity for not only producing but also recognising similarities.[77] Georges

---

[73] Here, I draw inspiration from the literary theorist H. U. Gumbrecht who critiques the absolute dominance of the modern hermeneutical paradigm and argues that it is incomplete for analytical work. He redirects the focus to something that exists prior to its expression in language. Such thinking points to the notion that, in scholarly work, presence effects and meaning effects operate in conjunction, emphasising that the physical stimuli that engage the senses are no less important than the production of meaning; H. U. Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey,* California, Stanford University Press, 2004.

[74] Rabinbach, 1979, p. 62.

[75] Benjamin, 1999a, p. 720; Here, Benjamin uses a phrase "Was nie geschrieben wurde, lesen" by H. von Hofmannsthal, *Der Tor und der Tod,* Oxford, Bloomsbury Academic, 1998.

[76] According to the literary scholar Eric Downing, Benjamin's treatment of magic, ocult, and hermetic practices and their connection to reading emphasises a model in which *seeing* or *reading* objects can evoke not only apparent meanings but also hidden, not immediately visible correspondences; Downing, 2011, cited in Krauß, 2011, p. 444; W. Benjamin, 'Doctrine of the Similar,' in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part 2, 1931–1934,* ed. M. W. Jennings et al., Cambridge & London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999a, pp. 694–697.

[77] Benjamin, 1999a, p. 720; As Rabinbach narrates, Benjamin's recognition 'that his philosophy of language did contain the possibilities of a mediation to the mode of perception of historical materialism,' therefore, not only of the textual but also visual material, first manifested itself in his writings: *Doctrine of the Similar* and its second manuscript *On the Mimetic Faculty,* both written in 1933. Both texts reveal Benjamin's growing interest in historical criticism. The roots of this line of thought can be traced back to his earlier works from 1916, 1918, and 1925, including *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man, On the Program of the Coming Philosophy,* and *The Origin of German Tragic Drama;* See Rabinbach, 1979, pp. 60–62; Benjamin, 1996; Benjamin 1998a.

Didi-Huberman examines Benjamin's idea of 'the *imaginative power* of language beyond its strictly argumentative function' in relation 'to *the visual consistency* of the image beyond its strictly representative function.'[78] He states that such unusual readability is '[a] path that was not mystical, but, on the contrary, attentive to immanence, that is to say, to bodies, desires, associations of ideas and their signs before all writing.'[79] As a starting point, before delving into a more detailed explanation of how the imaginative process of identifying similarities between the images of two women will be carried out, I will provide a brief introduction to the epistemology of constellations as articulated by the philosopher and aesthetics scholar Andrea Krauß. The insight into the constellation as a heuristic phenomenological tool is critical since it demarcates foundational aspects for the analysis of the phenomenon in question. Krauß states:

> *Constellations* arise out of the *conjunction* of certain factors that are significant for a situation, a process, a (textual) structure; they result from the presence and the *arrangement* or *grouping* of certain factors or elements. With reference to their astrological/astronomical semantic content, talk of *constellations* can be rendered more precise both discursively and in terms of a theory of representations (*Darstellung*). *Constellations* thus point toward a theory of reading. They designate an interpretive procedure that draws specific attention to the insatiable conditions of this interpretation: To look from the earth into the sky in order to 'read' the positions of the stars to one another, the *constellations,* is to become a relative observer in relation to an investigative object that is continually shifting; and it is to observe puzzlingly structured 'surfaces' that only coalesce into recognizable astral images when an 'external' knowledge intrudes into the domain of dispersed points of light, when significant patterns produce something legible among these intrinsically unspecified shapes.[80]

In the light of Krauß's introduction, the previously mentioned notion of the balanced relevance of both chaotic and structural modes of seeing becomes further elucidated. The interpretative exploration of the phenomenon in question starts with organising the presence-based experience of viewing images into the structural framework of a constellation. Clearly, such a procedure, as Krauß also suggests, does not claim to provide an exhaustive interpretation of the unstable object under consideration. Rather, it offers an open interpretation that emerges through the interaction between the viewer and the object of interest, while simultaneously deepening the interpreter's self-awareness by incorporating external knowledge.[81] James McFarland, a scholar of philosophy,

---

[78] G. Didi-Huberman, 'IMAGE, LANGUAGE: the other dialectic,' trans. E. Woodard et al., *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities,* vol. 23, no. 4, 2018, p. 19.
[79] Ibid., p. 23.
[80] Krauß, 2011, p. 439.
[81] This approach to methodology also aligns with Mieke Bal's previously introduced notion of *travelling concepts* in which she questions a simplistic binary opposition between the objective and subjective aspects of perception; See Introduction, p. 12.

literature, and film, drawing an analogy to astral constellations as a metaphorical device for theoretical formulation, notes that '[c]onstellations as such are not "out there" at the edge of the cosmos, they appear to us, from our position, [...].'[82] In the context of structural conceptualisation, the focus lies on the space between the human observer and the constellation. The characteristics of this space, encompassing '[t]he proximity of astral constellations to transcendental thought' despite 'the unimaginable distances at which their components lie,' are indeed paradoxical, yet brimming with potentiality.[83] Certainly, this mode of interpretation carries a certain degree of risk

> in its dynamic withdrawal to be an inaccessible — or one might say: unlimitedly accessible 'existence.' Seen in this way, *constellation* becomes a paradoxical concept, since it designates both the instrument and the object of reading, mutually intertwined with each other in a complex interaction [...].[84]

This paradox, however, becomes effective as it exposes the limitations of historical understanding which 'becomes a constitutive unrest that impels knowledge to continual self-overcoming' and discursive negotiation.[85] The quality of self-overcoming and negotiation, as I will further elaborate in Chapter II, is explicitly relevant for interpreting representations of women in order to challenge the male-dominated symbolisation of the female body. As already noted, the aspect of constellation as a heuristic tool is critical since it fully reveals that the thesis is not concerned with the individual history and context of the images, but rather, with the relation between the image constellation and the beholder. Therefore, analysis wanders on the surface — indicating common tendencies, symptoms, and visual signals of the images.

Image versus Artwork

To further justify the open and interpretative approach toward images, it is essential to highlight the inherent potentialities and limitations within the realms of both visual culture and art history. Specifically, it becomes necessary to draw a distinction between the status of an image, associated with the former, and the status of an artwork, associated with the latter. Returning to Mitchell's insights, he pays attention to the denotation of the ambiguous word *image* itself which 'can denote both a physical object (a painting or sculpture) and a mental, imaginary entity, a psychological

---

[82] J. McFarland, 'Sailing by the Stars: Constellations in the Space of Thought,' *MLN,* vol. 126, no. 3, 2011, p. 474, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23012672. Accessed 25 Apr. 2022.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., pp. 439–440.
[85] Ibid.

imago, the visual content of dreams, memories, and perception.'[86] While it is relatively simple to burn, eradicate, or destroy a physical artwork, the same cannot be said for a mental image — it remains everlastingly etched in one's consciousness. Precisely due to this characteristic, Mitchell compares images to living organisms. Similar to biological life forms, they can survive, multiply, expand, remain marginal, vanish, and even face extinction. In contrast to living organisms, however, images maintain the potential to reawaken, reemerge, and come back to life.[87] They might demand the viewer's attention in various ways, transforming from one manifestation to another across different mediums. Thus, simply put, an image, according to Mitchell, is 'any likeness, figure, motif, or form that appears in some medium or other.'[88] To elucidate the figurative resemblance of images,

> [t]he task of an iconologist with respect to images and pictures is rather like that of a natural historian with respect to species and specimens. [---] While we can recognize beautiful, interesting, or novel specimens, our main job is not to engage in value judgments but to try to explain why things are the way they are, why species appear in the world, what they do and mean, how they change over time.[89]

The analogy between images and living organisms, aimed at clarifying the tension between the adjacent fields of visual culture and art history, diverges significantly from the classical and elitist traditions of the latter. Art history has traditionally examined artworks as self-contained entities constructed with iconographical signs or varying stylistic genres, obsessed with the artistic genius, who frequently happens to be white, middle-class, and male. Following this established procedure and decoding the signs and stylisations, without incorporating external or contemporary values into the analysis, would render a work of art a mere window into a specific historical moment and cultural context of the past. Here, I allude to the scientification of the field through iconographic and stylistic studies pioneered by art historians Erwin Panofsky and Ernst Gombrich whose methodologies exerted considerable influence during the mid-20th century.[90] The critique of this paradigm emerged in the late 1960s, as art historians and visual culture scholars began to question both the means and ends of art history as a discipline: 'Works of art were no longer seen as neatly packaged messages delivered by artists to passive viewers, but complex communications that could be "read" (or "misread") in any number of ways.'[91]

---

[86] Mitchell, 2005, p. 2.
[87] Ibid., pp. 76-106; Mitchell, 2015, pp. 18–21.
[88] Mitchell, 2005, p. xiii.
[89] Ibid., p. 86.
[90] However, the process of making art history more scientific has a much longer background, dating back to the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries; M. W. Cothren and A. D'Alleva, *Methods & Theories of Art History,* Third Edition, London, Laurence King Publishing Ltd, 2021, pp. 34–49 and p. 65.
[91] Ibid., p. 41.

In her book *Beyond the Mirror: Seeing in Art History and Visual Culture Studies,* Susanne von Falkenhausen delves into the complex relationship between art history and visual culture studies, addressing their inherent tension as "a particular intellectual struggle."[92] She introduces a term that could fit within the methodological vocabulary of both disciplines, aiming to establish a balance between them. 'This term is *seeing*: it structures the *visuality* of visual culture studies as fundamentally as it does the *modus operandi* of art history [my italics].'[93] The concept of visuality, in Falkenhausen's terms, is 'closely associated with a specific political agenda: visibility as a socio-political resource.'[94] This notion forms the primary basis for the arguments presented by visual culture studies against the practices of art history. On the other hand, the art-historical methodology tends to downplay the act of seeing: 'Although seeing has been explained physiologically to a certain degree, it remains hard to "grasp" in thoughts and words.'[95] To put it simply, 'art history does not reflect on its own ways of seeing' and treats its own practice as a scientifically objective fact.[96] By exposing the intricacies of the act of seeing, Falkenhausen argues that it becomes possible to not only speak of the concept of visuality as a political and social category but also about the status of art and art objects which, as she posits, 'is not a given; it is subject to discursive negotiation.'[97]

My *seeing* of the image constellation, first and foremost, originates from a contemporary viewpoint shaped by the subjective sensations that arise from our image-saturated present-day culture. From this vantage point, the horizon of past art-historical receptions which may have analysed some of the images of two women as separate entities detached from each other rather than as a collective entity, remains obscured. Something peculiar emerges as the images converge, dance, and flow together like a stream. This *something* might not even be there in an individual image but it materialises as the rhythm of their joint movement is sensed. Of course, attending to this unique motion of the motif raises questions of visibility, recognition, and visual literacy. These considerations occur in the interplay between the viewer and the images and hold crucial significance for the forthcoming analysis.

The Implicit Viewer

Having introduced the thesis's stance toward such a complex creature an image is, and before delving into the viewer-image interrelation itself, let me shift the focus to the viewer. Image

---

[92] Falkenhausen, 2020, p. 7.
[93] Ibid., pp. 10–11.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., p. 14.
[96] Ibid., p. 16.
[97] Ibid., p. 13.

constellations, given their intricate disposition, possess the potential to inspire countless interpretations from any observer. Each individual archetype of a viewer, however, shaped by their unique upbringing, identity formation, background, or experiences, would sense the image and its movement in their distinct manner, discerning specific and exclusive elements that might elude others. This perspective amplifies the aforementioned allure toward certain images. Such an approach '[a]fter many decades in which stylistic analysis and iconographic studies were the reigning interpretive paradigms in art history,' has been brought to wider attention by Wolfgang Kemp through the theory of *reception aesthetics.*[98] Kemp's unorthodox methodology in the realm of art history was adapted from literary theory, originally formulated by literary critics Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, and subsequently applied to the interpretation of visual representations.[99]

Kemp's focus revolves around the reception of any representation which arises from the interplay between an image and a viewer. He asserts that each viewer is stimulated by an image due to their personal preconditions — 'a specific gender, presence, and history.'[100] Therefore, an image approaches the beholder much as the beholder approaches the image, both responding to and acknowledging their respective perceptual conditions. In Kemp's view, this reciprocal recognition represents 'the most felicitous pointer to the most important premise of reception aesthetics: namely, that the function of beholding has already been incorporated into the work itself.'[101] Thus, as he terms it, each work possesses its own *implicit beholder.* The recognition between the image and the beholder is established through modes of visual communication, referred to as *forms of address,* that either include or seemingly exclude the viewer from the depicted scene.[102]

In the aforementioned book, Falkenhausen investigates the similar yet earlier ideas of the art historian Otto Pächt, a contemporary of Panofsky and Gombrich, offering a glimpse into the art-historical discussions of the 20th century.[103] Pächt appears to have been a pioneering scholar who recognised 'the viewer as a practising art historian,' striving to develop a method that was not constructed speculatively, but is attuned to the processes of perception when encountering a work of art, or in this context, an image. Falkenhausen brings forward Pächt's approach to the art-historical *act of seeing,* noting that he

---

[98] Kemp, 1998, p. 184.

[99] See H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1982; W. Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett,* Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974; W. Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response,* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

[100] Kemp, 1998, p. 180.

[101] Ibid., p. 181.

[102] Ibid., p. 187; Kemp's methodology and the detailed description of visual forms of address are extensively discussed in Chapter III.

[103] However, Falkenhausen does not provide a discursive description of the affinity between Pächt and Kemp.

is interested in *Arbeitshygiene* (work hygiene), stressing the importance of a clear-cut approach "to the practical exercise of our craft as art historians." For him, this means developing both the "mental and sensory receptive organs" and the "conceptual apparatus," in turn calling for "introspection: we must look both at ourselves, the viewer, and at our object, the work of art."[104]

The transparent exploration of sensorial, practical, and conceptual practices serves as a means to address another significant aspect that Falkenhausen notices in Pächt's thinking — that of the "unfamiliarity" with an image and its distinct historical context. According to Pächt, this is 'a central problem in art-historical research' and, at the same time, it

> brings the necessity of interpretation into play (how else can today's viewer attend to an art object from a bygone period?), while at the same time implying the relativity of interpretation and the embeddedness of art object and viewer in a network of relationships.[105]

Falkenhausen further explains that this approach 'frees the individual work from its isolation' and establishes a relatively modest point of reference for objectively interpreting any representation.[106] This does not imply, however, that subjective interpretations are exempt from meticulous examination; they undergo careful scrutiny through comparisons with other works within the same genealogical sequence and the theoretical apparatus used to perceive images differently from prior scholarship.[107] To summarise this view, Falkenhausen marks out the significance of embracing and acknowledging 'the (historical) otherness or "unfamiliarity" of the object' under investigation.[108]

Art historian James Elkins echoes a similar sentiment when criticising the 'deciphering or problem-solving mode' prevalent in methodological practices which leads art historians to gravitate solely towards artworks that present themselves as puzzles. This, he asserts, limits the potential for critical investigation. In contrast, Pächt's developed line of thought 'can offer new perspectives on historically "unfamiliar" aesthetics' of bygone eras. This opens up new potentialities for perceiving art-historical heritage and challenges the established legacy of Panofsky and Gombrich.[109] In parallel, Kemp's reception aesthetics proposes a heuristic methodological tool for viewers to position themselves within the pictorial structure of an image and interpret it.

The methodologies of Pächt and Kemp, with their emphasis on considering the viewer's perspective and grappling with the unfamiliarity of images, can be seen as an intermediary space

---

[104] Falkenhausen, 2020, pp. 65–67.
[105] Ibid., pp. 67–68.
[106] Ibid., p. 68–69.
[107] Ibid., p. 69.
[108] Ibid., p. 74; The aspect of *otherness* with images will be another important aspect for the analysis in Chapter III.
[109] Cothren and D'Alleva, 2021, p. 46; Falkenhausen, 2020, p. 72.

between visual culture and art history. In this regard, the viewer is aware of the limitations inherent in the act of seeing while simultaneously being attuned to the symbolic significance of images.

Complexity of the Reception Process

I have now reached the point where the intricate interconnection between the image constellation and the beholder's perspective demands exploration. Engaging with the constellation of two women, characterised by its kaleidoscopic effect and its tendency to lead the viewer astray, presents itself as a risky endeavour. In his chapter titled *What Is an Image?,* Mitchell conceives 'of images as a far-flung family which has migrated in time and space and undergone profound mutations in the process.'[110] His genealogical model, resembling a family tree, encompasses graphic, optical, perceptual, mental, and verbal imagery.[111] Mitchell endeavours to blur the distinction between mental and physical images, asserting that these images have only differentiated themselves based on the boundaries imposed by distinct institutional discourses.[112]

For the discussion of the reception process, Mitchell's genealogical categorisation, and particularly his dissolution of the boundary between mental and material images, offers valuable insights. What he does not consider, however, are the spatial and temporal dimensions intrinsic to the reception process itself. In the context of this thesis, these dimensions cannot be separated or excluded, as they mutually contribute to the viewing experience. I will introduce both dimensions through a scheme designed to illustrate the complexity of viewing and interpreting the image constellation of two women (**Figure. 3**).

The initial predicament lies within the spatial dimension of the previously introduced trajectory of viewing, which entails an inseparable connection between the real and virtual domains of encounter. That is to say, the act of viewing is guided by the diverse potential sites where one might come across images of two women: art galleries and museums, photographs, book pages, journals, fashion magazines, street billboards, online image repositories, social media platforms, television screens, mental images, dreams, and recollections. The openness of this study to such a wide array of encounter sites aligns with the inclinations of visual culture which places the image at the core, in contrast to art history which generally confines appreciation of artworks to conventional institutions such as museums and galleries.

Beyond the spatial aspect, the trajectory also encompasses a two-fold temporal dimension: the specific moment of encounter in the past and the overall duration of the viewing

---

[110] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 9.
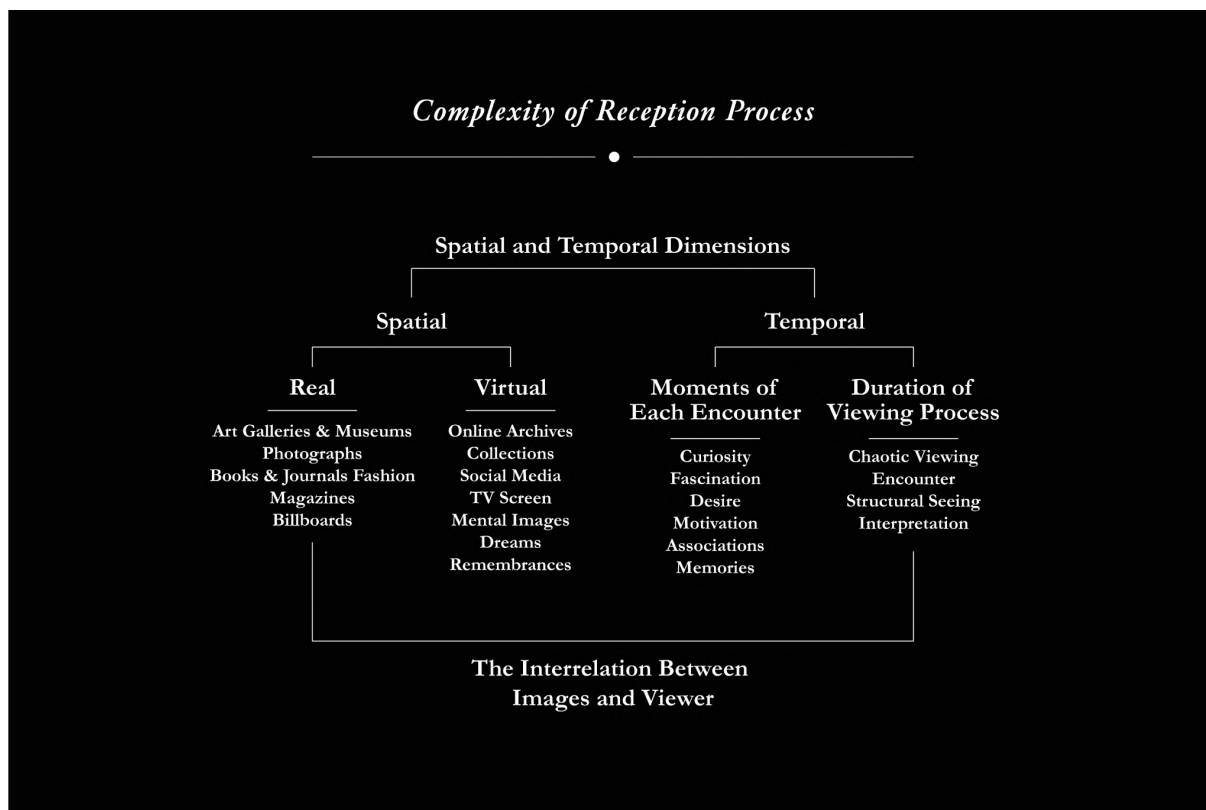[111] Ibid., p. 10.
[112] Ibid., p. 9.

Figure. 3 The Model of Reception Process

process. Each temporal facet carries its distinct attributes. The moment of encounter is suffused with curiosity, fascination, desire, motivation, association, and notably, memories — each contributing to the viewer's mental and sensory engagement. On the other hand, the duration of the viewing process covers the entire experience, from the initial chaotic perception of images to the construction of the conceptual and methodological framework for interpretative analysis.

To fully grasp the intuitive inclination toward the complex phenomenon of the image constellation in a scholarly context, one must consider the multifaceted interdependence of spatial, temporal, and emotional dimensions between the viewer and the images. In other words, this process entails recollecting personal memories, associations, and desires, and simultaneously recognising the affects provoked by the aesthetic experience. These elements are then interconnected with analytical discourses and methodologies, forming an essential part of the interpretive process.

Memory and Imagination

The art historian and visual culture scholar Joacim Sprung explores both the hazards and potentialities brought about by the flow of images, drawing from a note written by Aby Warburg

in 1891: 'Ways [or Forms] of losing oneself in an image, I – Tarrying with the feeling of being overwhelmed by the number of things [...].'[113] This overwhelming feeling might be familiar and unsurprising for many viewers who have, at least once in their lives, experienced the marvel of getting lost within an image due to 'its aesthetical splendour and seductive materiality.'[114] Although the note remains enigmatic, as Warburg himself does not provide further explanations, Sprung offers his own interpretation:

> [T]he note seems to suggest that images are filled with information, things and meaning that are heterogeneous, poly-iconic and impossible to circumfuse without some kind of order and organisation. Besides this obvious interpretation, Warburg's note does not seem to disregard the wandering mind of the onlooker or the power of curiosity. The image therefore appears to possess a heuristic and memory-evoking quality that can advance knowledge, teach us and sum up history, elaborate morals, but – if we interpret Warburg's note as a warning – also seduce us into unfocused oblivion, or into the slow death of nostalgia. In these multiple dimensions lies the power of images, but also the magic and fault lines of memory itself.[115]

An intricate aspect of memory becomes crucial in this context. To avoid infecting the analytical gaze, and instead harness both individual and collective memories embedded within images, Sprung proposes the necessity of artificial memory devices. These devices are intended 'to catalogue and organise the material into an open and interactive system. That is to say, to not only store and survey the object or material in question, but also retrace and relive memory itself.'[116]

The act of retracing and reliving memory involves the inclusion of imagination. These two psychological processes are intricately interwoven with the image itself, possessing qualities that evoke both memory and imagination. Notably, the interplay between memory and imagination has been a matter of great interest for the philosophy of memory, with its origins potentially tracing back to Plato.[117] Quite tellingly, the terms and metaphorical references used to discuss the complex relationship between memory and imagination, introduced by Plato and later developed by Aristotle, consistently employ language associated with representation.[118] Aristotle, in particular, differentiated two types of mental images: '*[P]hantasma,* which is used as a generic term for mental image, and *eikon,* which is a mental image similar to and causally derived from the object it represents.'[119] In the Greek language, *phantasma* is defined as "image, phantom,

---

[113] J. Sprung, 'Ways of losing oneself in an image: Notes regarding Aby Warburg and the artistic investigations of Elsebeth Jørgensen,' in *Elsebeth Jørgensen,* vol. 4, Dublett, Hordaland Kunstsenter, Bergen, 2016, pp. 38–63.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., pp. 38–40.
[116] Ibid., p. 40.
[117] F. De Brigard, 'Memory and Imagination,' in S. Bernecker and K. Michaelian (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory,* London and New York, Routledge, 2017, pp. 127–140.
[118] Ibid., pp. 131–132.
[119] Ibid.

apparition, mere image, unreality,"[120] while *eikon* signifies "likeness, image, portrait, image in a mirror."[121] Hence, the act of remembering involves recalling something previously seen. However, if the mental image merely resembles the perceived object without a causal connection, 'then it is not a memory: it is merely an imagination.'[122] This duality suggests that 'the ability to imagine possible events clearly depends on our ability to remember past events;' in this context, 'memory itself might be best understood as a form of imagination.'[123] Aristotle further elaborates on two forms of memory: memory as affection or *pathos,* and memory as *recollection* or reminiscence.[124] It is highly probable that Warburg had the Greek term *pathos* in mind, a term associated not only with mental aspects but also with spontaneous biological reflexes, encompassing notions of 'suffering, feeling, emotion, passion, emotional style or treatment.'[125] Thus, memory as *pathos,* abrupt and involuntary, appearing like a fleeting flash, necessitates being felt and imagined emotionally, perhaps even physically.[126] On the other hand, memory as *recollection* involves a more conscious activity of recalling facts or images from the past.

The image, whether seen as a likeness or experienced as a fleeting glimpse, remains closely intertwined with and inseparable from memories of the past as well as imaginings of the future. This proximity between memory and imagination plays a critical role in the forthcoming discussion, which reimagines a past where the female subject has been disregarded, overlooked, or suppressed. Analysing the image constellation thus implies a two-fold mnemonic-imaginative function: an intentional practice of collecting, *re*collecting, *de*collecting, and *un*collecting elements from the past, while also treating memory as an imaginative act that demands to be experienced, revisited, and reimagined.

Summary

In Chapter I, I lay the foundation for the theoretical and methodological framework to comprehend the image constellation of two women, addressing the two-fold process of perceiving and analysing images. Firstly, I explore the experience of chaotic viewing and the compelling encounter with images in today's image-saturated environment. Secondly, I delve into

---

[120] D. Harper. "Etymology of phantasm." Online Etymology Dictionary. https://www.etymonline.com/word/phantasm (accessed April 10, 2022).
[121] D. Harper. "Etymology of icon." Online Etymology Dictionary. https://www.etymonline.com/word/icon (accessed April 10, 2022).
[122] De Brigard, 2017, p. 132.
[123] Ibid., p. 2.
[124] Aristotle, 'On Memory and Reminiscence,' orig. ca. 350 B.C., trans. J. I. Beare, Originally published in W. D. Ross (ed.), *The works of Aristotle Vol. 3,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930.
[125] "pathos, n." *OED Online,* Oxford University Press, March 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/138808. Accessed 5 May 2022.
[126] This notion is similar to Walter Benjamin's idea that history transforms into images and manifests as a flash. For an in-depth discussion, refer to the section "Retrospective Reinvention of History" in Chapter I.

the structured methods of collecting and interpreting these images from a subjective standpoint. The activities of collecting, as discussed in this chapter, reveal the dynamic interplay between curiosity and the creation of meaning, both of which hold significant relevance within the context of the thesis.

Moreover, drawing from W. J. T. Mitchell's insights and shifting the question of desire towards the images themselves, I assert that the central objective of the study is to comprehend the interchanging forces, desires, and demands between the viewer and the image constellation. Rather than delving into the historical and cultural context of the images, the thesis examines the internal logic that binds the images of two women together as a constellation. In establishing the theoretical foundation for this approach to the inherently unstable visual entity, I introduce the concept of *constellation* as a heuristic tool that emphasises the open and interpretative nature of reading and seeing. This inclination towards embracing existing visual content, I argue, is particularly significant for feminist analysis, allowing for the exploration of women's representations and the reevaluation of prior male-dominated interpretations.

After setting the general theoretical stage, this chapter delves into more specific methodological discussions, unveiling the discursive tension between the realms of art history and visual culture. This contrast becomes evident through the distinct usage of the terms — *artwork* and *image,* respectively. In divergence from the classical approach often associated with the former, the thesis aligns with Mitchell's perspective which emphasises the vitality of mental images and compares them to living organisms — both alive and undead at the same time, perhaps even seeking something from the viewer.

Building upon Susanne von Falkenhausen's proposition to adopt the term *seeing* as a bridge between the two fields, I introduce methodological viewpoints that revolve around the viewer and the inherently subjective act of seeing which assumes an objective significance. As a key methodological foundation utilised throughout the analysis, Wolfgang Kemp's theory of reception aesthetics is brought forward. This theory posits that the viewer is impelled into engagement because the function of beholding is already embedded within the image through visual modes of communication. Furthermore, Otto Pächt's concept, which emphasises the need to embrace the historical unfamiliarity of the image, is introduced. This underscores the viewer's necessity to cultivate mental and sensory faculties, along with a conceptual apparatus, in order to facilitate open interpretation of images from bygone eras.

In addition, the chapter presents the intricate spatial and temporal nuances of the reception experience which, I argue, are inextricably intertwined, jointly encompassing the entire process — from the collection of images to their interpretation. Thus, in order to grasp the complexity of the image constellation, it is essential to interlink the spatio-temporal intricacies

held within personal and collective memories with the chosen theoretical and methodological frameworks. As a result, the discussion highlights the significance of memory and imagination, emphasising their inherent connection to the image per se. This attribute, I suggest, is particularly important in conducting the analysis that reimagines a past where the feminine subject has been marginalised, disregarded, or suppressed. The theoretical and methodological tendencies delineated in this chapter will serve as the foundation for Chapter II which pursues Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas,* establishing a well-defined approach for the interpretive analysis of the image constellation depicting two women.

CHAPTER II

Bilderatlas Mnemosyne

Atlas

I now shift my focus towards the second research question: How can images be thoughtfully assembled in the age of digital reproduction, where the viewer is continuously exposed to their multiplicity and sheer volume? The manner in which the images of two women are perceived, akin to fleeting memories forming a constellation, necessitates an intentional process of recollection and organisation. This approach aims to prevent getting lost in either the past memories evoked by these images or the future imaginations derived from them. Analysing an image constellation characterised by its temporal and spatial diffusion might be problematic unless a method that enables addressing the historical past is firmly established. In the case of this thesis, the research method that provides such grounding is rooted in the Warburgian practice of cultural history.

In the 1920s, Aby Warburg designed the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne,* a project that quite tellingly paid homage 'to the Greek goddess of memory and language: Mnemosyne' (**Figure. 4**).[127] The unfinished atlas of images was organised on a black background, aiming to trace recurring visual symptoms, motifs, gestures, patterns, themes, and structures in a vast array of representations. The research aimed to explore objective and subjective psycho-historical forces that have shaped Western culture, drawing influences from Antiquity to the Renaissance and into contemporary times. In contrast to his predecessors such as Johann Joachim Winckelmann, and his aforementioned followers Erwin Panofsky and Ernst Gombrich, who sought to decode Renaissance art by tracing iconographical signs and advocated for art history to be built on scientific objectivity, Warburg approached works of art as anthropological traces and visual evidence reflecting human psycho-social history.[128]

Georges Didi-Huberman, while investigating these contrasting art-historical approaches and the tensions between them, notes that scientifically objective art history 'recognizes that there is one historical moment, a canonical time, without impurity — the Renaissance — when the homogenous reintegration of form and content became perfectly legible.'[129] Warburg, on the other hand, through the creation of the atlas, 'introduced the problem of memory' into art-historical practice, setting it apart from other practices of that era.[130] As Didi-Huberman

---

[127] Sprung, 2016, p. 40.
[128] Didi-Huberman, 2003, p. 280; J. Sperling, 'A Feminist Picture Atlas: Images of Lactation in Medieval and Early Modern Art,' *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal,* vol. 13, no. 1, 2018, p. 118.
[129] Didi-Huberman, 2003, p. 280.
[130] Ibid., p. 273.

highlights, *Mnemosyne* presents a new form of visual knowledge within the realm of art history, establishing a fresh method of juxtaposing images for analytical purposes.[131] He underlines its significance and fertility in shaping the contemporary methods of producing, presenting, and comprehending images. However, he also warns readers about the 'fundamental fragility' of the Warburgian atlas, akin to interpreting constellations:

> It is the bet that images, collected in a certain manner, would offer us the possibility — or better still, the inexhaustible resource — of a rereading of the world. To reread the world is to link the disparate pieces differently, to redistribute the dissemination, which is a way of orienting and interpreting it, no doubt, but also of respecting it, of going over it again or reediting and piecing it together again without thinking we are summarizing or exhausting it. But how is this practically possible?[132]

Above all, grasping the practicalities of this art-historical method requires an understanding of both the historical backdrop and the future potentialities related to the atlas phenomenon. Didi-Huberman examines the etymology of the Greek word *atlas* which is formed by

> the combination of the prosthetic *a* (the adjunction, to the initial of a word, of a nonetymological element that does not modify the meaning of the word itself) and the form of the verb *tlaô*, which means "to carry" or "to support". *Tlas* or *atlas*, in the literal sense, means "the carrier" par excellence. But to carry is by no means a simple gesture.[133]

In line with its etymology, in Greek mythology, Atlas was a Titan condemned to bear the pillars that upheld heaven and earth apart for eternity.[134] The oldest surviving representation of this figure, together with the celestial spheres and classical constellations, is the *Farnese Atlas* — a 2nd-century AD Roman marble sculpture, likely a copy of an earlier work from the Greek Hellenistic period in the 2nd-century BCE (**Figure. 5**). This sculpture eloquently captures the weighty burden assigned to the Greek Titan. He was believed to be a philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer, inspiring the 16th-century geographer Gerardus Mercator who dedicated his collection of maps to him. This is how the educational term "atlas," primarily associated with geography, was born. Subsequently, atlases have consistently served as repositories of condensed knowledge — tools that encapsulate both memory and imagination. On the one hand, they embody an extensive capacity of previous scholarship in a concentrated form; on the other hand, they create the potential to perceive familiar things in novel ways. As Sprung observes, '[d]espite

---

[131] Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 227.
[132] Ibid., p. 11.
[133] Ibid., p. 71.
[134] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Atlas." *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 25 Nov. 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Atlas-Greek-mythology. Accessed 11 April 2022.

Figure. 4 Aby Warburg, *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne,* Panel 39, © The Warburg Institute.

the classification and organisation they [atlases] are produced with a maximum of artistic intent, because they usually are intended to be beautiful as well as informative.'[135] The aesthetic quality of surveying visual atlases sparks the imagination through enduring effects of playfulness, inventory, and joy.

---

[135] Sprung, 2016, p. 60.

Furthermore, Sprung draws a comparison between the 'present use of PowerPoint presentations and similar programs,' analysed by the art historian Sven Lütticken and the assemblages created by Warburg and his assistants. He argues that one should not perceive the latter 'as a one-sided expression of a cinematic "Art history without words,"' a description that scholars and critics sometimes attributed to Warburg's atlas.[136] Instead, these assemblages should be understood 'as a common and well known display strategy.'[137] The presentation approach employed in the *Mnemosyne Atlas,* therefore, reflects 'a historically conditioned 'reading modus,' in which images and text are intricately interwoven in a dual and oscillating manner.[138] This oscillating mode of thought is also evident in Warburg's decision to name his project after the aforementioned epistemic genre of atlases, stemming from the polar character of the Greek Titan. As Didi-Huberman asserts, this naming choice was intentional, especially considering that the same *Farnese Atlas* sculpture appears in Plate 2 of Warburg's *Mnemosyne*:

> Atlas would thus be the emblematic figure of a fundamental polarity through which Warburg never stopped thinking about the history of Mediterranean civilizations: on the one hand, the tragedy by which every culture demonstrates its own monsters (*monstra*); on the other hand, the knowledge by which every culture explains, redeems, or thwarts its monsters in the sphere of thought (*astra*).[139]

The atlas, thus, functions as a heuristic tool for spatially and visually reorganising the latent aspects of history. It transcends the boundaries of classical art history, offering the potential to perceive, alongside the iconography of representations, both the signs of suffering and oppression and the possibilities to view history, something that has already occurred, in a new light. Didi-Huberman directs attention to the letters written by Warburg between 1927 and 1929, wherein he explains his project using linguistic expressions 'that turn around the adverb *zusammen,* that is, the idea, which is more modest and empirical, of a "gathering-together."'[140] He also suggests that Warburg was aware 'that his collection of images worked like an ensemble of "plates" — or of "panoramic tables" — on which multiple things, often heterogeneous, came to

---

[136] Sprung, 2016, p. 50; Originally, Warburg intended to publish the *Mnemosyne Atlas* as a book in 1930, but he passed away before completing it; Sprung, 2011.

[137] Sprung, 2016, p. 52; According to Didi-Huberman, the mystification of Warburg's unfinished project as a "postmodern" thought is incorrect. Not only did Warburg produce lengthy theoretical manuscripts accompanying the atlas, notably between 1927 and 1929, but he also planned to publish two volumes of texts to provide commentary on the arrangement of the illustrated plates. Furthermore, 'if the *Mnemosyne* atlas aims for the organization of the Warburgian *Denkraum,* this would signify that it is inseparable from the other elements of that space;' See Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 221.

[138] Sprung, 2016, p. 50.

[139] Didi-Huberman, 2018, pp. 67–68; See A. Warburg, 'Souvenirs d'un voyage en pays Pueblo,' unpublished notes for Warburg's Kreuzlingen conference on the Serpent Ritual (1923), trans. S. Muller, in P.-A. Michaud, *Aby Warburg et l'image en mouvement,* Paris, 1998.

[140] Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 227.

Figure. 5 *Farnese Atlas,* 2nd Century AD, Roman copy of a Greek sculpture of the 2nd Century BCE, The National Archaeological Museum of Naples, Italy.

meet each other.'[141] Therefore, the method of assembling images in the form of an atlas should not aspire to provide exhaustive expertise on each image but rather to demonstrate how images act as a unified compilation.[142]

Mechanical Reproduction

The innovative manner of viewing artworks according to the Warburgian approach appears much more habitual when observed within the context of the age of mechanical reproduction, to borrow Walter Benjamin's formulation. This is particularly relevant since, often due to economic considerations, Warburg and his fellow art historians were commissioning photographic reproductions of diverse artworks and paintings for the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg.[143] While exploring the profound technological shifts occurring around the 1900s and 'the developmental tendencies of art' under the capitalist mode of production from a Marxist perspective, Benjamin asserts that

> [t]hey brush aside a number of outmoded concepts, such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery – concepts whose uncontrolled (and at present almost uncontrollable) application would lead to a processing of data in the Fascist sense.[144]

In the text, Benjamin's arguments are meticulously crafted toward the idea that mechanical reproduction introduces the potential to dismantle the preceding classical reception and appreciation of art which, in his view, tends to aestheticise art rather than politicise it, leading to a form of fascism.[145] For Benjamin, this transformation not only shifts the methods of art's production and dissemination but also extends to the very essence and function of art, primarily due to two principal factors. Firstly, novel technological processes, 'such as enlargement or slow motion,' allow for observations that lie beyond the scope of human perception. Secondly, copies of original artworks can be dispersed across various locations.[146] Within this process of replication and dissemination, the authority of the object, its *aura* — 'the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close [to the presence of the object] it may be' — is lost, giving rise to the issue of authenticity:

---

[141] Didi-Huberman, 2018.
[142] Ibid., p. 228.
[143] Sprung, 2011.
[144] Benjamin, 1998b, p. 2; Despite Benjamin's limited exploration of this subject, a connection between his train of thought and Marxist theory becomes evident. Marx viewed capitalism as an unavoidable but necessary stage through which the working class could ultimately emancipate themselves from capitalistic exploitation; See K. John, 'The End of Morality? Theory, Practice, and the "Realistic Outlook" of Karl Marx,' *Nomos,* vol. 37, 1995, pp. 403–439, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24219536. Accessed 15 Apr. 2022.
[145] Benjamin, 1998b, p. 31.
[146] Ibid., p. 5.

[T]he technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind. Both processes are intimately connected with the contemporary mass movements.[147]

Here, the term "tradition" implies the ingrained value of the artwork within the spiritual or religious fabric of ritual. Benjamin declares that this unique authenticity of the artwork, however remote from the ritualistic origins, 'is still recognizable as secularized ritual even in the most profane forms of the cult of beauty' which emerged in the course of the Renaissance.[148] Thus, he presents 'an all-important insight' that 'for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual.'[149] He considers the rise of cinematic practice as the most prominent example of this technological shift and draws a parallel between a painting canvas and a film screen:

The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested.[150]

Benjamin finds this disruptive manner of mass image movement revolutionary, as it challenges classical perceptions and requires recognition of the changes in the way art is perceived.

The emphasis on movement has gained even more relevance in the era of digitalisation. The pace of viewing representations can now be counterbalanced by the velocity of cinematic moving images that Benjamin previously discussed. In his 1995 article *The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction,* the artist and critic Douglas Davis argues that '[t]he work of art in the age of digital reproduction is physically and formally chameleon.'[151] He alludes to the various ways in which artworks can be digitally copied, edited, deconstructed, modified, or counterfeited, asserting that '[t]hese events empower imagination rather than reason, as new tools placed in the hands of people with open minds always have.'[152] Moreover, images can be disseminated virtually anywhere, and what is more, they can propagate and multiply in the virtual realms autonomously, without any human intervention. These newly emerging traits of digital images can be correlated with W. J. T. Mitchell's portrayal of them as living organisms and species:

---

[147] Benjamin, 1998b, p. 6 and 8.
[148] Ibid., p. 9.
[149] Ibid., p. 10.
[150] Ibid., p. 26.
[151] Douglas, 1995, pp. 381–86.
[152] Ibid., p. 382.

It is in the sphere of the life sciences that our science of images would confront the problem of the *reproduction* of images, their *mutations* and *evolutionary transformations.* If the image is to iconology what the species is to biology, then pictures (in an extended sense that includes sculpture and other material constructions or "situations") are the specimens in a natural history of images. This natural history is, of course, also a cultural and social and political history, but it is one that is focused on the "second nature" we have created around ourselves — the entire image-repertoire of human consciousness and civilization. We have always understood that the arts are, as Aristotle insisted, "imitations of nature," and that this means not just that they represent or resemble the natural world, but also that they themselves are a kind of nature "in process," an expression of the species identity of human beings.[153]

Therefore, from the perspective of natural history, reexamining the tradition of utilising atlases as scholarly tools can largely be regarded as a precursor to the modern phenomenon of image search engines, including Google, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, and others. Through these platforms, contemporary society views its extensive image repertoire. While these search engines are algorithmically driven and digitally coded, they, to some extent, mirror the arrangement of an atlas: images paired with accompanying text which often goes unnoticed while navigating from one example to another within the sea of images. Consequently, to truly do justice to the way images are consumed today, the rapid character of viewership must be taken into consideration.

Hyperimage

Art historians and scholars in the field of visual studies who belong to the Warburgian tradition are well acquainted with the charm and potential of this practice, therefore, despite the hardships, they recognise that the game is worth the trouble.[154] As Sprung states, '[s]patially arranged reproductions have the strange ability to work as seductive memory emblems, heuristic tools, as well as visual evidence, for the enquirer and other observers.'[155]

The art historian Felix Thürlemann, in his book *More Than One Picture: An Art History of the Hyperimage,* introduces the concept of the *hyperimage* — 'a particular form of the image in plural' (**Figure. 6**).[156] This term refers to a deliberate practice of arranging selected images — including paintings, drawings, photographs, and sculptures — as overarching ensembles within

---

[153] Mitchell, 2015, pp. 34–35.
[154] Warburg also employed the game metaphor when he called his *Mnemosyne Atlas* "Chips from a German Workshop," with "chips" alluding to gambling tokens used in a casino; See J. Sprung, *A few comments on Aby Warburg's phrase: "Kritik der reinen Unvernunft,"* La Rivista di Engramma, no. 125, 2015.
[155] Sprung, 2016, pp. 42–44.
[156] To illustrate the diverse applications of the hyperimage across various domains, Thürlemann examines three fields of practice — those of collectors, art historians, and artists — each showcased through three different manifestations; F. Thürlemann, *More Than One Picture: An Art History of the Hyperimage,* trans. Elizabeth Tucker, Los Angeles, The Getty Research Institute, 2019, p. 1.

Figure. 6 Brassaï (Hungarian–French photographer, 1908–2004), The picture wall in Pierre Bonnard's studio at Villa Le Bosquet, Le Cannet, France, 1944; Used as the cover image of Felix Thürlemann's *More than One Picture: An Art History of the Hyperimage.*

exhibition spaces, illustrated art books, atlases, and classrooms. Thürlemann contends that the interpretations viewers derive from hyperimages are ever-evolving with each new configuration of objects. While Western image culture has a longstanding art-historical tradition of assembling representations dating back to the sixteenth century, initially found in the Italian painter and historian Giorgio Vasari's *Libro de' Disegni,* the interconnection of images, possibly due to its temporal and elusive nature, has largely remained unexplored.[157] Furthermore, in contrast to the widespread convention of art history that gathers images under the study of artistic influences from a diachronic perspective, the *hyperimage,* as an assemblage practice, presents anachronic images synchronically within a specific historical and spatial context.[158] While addressing questions of the methodology, Thürlemann highlights that exploring multiple images as a hyperimage does not diminish the uniqueness of each individual work. On the contrary, it enhances their individuality, revealing attributes that might remain concealed in isolated presentations of these works.[159] In this manner, when viewed through the lens of the hyperimage, art history can be reimagined as a continuous process of rearranging both preserved and newly created images.[160]

One of the examples Thürlemann focuses on is *Museum Without Walls* — the book of the novelist and art theorist André Malraux. In this work, Malraux explores the effects of reproduction capacity, similar to Benjamin's perspective, in terms of broader public viewership, fluidity of artistic mediums, and modifications in concepts within art, art history, and artistic institutions (**Figure. 7**).[161] Malraux did not create a physical museum per se; instead, he constructed 'a new type of art book: not the *atlas,* but the photographic *album'* which, through page layout — juxtaposing two images and often employing photographic enlargement — ensured that 'works are in direct dialogue.'[162] Despite the disparate nature of the works presented in the book, they 'are brought together in order to converse across boundaries and to help expose us to the unity of human culture across the globe and throughout history.'[163] While Thürlemann does not delve into digital assemblages of images, the concept of the hyperimage offers crucial insight into the homogeneous viewership of images in the present-day era of globalisation, during which 'advances in communication technology, such as mobile phones, satellite television and the

---

[157] Sprung, 2011; Thürlemann, 2019.

[158] T. Pignarre-Altermatt, 'More Than One Picture: An Art History of the Hyperimage,' *European Review of History,* 2021, Vol. 28, No. 4, p. 612, https://hdl.handle.net/1814/70006.

[159] Thürlemann, 2019, p. 10.

[160] Ibid., p. 2.

[161] The French and English alternative title of the book is *The Imaginary Museum;* A. Malraux, *Museum Without Walls,* orig. 1947, trans. S. Gilbert and F. Price, New York, Garden City: Doubleday, 1967.

[162] G. Didi-Huberman, 'The Album of Images According to André Malraux,' trans. E. Woodard and R. Harvey, *Journal of Visual Culture,* vol. 14, no. 1, 2015, p. 3; Malraux, 1967, cited in Didi-Huberman, 2015, p. 8.

[163] Ibid., p. 14.

Figure. 7 Dennis Adams, *Malraux's Shoes,* a video still from the single-channel video, 42 minutes, Directed by Dennis Adams and Paul Colin, 2012.

Internet,' have brought 'happenings around the globe into the domestic orbit of those to whom they would once have appeared remote, exotic or even irrelevant.'[164]

Unlike Benjamin, another pivotal aspect for Malraux is that 'the issue is not some general "decline of the aura" in art but, rather, a matter of using photography to *return the aura'* by increasing the circulation of images and their viewership.[165] Through a reversal of Benjamin's reflection on mechanical reproduction, where the cult value is not diminished but heightened, the central focus becomes a mental museum — a visual reference system imprinted in the collective consciousness by this practice. As a result, the audience might not retain the memory of a specific composition of a particular artwork; however, they carry mental images in their minds that could have a more powerful impact on viewers.

Griselda Pollock, following the Warburgian agenda which she calls 'hardly mainstream art history,' intervenes in the prevalent canon from a feminist and gendered perspective. She critically examines feminist desires with the assistance of a wide range of theoretical perspectives.[166] In her book *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum,* Pollock constructs an imaginary space, 'a museum

---

[164] N. Ratnam, 'Art and globalisation,' in G. Perry and P. Wood (eds.), *Themes in Contemporary Art,* London, Yale University Press, 2004, p. 286.
[165] Didi-Huberman, 2015, p. 17.
[166] Pollock, 2014, p. 10.

that could never be actual,' to explore her proposition of feminist interventions in the histories of art because '[t]he dominant social and economic power relations that govern make feminist analysis almost impossible' (**Figure. 8**).[167] Thus, the term "virtual" pertains to feminism, not to the museum, referring to something that is not-yet-fulfilled.[168] Although both projects have the form of a book, Pollock clarifies that her endeavour is not an adaptation of André Malraux's previously mentioned project, which she describes as one that 'removed works of art from their original contexts and enabled them to be assembled in orders and relations defined by superimposed art historical logics of style, iconography, artist and nation.'[169] Rather, akin to Warburg's approach, tracing connection among artworks beyond 'the abstract principles of form and style or the individualism of the creative author' allows viewers to perceive images as transformative and interpretative propositions, facilitating discussions about ignorance, exclusion, and oppression.[170]

The Virtual Feminist Museum bypasses strict and well-known definitions and classifications of art to generate inquiries specifically about the unknown history of women, 'the history we do not yet know about ourselves' through representations of the female body.[171] It also complicates canonical and well-refined sites of encounter with an artwork, introducing 'radically transformed' real or virtual spaces in which one can engage with images and create a personal "portable image-bank."[172] In today's context, through smartphones and digital image-search apps, viewers can carry a virtual museum in their pockets. These digital and portable image banks enable viewers to access images anytime and anywhere — organise, structure, and store them. What is even more significant in terms of this radical transformation of encountering sites is that these devices have a high capacity to adapt to the viewer's interests, offering new images by remembering both visual and textual information accumulated from year to year. Despite differences in motives and purposes, both Malraux's and Pollock's imaginary projects reflect on the practice of juxtaposing images together to comprehend the effects of such a procedure on collective consciousness and to highlight the need for cultural and societal transformation. As the interaction between images generates new affects, speculations, and meanings, the thesis aims to incorporate the above-described practices into the analysis.

---

[167] Pollock, 2007, p. 9.
[168] Pollock, 2014, p. 12.
[169] Pollock, 2007, p. 10.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., pp. 11–12.
[172] Ibid., pp. 15–16.

Figure. 8 Griselda Pollock, *Exhibited items in Room 2,* items 2.30–2.35, in *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive,* p. 38.

Immutable Mobiles

The practice of comprehension through juxtaposing objects next to each other has much deeper roots beyond the art-historical level. The philosopher Bruno Latour delves into a broader historical context, examining how inscription procedures, particularly writing and visualisation, have always played a crucial role in Western scientific practices of cognition. These practices help in understanding otherwise overwhelmingly complex natural or cultural phenomena. Similar to Benjamin and Malraux, when discussing the invention of the printing press as both a mobilisation and immutability device, Latour asserts,

> [f]or the first time, a location can accumulate other places far away in space and time, and present them synoptically to the eye; better still, this synoptic presentation, once reworked, amended or disrupted, can be spread with no modification to other places and made available at other times.[173]

To objects enabling this mobilisation are what he terms *immutable mobiles*.[174] They offer the capacity to gather things from distant places and times into the here and now, inspiring ideas and generating new meanings. Subsequently, these meanings can be disseminated in a freshly comprehended and modified form. The atlas, therefore, can be understood as the immutable mobile which, according to Didi-Huberman, 'is a visual form of knowledge, a knowledgeable form of seeing,' facilitating the collection of the fragmented world.[175] He contends that the atlas disrupts the impregnability of previously acquired knowledge, 'introduces a fundamental impurity,' and

> bursts the self-proclaimed certainties of a science that is so sure of its truths, as it does of art that is sure of its criteria. It invents, between all of this, interstitial zones of exploration, heuristic intervals. [---] It deconstructs, with its very exuberance, the ideals of uniqueness, of specificity, of purity, of logical exhaustion. It is a tool, not the logical exhaustion of possibilities given, but the inexhaustible opening to possibilities that are not yet given. Its principle, its motor, is none other than the imagination. Imagination: a dangerous word if anything (as is, already, the word *image*).[176]

The atlas, in summary, brings 'the sensible dimension into knowledge' and demonstrates 'the incomplete character of each image,' necessitating the engagement of the viewer's imagination to fill the gaps.[177] The Warburgian concepts of *Zwischenraum* and *Denkraum,* the suspended analytical

[173] B. Latour, 'Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together,' *Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present,* Jai Press, vol. 6, 2012, p. 10.
[174] Ibid., p. 20.
[175] Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 3; C. Millet, 'Georges Didi-Huberman on Atlas: How to Store the World,' Art Press, no. 373, 2010, p. 49.
[176] Didi-Huberman, 2018, pp. 4–5.
[177] Ibid.

space between impulse and action, or a reaction and response, are achieved through the visual arrangement of imagery on a black background — an essential element of the *Mnemosyne Atlas*.[178] This dark background, as a constitutive blank between images, holds something dormant, latent, or unknown.[179] It is precisely this distance that empowers the viewer to reinvent the world, employing imagination and intuition to bridge the gaps between representations.

According to art historian Matthew Rampley, Warburg's notion of the *iconology of the interval* introduces 'the dual possibility of tradition, either as an amnesiac repetition of the past or as a memorial construction.'[180] This thinking also led Warburg to perceive the ethical aspects of interval space — the space that provides the viewer with time to ponder potential choices.[181] This method of seeing, as described by Didi-Huberman, 'is neither narrative nor explicative, neither contemplative nor mute [...] because it allows only a "surveying gaze," a simple *übersicht*.'[182] This mode of examination transcends canonical disciplinary practices and enables

> new connections or affinities between certain images rise to the surface, a way of making *tempestas philosophica* [the philosophical storm] of unseen problems appear, and of opening new horizons for a cultural history.[183]

Naturally, considering the vast realms of time and space carries the risk of overlooking specific historical facts and details, potentially hindering a comprehensive art-historical analysis in the traditional sense. It could also lead to fables, stories never told or heard, wishful images, and hallucinations. Nonetheless, this reflection on historical memory — the tracking of primary frequencies and tendencies in visual imagery — has the capacity to challenge the understanding of historical phenomena and recognise their fluid, variable, and renewable quality which, to note once again, underscores an invincible necessity for the female subject.

Symbol to Symptom

In order to grasp the complex correlation between memory and imagination through the construction of the atlas, the principal concepts of Warburgian practice include the terms *Nachleben* and *Pathosformeln,* both fundamentally linked to historical and art-historical criticism,

---

[178] Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 230.
[179] M. Rampley, 'Iconology of the interval: Aby Warburg's legacy, Word & Image,' *A Journal of Verbal/ Visual Enquiry,* 2001.
[180] Ibid., p. 324.
[181] Sprung, 2011.
[182] Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 230.
[183] Ibid., p. 234; "Elective Affinities" and "Constellations" are two common translations of Benjamin's essay on Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften;* See N. K. Leacock, 'Character, Silence, and the Novel: Walter Benjamin on Goethe's "Elective Affinities."' *Narrative,* vol. 10, no. 3, 2002, pp. 277–306. *JSTOR,* http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107294. Accessed 3 Aug. 2022.

anthropology, and nineteenth-century psychology of the unconscious.[184] According to Didi-Huberman, 'the term *Nachleben* 'refers to the survival (the continuity or afterlife and metamorphosis) of images and motifs,' while *Pathosformeln* (the formulae of pathos) encompass the visible symptomatic corporeal gestures expressing human emotions.[185] The afterlife of images — the survival, thus, 'lies in the recurring symptom' — the *Pathosformel,* 'in the unconsciousness of forms.'[186] Didi-Huberman highlights the significance of the term *symptom,* a medical metaphor that aligns Warburg's approach to images with Freudian psychoanalytic concepts such as 'repression and the return of the repressed.' This connection enables Warburg to explore psychopathologies within art history.[187] Both terms are considered psychic categories: *Nachleben* refers to 'a *psychic time,*' thus representing a temporal model, while *Pathosformel* pertains to 'a *psychic gesture'* — a model of sense.[188] In Didi-Huberman's reading, Warburg turned to anthropology and psychoanalysis to 'dismantle the judgements of taste proper to the 'aestheticizing history of art,' introduce the impurity of time, and open it up for new readings by making the symptom a 'constantly open work of *over-determination.*'[189] In this perspective, the *symbol* that traditional art history deciphers for understanding transforms into a *symptom* 'the moment it displaces itself and loses its primary identity, when its proliferation suffocates its signification, transgressing the limits off its proper semiotic field.'[190] Accordingly, '[t]he symptom needs to be *interpreted* and not *deciphered* (as the iconologists, heirs to Panofsky's legacy, would like to decipher "symbolic forms").'[191]

According to Didi-Huberman, the Warburgian approach is 'a living metamorphosis of traditional art history' shifting a focus from the history of objects to the history of the psyche, 'embodied in styles, forms, 'pathos formulae', symbols, fantasies, beliefs.'[192] This metamorphosis alters the positivist and idealist perspectives of history and art, profoundly transforming them.[193] The mystery of this venture lies in the impregnable connection between *Nachleben* (afterlife) and *Leben* (life) itself: 'Both are messy, cluttered, muddled, various, haphazard, retentive, protean,

---

[184] Didi-Huberman, 2001, pp. 621–645.
[185] Ibid., p. 622; Didi-Huberman, 2003, p. 273.
[186] G. Didi-Huberman, 'The Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology,' *Oxford Art Journal,* vol. 25, no. 1, 2002, p. 63.
[187] Didi-Huberman, 2001, p. 627.
[188] Ibid., pp. 622 and 626.
[189] Ibid., p. 622 and p. 632; However, there is no substantial evidence that Warburg was deeply interested in or well-read in Freud's work. This is theoretical speculation from Didi-Huberman; See G. Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art,* Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017; L. Ruprecht, 'Gestures between Symptom and Symbol in Aby Warburg and Sigmund Freud,' *Gestural Imaginaries: Dance and Cultural Theory in the Early Twentieth Century*, New York, Oxford Academic, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190659370.003.0007, accessed 13 Jul. 2022.
[190] Didi-Huberman, 2001, p. 640.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid., p. 621.
[193] Ibid.

liquid, oceanic in scope and complexity, impervious to analytical organization.'[194] In contrast to the classical tradition of understanding representations as self-contained meanings, the atlas is capable, precisely through the interdependence of memory and imagination, of capturing the *life forces* of images.[195] In Mitchell's terms, it delves into "the biology of images" — how they live, die or survive, come back to life again, shed skin and transform, and travel through thousands of years and places. The afterlife of images, their reoccurrence through gestures, bodily movements, and motifs that persist, transform, and reproduce, encourages viewers to engage in unpredictable art-historical interpretation to discover the unknown or uncertain. However, interpretation is a complicated mnemonic operation, requiring pieces to be extracted from individual and collective memories and imaginatively reconstructed.

Retrospective Reinvention of History

The image atlas itself serves as a mnemonic device, carrying figurative gesturalities laden with historical memories. The structure of assembling scattered images in the form of an atlas is analytically closely affiliated with Benjamin's concept of *historical materialism* and the phenomenon of *montage*. Historical materialism, as a philosophical concept of historical time, is defined by 'a certain relation to the past, namely, a redemptive relation,' guarding radically fragmented moments in the past in order to reimagine the future.[196] Montage, on the other hand, is an analytical method for rewriting history by assembling respective materials — as Benjamin's renowned phrase implies: 'History decays into images, not into stories.'[197] His historical criticism, therefore, centres on 'the past as flashing up *as an image'* that 'can only be seized and actualized by the present.'[198] This means that the past is always tangible because history is not a continuous flow of progress but rather a permanent and retrospective reproduction of the past in the present.[199] The occurrence of the historical past as the flash image in the present moment of its recognition is what Benjamin calls a *dialectical image.* According to him, 'the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.'[200] History and its possibilities can be missed, thus seizing the flash of a memory and 'save the past

---

[194] Didi-Huberman, 2001, p. 282.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Beiner, 1984, p. 424.
[197] N. Levin, 'Montage Mahagonny: Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht's Theatre of Interruptions,' in (eds.) F. Voigt et. al., *Material und Begriff: Arbeitsverfahren und theoretische Beziehungen Walter Benjamins,* Hamburg, Argument, 2019, pp. 145–159; W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999b, p. 476.
[198] Schwartz, 2001, p. 1740.
[199] Benjamin, W., 'On the Concept of History,' in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 4, 1938–1940,* eds. H. Eiland and M. W. Jennings, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 389–400.
[200] Schwartz, 2001, p. 1740.

from the threat of irretrievable disappearance,' is a crucial task for anyone working with historiographical investigation.[201] However, for Benjamin, '[a]rticulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it "the way it really was."'[202] Rather, since the past offers a range of new possibilities to the present, the aim is not to recover it, but to renew it through retrospective correction.[203]

Similarly, by means of *Nachleben* and *Pathosformeln* to execute a redemptive operation towards memory and the past, the atlas can be seen as a dialectic object. It collects images full of memories to see them in a fresh light. Therefore,

> [i]t is a *materialistic* practice in the sense that it leaves things their anonymous sovereignty, their abundance, their irreducible particularity. But it is at the same time a psychological activity in which the reasoned inventory makes room for association, anamnesis, memory, the magic of a game that is linked to childhood and imagination.[204]

In simple terms, the chiasm of memory and imagination, as grasped by the practice of the atlas or montage, is an imaginative and creative act of the redemptive revision of history.

Anachronisms

The atlas of images, functioning as a visual embodiment of historical knowledge, offers the opportunity to pierce through and disrupt the linear framework of art history which has been traditionally organised through established investigative practices. Instead, it allows for a retrospective reimagining, birthing novel interpretations. In this perspective, history takes on a new form, and the images, once firmly entwined within art's stylistic categories or chronological periods, break free from their singular contexts and engage in a collective, chaotic dance within the realm of anachronistic time.

As elucidated by Didi-Huberman, '[t]he atlas is an anachronistic object, in the sense that heterogeneous times are constantly at work together in it.'[205] While the conventional narrative structure of art history often adheres to a linear and consistent chronology, the Warburgian approach of examining the pictorial history spread across a montage table introduces a chronologically inconsistent, or anachronistic, perspective. Didi-Huberman interprets this

---

[201] W. Hamacher, '"Now:" Walter Benjamin on Historical Time,' in A. Benjamin (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and History,* London and New York, Continuum, 2005, p. 46; Beiner, 1984, p. 428.
[202] Benjamin, 2003, p. 391.
[203] Cappelletto, 2013, p. 161.
[204] Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 63.
[205] Ibid., p. 9.

anachronistic montage practice as a necessary antagonism to the conventional linear understanding of time and history.[206] He states:

> It is better to recognize the necessity of anachronism as something positive: it seems to be internal to the objects themselves — the images — whose history we are trying to reconstruct. In a first approximation, then, anachronism would be the temporal way of expressing the exuberance, complexity, and overdetermination of images.[207]

This aspect was also crucial for Warburg: When images are present in the current instant anachronically, their former historical function, as well as their historical route, becomes less important. 'To sample chaos means at the same time to recognize the dispersion of the world and to become involved, in spite of all, in its collection.'[208] Therefore, the images of two women, constituting as-yet-unknown chaotic historical evidence, form a structure that radiates something larger than their individual historical contexts. This something larger was the *missing x* for both Warburg and his significant influence, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. As Didi-Huberman points out, for Goethe, while attempting to create a universal operating hypothesis 'on the relations between the multiplicity of phenomena and their fundamental unity,'

> the universal cannot be limited to the general idea, the abstract law, or the common denominator of the particular cases gathered. On the contrary, it is multiplied in the particular cases, in each particular case: each phenomenon of nature, each work done by man. This is why a particular case must never be isolated from the "millions of cases" that surround it in the chaos of the world. [---] On the contrary, it is necessary to lean over each particular case, to respect its intrinsic difference, but, then, to displace one's gaze, to put a thousand new cases on the table — like the thousand images of which the *Mnemosyne* atlas will be made up — in order to recognize the extrinsic differences that can, according to the contexts, be conflicting polarities or elective affinities.[209]

Seeing pictorial survivals as anachronisms, therefore, should not be viewed as 'a historiographical error, but a fertile principle for understanding the complex behaviour of images.'[210] To delve further into the history of the human psyche, why not venture into it, explore, and perhaps even redefine it?

---

[206] C. Larsson, *Didi-Huberman and the image,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2020, pp. 69–97.
[207] Didi-Huberman, 2003, p. 37.
[208] Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 118.
[209] Ibid., p. 119; See J. W. von Goethe, *Maximes et réflexions,* orig. 1809–10, trans. P. Deshusses, Paris, Payot & Rivages, 2001, English edition: Maxims and Reflections, trans. E. Stopp, London, Penguin, 1998.
[210] Larsson, 2020, p. 71 and 83.

Summary

In Chapter II, I delve into the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* as a heuristic tool for comprehending cultural history through visual representations. This approach, in contrast to positivistic and idealistic art-historical viewpoints, considers images for their creative and emancipatory potential, diverging from linear narratives and hierarchical categorisations. At the core of the Warburgian method lies the construction of an assemblage of images — the atlas — sidestepping conventional frameworks and creating an ethical surface where diverse genres, aesthetics, and schools coexist. Similar to Walter Benjamin's concept of *mechanical reproduction* which critiques traditional notions such as creative genius and eternal value, the Warburgian practice detaches images from their original contexts, fostering transformative potential and envisioning them as agents of change. Both approaches reject oppressive historical truths and embrace the potential for meaningful transformation in past, present, and future narratives. This perspective acquires further significance in the era of digital reproduction where image arrangements on various platforms alter modes of art perception and offer dynamic experiences.

The chapter subsequently delves into Felix Thürlemann's concept of the *hyperimage,* referring to the interplay of spatially arranged image assemblages that create new meaning. These platforms disrupt conventional art-historical notions of linear progression, allowing novel interpretations of and interactions with images. Two prominent examples I focus on are André Malraux's *Museum Without Walls,* extending the dialogue among images across epochs and cultures; and Griselda Pollock's *Virtual Feminist Museum* which from a feminist and gendered perspective intervenes in traditional art history, critically examining representations of women in art. Here, the notion of the *virtual* challenges dominant power structures and provides a platform for reimagining the history of women through images — a crucial endeavour for the female subject. Beyond the realm of art but in alignment with the Warburgian atlas, the chapter introduces Bruno Latour's concept of *immutable mobiles*. These objects possess the ability to accumulate, gather, and present information synoptically across space and time, serving as tools for comprehension and reinterpretation. Latour's proposition contributes to emancipating the transformative potential of images within a nonlinear discourse of visual narrative.

After exploring image assembling practices, the chapter delves deeper into the principal concepts of the Warburgian method: *Nachleben* and *Pathosformeln,* carriers of mnemonic and emotional content throughout history. These notions illuminate the complex relationship between memory and imagination and their role in reshaping historical narratives. As highlighted by Georges Didi-Huberman, this approach is a living metamorphosis of traditional art history,

inspiring new ideas and creating fresh meanings through playful imagination. To address methodological complexities, the chapter draws from Benjamin's concepts of *historical materialism, montage,* and *dialectical image,* emphasising the redemptive potential of images in historical reinterpretation in order to reimagine the future. In this context, the atlas of images acts as a disruptive force in traditional art history, enabling a retrospective reimagining and generating novel interpretations, breaking free from established stylistic categories and chronological periods. This anachronistic approach, exemplified by Didi-Huberman's insights, acknowledges the complexity of images and their intrinsic differences. Viewing pictorial survivals as anachronisms, therefore, should not be considered an error but a fertile principle for understanding the intricate nature of images and delving deeper into the history of the human psyche.

By synthesising these key theoretical perspectives and methodological foundations, the chapter sets the stage for the interpretive analysis of the image constellation of two women, ultimately aiming to comprehend their dynamic relationship within the framework of memory, imagination, and historical transformation.

CHAPTER III
The Atlas of Two Women

Feminist Writing Otherwise

To comprehend the complexity of images representing women and to redefine them, the analysis in this chapter needs further enrichment through critical modes of thinking that contribute explicitly to issues of femininity. The theoretical and methodological framework of seeing image constellations in a structured atlas-like form, along with the notion of *Nachleben* (survival) as previously introduced in Chapter II, holds essential significance in discussing the vague pictorial ambience in which the feminine presence is immersed.

Griselda Pollock discloses the peculiarities of "feminist writing otherwise" which encompasses the approaches of 'writing and reading with life, death and survival.'[211] This expression alludes to the challenge and impracticability of articulating the narrative in a singular feminine voice within the symbolic framework of hegemonic masculinity. To transcend the traumas stemming from ignorance, neglect, and oppression, there exists no alternative but to lend one's own narratives 'to the reading of cultural or visual texts which, in turn, provide forms and figures through which we come to grasp the present, but shapeless, nature of affects and as-yet-unfigured memories.'[212] By highlighting 'the ellipsis of cultural memory,' Pollock conducts a radical inquiry into Western notions of psychosexual and psycholinguistic formations — often referred to as patriarchy or phallocentrism — in conjunction with the constructs of sexual difference, sexuality, and language.[213]

While the dominant, sexist, and hegemonic 'Art History fails because, in the face of twentieth-century history, it continues to plot out a history of art without rupture and catastrophe,' Warburg's proposition of an alternative concept of time, 'not directional, developmental, and historicist but bending, recurring, repetitive, and above all, traumatic,' offers a possibility to examine 'the traumas of contemporary femininities — classed, raced, ethnicised, desiring, embodied, sensate, material, psychically vivid, thinking, speaking, writing and making.'[214] This is precisely why the psychoanalytically inspired Warburgian method of assembling images remains highly relevant for feminist analysis in grasping memories that have yet to be articulated.[215]

These memories, whether personal or collective, remain highly disorganised and scattered

---

[211] Pollock, 2013, p. 19.
[212] Ibid., p. 20.
[213] Pollock, 2016, pp. 27–61.
[214] Pollock, 2014, p. 13; Pollock, 2013, p. 31.
[215] See Iversen, 1993.

within pictorial depictions and textual narratives, manifesting as bodily gestures and linguistic expressions. Consequently, to revive, recollect, and systematise them, both from a personal and scholarly perspective, a two-fold operation is required: the simultaneous consideration of the internal and external affects of language and pictorial representation. Recognising resemblances between personal and collective psycho-corporeal traits necessitates meticulous scrutiny of both visual and textual portrayals, thinking through the self while negotiating with other analytical voices. This process of seeing and reading, however, does not occur on a formal canonical level. To establish a connection between personal and collective experiences of the psychic and corporeal, one needs to think a hundred times, twist and fold ideas and concepts, and assess their plasticity.

Female Gesturality

The constellation of images depicting two women is a complex structure brimming with collective figurative memories, encountered and recognised through corporeal gestures — *Pathosformeln*. Nonetheless, in comparison with the previously introduced practices of tracking repetitive pathos formulas (expressions of human emotions), the analysis in this specific case aims to trace the interrelation between *two women* rather than following a single gesture, signal, or posture. While gestures may vary from one image to another, shifting between diverse scenes, narratives, or moods, the inclination of female bodies toward each other remains unvaried. Therefore, at a formal level, the gesture of relation serves as a common denominator across all images within the collection. In a sense, the enduring relativity between two women positions each image as an *immutable mobile:* While the content of each image continuously shape-shifts, the fundamental essence remains unvaried. However, it is important to emphasise that the analysis does not seek to homogenise the multitude of artworks as physical objects. Instead, it embraces their inherent unity to comprehend the mental image imprinted when viewing them as a constellation.

As Pollock articulates, images 'are tangible as they are visible, as physically manufactured as they are able virtually to generate affects and thoughts, while any field of vision is mediated by tangibility and materiality.'[216] It is neither intended nor possible to comprehensively analyse every internal composition, visual narrative, colour palette, or bodily posture in intricate detail. Nevertheless, akin to a Benjaminian flash, the motif of two women gradually becomes ingrained in memory as a mental image. As such, *The Atlas of Two Women,* as a singular mental image,

---

[216] Pollock, 2014, p. 12.

represents 'both a specific individual thing and a symbolic form that embraces a totality.'[217] In other words, as a mental image, hyperimage, or monogram arising from yet-unfigured personal and collective memories, it possesses both concrete and abstract qualities. On the one hand, it emanates from the social order, because irrespective of personal intentions, creative expressions, or artistic techniques, an artist depicts, photographs, or sculpts something experienced or encountered in the external world. On the other hand, when daily occurrences are captured and translated into visual representations or linguistic forms, especially with persistent obstinacy and repetition, they demand attention, signal certain circumstances, and provoke novel interpretations.

The question of visibility and recognition of societal and symbolic symptoms, which unfolds between the viewer and the images, consistently revolves around one another — sometimes reinforcing, and at other times clashing with each other. The corporeal gestures embedded within a female body and viewed in *The Atlas of Two Women,* thus, become symbolically remembered iconic representations that arouse personal remembrances through sensations of aesthetic appreciation, joy, admiration, identification, envy, sexual desire, anxiety, confusion, sadness, empathy, nostalgia, tenderness, calmness, excitement, hope, and so on. As W. J. T. Mitchell would inquire, what forms might these sensations and desires assume when projected back at the viewer from the images themselves?

The contagious and forceful diffusion of these figurative but also sensory gesturalities across cultures and periods ensures the survival and afterlife, *Nachleben,* of the repetitive motif of two women. The affective prevalence of the symptom stipulates the theoretical universalisation of the analysis, and the diagnosis, and opens up the possibility of searching for the *missing x.* As already elaborated, the analysis accepts the circumstance of unfamiliarity with images and the otherness of their individual historical background and cultural, social, and economic context — underlining the necessity of importing the capacities of intuition, creative speculation, and interpretation of the beholder. The motif of two women that revisits each representation, employed here almost like a visual metaphor, the mental image, points to a much larger structure and lets the viewer see something else in which a condition of the feminine psyche can be sensed. Put differently, the thesis examines the motif of two women in movement as a certain process of the human psyche and sidesteps from establishing it as another impregnable paradigm belonging to art history or visual culture. What is this something else, then, reoccurring in each image and not only making the motif of two women endlessly repeatable but also an unhurriedly recognisable pattern for the viewer stretched over the certain course of time?

---

[217] Mitchell, 2005, p. xvii.

As previously highlighted in Chapters I and II, due to its constellational abundance, the atlas is a paradoxical object containing hundreds of images, yet coalescing into a singular mental image saturated with mnemonic complexity and imaginative potentiality. Consequently, it affects the viewer in an equally paradoxical manner: The atlas either evades interpretation and appears inaccessible, or it breaks loose and overwhelms the interpreter with recollections and associations. For this reason, not every emerging association during the analysis should be encompassed. Instead, I will adhere to certain structural properties that establish an isomorphic relationship between images on the pictorial surface of the atlas.

Let me reiterate that interpreting the unstable object necessitates harnessing the imaginative power of both image and language, extending beyond their strictly representative and argumentative functions. Similar to image constellations, language continually shifts, not solely through re-evaluating former linguistic forms and establishing new paradigms but also through uncovering deeper fluctuations in linguistic terms, concepts, expressions, and translations across various languages. In the context of this thesis, when employed to describe the realm of the feminine — an already elusive concept — language becomes even more precarious, tender, sensitive, fluid, malleable, thin, and fragile layer that enshrouds theoretical argumentation.

The difficulty of comprehending the instability of the image atlas is further compounded by the intricacies of capturing female narratives, desires, or orientations in language. Hence, the visual analysis of the atlas will be enhanced by a sensitive reading of certain linguistic etymologies, meanings, and expressions. This attentiveness to linguistic functions reinforces a dual obligation — both pictorial and linguistic — in order to facilitate the process of reconstructing female subjectivity within scholarly practice.

Forms of Address

As previously indicated, to undertake an analysis driven by intuitive, imaginative, and interpretative modes of *seeing,* and to embrace the unfamiliarity inherent in the images constituting the atlas, this thesis concentrates on the reciprocal recognition between images and the viewer. In the words of Wolfgang Kemp, each image either invites or resists the implicit viewer's integration into a pictorial representation through what he terms *forms of address.*[218] In order to trace and interpret the signals of visual communication directed at the beholder by the image collection, I will adopt Kemp's methodology of the *aesthetic of reception,* gradually introducing its five analytical levels. However, since this method was originally designed for application to individual artworks, images, or other visual phenomena, it requires modification

---

[218] Kemp, 1998.

and adaptation to render it functional for the multiplicity of images — or, to put it differently, the mental image of two women.

The initial form of address is concerned with internal relationships among depicted figures, simultaneously incorporating or (seemingly) excluding the viewer — 'the position that they take toward one another and toward the beholder, their gestures and visual contacts.'[219] This level, with its emphasis on the communication patterns depicted within the image, corresponds to the Warburgian notion of *Pathosformeln* — symptomatic corporeal and psychic gestures that unveil latent memories within cultural histories. Additionally, since Kemp's method incorporates the agency of the viewer, this analytical level contributes to a profound understanding of the complex interplay between artistic representation and viewer engagement. Within this context, it facilitates grasping the realm of the feminine psyche in aesthetic experience, thereby enabling the possibility of sensing the yet-unrecognised future potentialities.

The second level delves into the concept of an internal figure purposefully distanced from the centre of action or communication, while simultaneously assuming the role of an identification vehicle or representing a personal perspective for the viewer. In narratological terms, these figures serve as focalizers, capable of establishing direct engagement with viewers, directing their gaze, attention, and concentration.[220] However, in the specific context of the atlas at hand, this level has limited applicability due to the absence of a third figure that typically serves as a visual cue for a pictorial action. In the atlas, each image, without exception, consistently portrays only two women, being discharged from heroic, violent, and forceful actions. Instead, they portray contemplative, elusive, and serene feminine behaviours such as whispering, gossiping, embracing, sleeping, drinking tea, sobbing, laughing, caressing, and so forth.

The third level involves situating the viewer within a pictorial composition through perspective and spatial composition. As Kemp asserts, this level achieves more than simply connecting the spaces of the viewer and a painting — it dictates how an image should be viewed and interpreted. Given the thesis's objective, attempting to provide an exhaustive description of the spatial arrangements in every image would prove to be an almost impossible task. Nonetheless, highlighting certain characteristics of the overarching compositional pattern could offer valuable insights. The composition woven into the images maintains balance through reciprocal exchange, duplication, mirroring, or inversion. The figural properties of women harmoniously occupy the pictorial space with symmetry, often aligned on a parallel plane. In rare instances of figurative imbalance, images portray gestures of care, attentiveness, vigilance, and

---

[219] Kemp, 1998, p. 187.
[220] Ibid.

consideration during moments of vulnerability or emotional disbalance, ultimately restoring the compositional harmony (**Panels. 17 and 19**).

The fourth level entails exploring how the accessibility and inaccessibility of the depicted pictorial scene are influenced by an artist's choices concerning cropping, details, and painted fragments.[221] The interaction depends on whether figures or objects 'are demonstrably revealed to or hidden from their beholder, whether they let themselves be observed or deliberately elude visibility, just like everything that exists outside the boundaries of the painting.'[222] In relation to this analytical level, the images of two women assume a paradoxical quality. Despite instances where their faces are concealed from view, there is no apparent distinction from images in which they fully reveal their appearance. What might be occurring between these women remains elusive to the viewer, regardless of whether their faces are displayed or not. This effect is reinforced by the prevailing sense of remoteness, isolation, and detachment from the outside world that extends beyond the frame. What they obstinately reveal, however, is the enduring gesture of interrelatedness between two women which infuses the atmosphere of the atlas with a conspiratorial, enshrouding, and even claustrophobic touch. In a sense, then, the images of two women, when seen in multiplicity and not in singularity, can be perceived as a representation of an everlasting relation.

The fifth and final level of analysis focuses on 'the *blank* or the aesthetics of *indeterminacy*' within the pictorial narrative. This indicates that 'works of art are unfinished in themselves,' inviting viewers to complete them with imagination.[223] To be precise, these blank spaces establish a liminal zone between the viewer and an image, nurturing the potential for interaction. In this context, within *The Atlas of Two Women,* as the analysis traverses the surface without delving into the construction of each pictorial narrative, the blank space equates to the Warburgian concepts of *Zwischenraum* and *Denkraum* — the black background between images serving as a formal spatial quality where exploration, discovery, and invention occur.

Due to their affinity to the Warburgian approach, the first and last levels of Kemp's methodology — corporeal signals and constitutive blanks — serve as the foundation for constructing *The Atlas of Two Women,* consisting of 20 panels and 213 images (**Panels. 1–20**). By adapting this methodology to encompass a multitude of images, the thesis establishes a connection between the significance of the viewer-image relation to the Warburgian practice of problematising memory to understand the reciprocal exchange of forces, drives, and demands between them. Moreover, the thesis demonstrates that through speculative manipulation of ideas, concepts, and methods, unconventional perspectives of seeing can be attained.

---

[221] Kemp, 1998, pp. 187–188.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid., p. 188.

Glances and Gestures

To initiate an exploration of *The Atlas of Two Women,* let me return to the gesturalities, *Pathosformeln,* as observed in the atlas categorised as *Glances* and *Gestures.* Through this categorisation, my intention is to emphasise the interconnectedness between the optical and corporeal relationships of the depicted figures and the viewer. This discussion aims to demonstrate a limitation inherent in art history and visual studies, where the vision is treated as the sole central aspect of the analysis. By replacing the optical supremacy of the *gaze* with corporeal, even gestural instability of the *glance,* the divide between what is visually perceivable and what is physically sensible on a pictorial plane becomes less distinct. The tangibility of seeing, though this might sound controversial, manages to disrupt the conventional prominence of ocularcentrism, directing attention to other corporeal senses provoked by visual depictions. These senses play a vital role in revealing something larger that is not immediately apparent.

In parallel, the sensitivity, subtlety, and softness of seeing disrupts scopophilia — the male-oriented pleasure derived from objectifying the female body through looking — allowing the viewer to see something simultaneously disastrous and promising. Both glances and gestures are involuntary, often subconscious, soundless, and non-verbal modes of communication that exist in a rhythmic flux, transitioning from one image to another. In order to trace the isomorphic connection of images in their rhythmic movement of pictorial glances and gestures, this analysis emulates the frivolous quality of surveying the surface. However, it carries a corporeal weightiness of sensing, remembering, and articulating the nameless and fragmented implications of depicted femininity.

Normally, classifications such as this cannot offer untroubled outcomes on their own. The depictions of trailing glances and gestures do not inherently convey any information to the viewer regarding the significance of the image collection. They radiate a certain essence that must be felt, experienced, and interpreted; otherwise, they remain devoid of meaning. According to Giorgio Agamben, '[w]hat characterizes gesture is that in it nothing is being produced or acted, but rather something is being endured and supported.'[224] Gestures serve as a means of connecting with that intangible *something* which slips through our fingers while being-in-language.[225] However, Agamben continues, 'because being-in-language is not something that could be said in sentences, the gesture is essentially always a gesture of not being able to figure something out in language.'[226] In this sense, the expressiveness of a body becomes a 'communication of a communicability,' a way to reclaim what has been lost in memory and

---

[224] G. Agamben, *Means Without End: Notes on Politics,* trans. V. Binetti and C. Daniel Heller, Minneapolis and London, Regents of the University of Minnesota, 2000, p. 57.
[225] Ibid., p. 54.
[226] Ibid., p. 59.

compensate for the 'inability to speak.'[227] *Pathosformeln,* recognised in the glances and gestures on the surface of the atlas, succeed in disrupting pure language and the progressive course of history. They underline the vulnerability inherent in discussing the obscured history of femininity. Therefore, the analysis does not have the ambition to provide exhaustive interpretations and explanations for each gesture, image, or panel. Instead, through the gentle act of surveying the surface of the atlas, it refrains from robbing, overpowering, and wearing the images to the verge of death. Thus, engaging with *The Atlas of Two Women* resembles the act of glimpsing into the expanse of the night sky to perceive images as constellations of stars — delicately caressing their potentiality.

As stated in the Introduction, the category of *Glances* encompasses images in which the visual connection between internal figures and the viewer holds more prominence (**Panels. 1–8**). On the other hand, the category of *Gestures* brings together images that depict more dynamic everyday gesturalities and more distinctly reveal social interactions between women (**Panels. 9–20**). Since the thesis concentrates on the act of seeing as an analytical endeavour and investigates the reciprocal relationship between the viewer and the images during this process, the primary concentration of the analysis will be directed toward images in which figures look back with extra-diegetic glances (**Panels. 1 and 2**).

James Elkins, while discussing the nature of sight and the intriguing link that binds the observer with the observed representation that looks back, states that by regarding the presence of each image and the faces of depicted figures seriously, 'not as a vague intuition but as a fact of vision,' it becomes evident that 'the world is full of eyes.'[228] This reflection would not appear as eerie if Mitchell's concept of images-as-organisms and the field of libidinal exchange between images and the viewer were recalled.[229] As he articulates, images might appear considerably weaker if one were to 'shift the question from what pictures *do* to what they *want,* from power to desire, from the model of the dominant power to be opposed, to the model of the subaltern to be interrogated or (better) to be invited to speak.'[230] As the implicit beholder who may invoke numerous details of lived experiences while examining the symbolic atlas, I accept the invitation proposed by the images of two women to discuss femininity as an elusive entity that is difficult to grasp. Consequently, the kaleidoscopic process of *seeing* and *reading* the atlas's surface will be informed by personal recollections, associations, and interpretations, entwined with *the travelling concepts* encountered during this journey. My aspiration is that by surveying the surface of the atlas,

---

[227] Agamben, 2000.
[228] J. Elkins, *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing,* San Diego, New York and London, A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996, p. 12.
[229] Mitchell, 2005, p. xvii.
[230] Ibid., p. 33.

the analytical discourse will take on the structure of an experimental, open-minded, and receptive narrative that allows glimpses into what the thesis terms the unknown feminine.

Glancing at Each Other

As previously mentioned, I will outline the main argument by examining the first two panels, which serve as the most distinct and compelling instances of the underlying visual logic found in all the images within the atlas (**Panels. 1 and 2**). These images have a portrait-like appearance, characterised by static postures of sitting or standing. Often, they feature monotonous or inconspicuous backgrounds that emphasise faces, facial expressions, or bodies as the most prominent elements on the pictorial surface. The visual effect of the depicted female figures being aware of the viewer's presence creates a sense that these portraits serve as statements against the dominating, objectifying gaze, even more strikingly when they are depicted in a state of nudity.

As pointed out by Margaret Olin, the direct gaze returned to the viewer can be interpreted as a provocative sexual invitation, as seen in various contemporary advertising photographs portraying single female figures.[231] In the context of two women, however, this hegemonic gaze is nearly eradicated, as the images do not portray a single minus female figure, an empty signifier, or an object of desire for a presumed male spectator. Rather, women present themselves as two equal minuses which, ultimately, equals a plus. This reasoning, I argue, renders the presumed function of the male gaze obscure, intricate, and difficult to perform. Furthermore, the resistance of the depicted women against the overpowering gaze can be traced through other visible gestures such as holding hands, entwining arms, grasping each other's fingers, and embracing. Notably, the English idiom "clinging on by fingertips" is often used to symbolise someone managing to survive in a difficult situation or maintaining their desired position, all the while being at risk of failing.[232] This gesture of mutual clinging can be interpreted not only as a visual resistance against the dominant masculine gaze but also as a defiance against all hegemonic structures that oppress the feminine realm of the psyche — be they social, political, economic, psychoanalytical, philosophical, or linguistic. While the extra-diegetic effect of looking back at the viewer diminishes in subsequent panels of the atlas, the impact of resisting the listed oppressive structures remains intact.

The inherent logic within the images under scrutiny, portraying two women as minuses, is both perplexing and intriguing, even from the perspective of a female spectator, often referred to

---

[231] Olin, 1996, p. 216.
[232] "clinging on by fingertips." *Farlex Dictionary of Idioms,* 2015, Retrieved May 9, 2022, from https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/clinging+on+by+fingertips.

as the *female gaze*.[233] In this case, associating oneself with the image is achieved through a convoluted process because the power dynamic between two depicted women is virtually non-existent, making it difficult to determine which of the two figures to identify with.

The women are almost indistinguishable, dressed uniformly with only slight variations, often mirroring or mimicking each other's postures, intertwining their bodies with various parts or braided hair, and at times, even resembling conjoined twins (**Panels. 1 and 2**). Both figures acknowledge the viewer, as they are aware of being seen. These visual effects place the female viewer in a double bind — a situation where she is confronted with two irreconcilable demands: Either making it impossible to identify with *both women* simultaneously, leading to a sense of ignorance, or challenging herself to comprehend the paradoxical visual logic at play. This is precisely where my primary curiosity and desire, as the implicit viewer, have originated. Thereby, I present the third research question: What could the paradoxical visual logic of the symptomatic visual motif of two women signify?

The principal aspect of the visual logic within the context of the extra-diegetic glances is concealed within the similitude of faces and appearances. Agamben, while proposing an exceptional differentiation between two elements — the face and the appearance — asserts that all beings manifest themselves through their appearances but only human beings endeavour to culturally appropriate this manifestation through language. This is how the appearance as something natural transforms into a human *face,* a cultural construct within the Symbolic order, encompassing both the pictorial and linguistic realms.[234] Therefore, the aim should not be to identify the natural appearance of women in these images. Instead, they should be perceived as culturally shaped, repetitive *faces* — symptoms, motifs, patterns, hyperimages, emblems, or mental images that signify something beyond themselves. According to Agamben, similar to gestures, the face does not convey anything specific about an individual; it serves as '*only* opening, *only* communicability,' and its 'revelation is revelation of language itself.'[235] This perspective, of course, does not undermine the reciprocal interdependence between social and symbolic structures. On the contrary, it reinforces the significance of taking symbolic forms seriously in order to unveil the deeply entrenched oppressive structures beneath the social order. Thus, the discussion here is not concerned with a human face linked to an individual, but rather, with two identical faces recurring together as something symbolic.

James Elkins, addressing the context of twins' appearance, discusses the challenge of discerning differences between faces and notes that the human mind resists constructing an

[233] See M. A. Doane, 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator,' *Screen,* Volume 23, Issue 3–4, Sep/Oct 1982, Pages 74–88, https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/23.3-4.74.
[234] Agamben, 2000, p. 91.
[235] Ibid., p. 92.

understanding of two individuals unless it discovers 'something that makes sense.'[236] The almost identical appearance, Elkins suggests, is analogous to a 'nonsensical proposition in mathematics: $1 + 1 = 1$,' nevertheless, it could indeed hold significance if interpreted in theoretical contexts.[237] After all, the complexities of symbolic practices, language, and aesthetics cannot be measured by algebraic equations. In this context, the viewer is compelled either to ignore, dismiss, or underestimate *the image* of two women or is encouraged to associate herself with two figures simultaneously — with something similar but different, something singular and dual at the same time. Such formulations, needless to say, do not make sense within conventional visual and linguistic analytical practices. However, these nonsensical and paradoxical propositions hold great significance in the context of this thesis because, above all, they interrupt the linear trajectory of visual analysis typically conducted from the dogmatic subject-object perspective. As Elkins writes:

> [T]here is no such thing as just looking, and there is also no such thing as an object that is simply looked at by something else called an observer. Looking is much too complex to be reduced to a formula that has a looking subject and a seen object. If I observe attentively enough, I find that my observations are tangled with the object, that the object is part of the world and therefore part of me, that looking is something I do but also something that happens to me [...].[238]

Viewed from the perspective of the implicit female viewer, the act of witnessing the image of two women transcends a mere visual or physical identification with the female body. Instead, it involves grasping the deeper structure of the feminine psyche both in singularity and totality. This point is critical because, to reiterate, "grasping the deeper structure of the feminine psyche both in singularity and totality" constitutes precisely the process of reconstructing female subjectivity in Luce Irigaray's terms: an understanding of oneself 'beyond differences but thanks to these very differences.'[239] The corporeal expressiveness witnessed through the faces and appearances of two women reveals and compensates for the difficulty of articulating the condition of the feminine psyche and the lack of female subjectivity within language. The presence of two women as a symptom, therefore, challenges the conventional binary reception of pictorial phenomena, as it also uncovers the broader context of female oppression, rooted in the same binary structure inherent to the Symbolic order. In other words, it disrupts pure pictorial and linguistic frameworks and exposes the predicament of defining *the feminine* within (visual) language. This is how the mental image of two women transforms into 'both a specific individual thing and a symbolic form that embraces a totality.'[240]

---

[236] Elkins, 1996, p. 174.
[237] Ibid., p. 176.
[238] Ibid., p. 35.
[239] L. Irigaray, *Between East and West*, org. 1997, New York, Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 12.
[240] Mitchell, 2005, p. xvii.

My choice to outline the main argument based on the first two panels of the atlas is by no means accidental. I want to emphasise the importance of keeping in mind this logic of *being two,* or rather, the gesture of the interrelation between two while glancing at the other panels. When considering the images featuring extra-diegetic glances, the act of *seeing* is exposed to a state of being-in-medium, as figures and the viewer exchange visual contact directly. In images where only one woman is depicted looking back, she assumes the role of a guardian of the depicted scenes, reminding the viewer of her engagement with a symbolic visual medium (**Panel. 3**). To a certain extent, this configuration makes it easier for the viewer to identify with the image since visual contact is established with one of the female figures. Furthermore, the physical appearances of the women become more discernable compared to the preceding panels. However, she is not alone in this role; she safeguards, supports, and advocates for her pictorial counterpart.

As glances of both female figures become divergent, the images convey emotions like confusion, melancholy, alienation, separation, sadness, ambiguity, and shyness (**Panel. 4**). These emotions might mirror the feelings evoked when confronted with an overpowering male gaze. Nonetheless, even in their divergence, women remain empathetic and connected to each other. These perplexing sensations become much more noticeable when contrasted with the panel in which the women's glances converge once more (**Panel. 5**). When the composition retrieves its balance, calmness, and fixation, the potency shifts back to both women entirely. Even though a range of downhearted emotions can be read on their faces, an element of suspense regarding their point of focus, what might they be looking at, comes into play, distressing the presumed domineering gaze.

When one woman looks at another through an intra-diegetic glance, the atmosphere undergoes a complete transformation (**Panel. 6**). The gestures convey emotions such as care, concern, admiration, attentiveness, curiosity, empathy, and even a touch of envy and alienation. Through these images, it becomes evident that regardless of the complex reciprocal forces at play, including those between the viewer and the images, the depicted women accept each other as *other than the self.* This acceptance, contrary to the conventional subject-object dichotomy, is performed through mutual trust in either leading or following one another.

As for the panel where both depicted women look at each other, the viewer witnesses mutual recognition and appreciation (**Panel. 7**). From the viewer's perspective, the pictorial narrative becomes more self-contained since the images portray women revelling in each other's company, fully committed to one another. An image situated in the upper right corner even mocks the detail of hands from Michelangelo's c. 1512 painting *The Creation of Adam,* offering a feminine reinterpretation of the biblical story. This mutual understanding gives rise to a sense of lighthearted coexistence, evident in the carefree gestures of lolling out tongues or dancing

together in a blissful manner, enhanced by the flowing movement of their clothing textiles. The images in the last panel of *Glances* do not reveal the faces of women; instead, the viewer glances at them from behind their backs (**Panel. 8**). The women are completely immersed in each other, making it even more challenging than in earlier panels to discern the nature of their interaction.

Within the category of *Gestures,* the occurrence of extra-diegetic glances becomes notably rarer (**Panels. 9–20**). Consequently, the sense of complete immersion in the depicted scenes weakens, diminishing the awareness of being-in-medium. However, as mentioned earlier, it remains crucial to approach these images as symbolic gestures of *being two,* regardless of the temptation to delve into various social dimensions of female oppression portrayed within the pictorial narratives. Hence, I will refrain from providing a detailed description of each gesture and scene. Instead, I will offer overarching observations derived from a collective examination of all panels in this category.

The images within this category emanate a discharge of harmonic bodily gestures, making it even more difficult to decipher distinct interrelations between women. They exude a completely different, much more intimate, sensual, and tactile manner of being together, as the depicted women maintain close bodily contact in a manner that makes it nearly impossible to distinguish whether they are mothers and daughters, sisters, friends, lovers, or companions. These panels reinforce a sense of suspense, almost as if the women were conspiring against patriarchy, exchanging confidential ideas, thoughts, and perhaps even rumours. The subtle gestures of activities such as embroidery, reading, conversation, sleeping, playing cards, drinking tea, preparing dinner, helping each other, working and relaxing together, and fortune-telling, among others, allude to the scattered implications of femininity as a historical process of psychic formation through 'social practices of enforced domesticity, passivity and silencing encoded in obligatory needlework.'[241] However, alongside this passive weight of oppression, the images radiate a sense of balance in the coexistence of two beings, a potentiality discerned through the analysis.

The atlas harnesses the richness of *difference* among women, showcasing myriad ways of coexisting, collaborating, loving, strategising, learning, reading, seeing, conversing, and exploring possibilities together. Despite variations in social and symbolic contexts of oppression, the gesture of *being two* remains constant, demonstrating that *being two* is a possibility to transcend oppressive binary paradigms. *The Atlas of Two Women,* therefore, offers a portrayal of the feminine psychic condition encapsulated in symbolic representations that reciprocally affect the viewer — emanating the exchange of desires through a paradoxical visual logic that is challenging to articulate in language. In this manner, within the realm of aesthetic experience, the motif of two

---

[241] Pollock, 2014, p. 29.

women exposes the limitations of the linear mode of art-historical analysis, enabling a deeper exploration of the underlying structures of oppression, rupture, and catastrophe inherent in historical progression.

Sexual Difference

As the methods of analysing the representations of two women have evolved in relation to linguistic, philosophical, and psychoanalytic practices, it becomes essential to further enrich art history and visual studies with notions of philosophising *the feminine*. The problematization of the binary paradigm extends far beyond the viewer-image relationship within art history and visual culture. Given that this thesis aims to underline the inaptitude of canonical art-historical traditions for critical feminist reception and the importance of alternative modes of perception in addressing issues of *the feminine,* understanding the incompleteness inherent in binary constructions is inevitable.

Returning to Irigaray's exploration of female subjectivity and the imperative to transcend the fundamental instability of the Symbolic order, I will now present a straightforward linguistic example in relation to the images of two women. Irigaray, in her endeavour to unveil 'the sexualized characteristics of language,' presents the findings of her investigation into speech patterns employed by female and male participants while expressing themselves.[242] While male participants tended to favour subject-object relations when constructing sentences, female participants leaned toward subject-subject relations. Moreover, it became evident that 'women prefer the present and future tenses, contiguity, a concrete environment, relations based on difference; they prefer being with, *being two* [my italics].' Conversely, men 'prefer the past tense, metaphor, abstract transposition, relationships between likes, but only through a relationship with the object, relationships between the one and the many.'[243] Irigaray contends that these linguistic configurations, representing different subjective realms, with the masculine being active and self-contained while the feminine passive and relational, should neither be abandoned nor abolished by equating passive femininity to active masculinity. She argues that feminine passivity 'demonstrates an inherent richness' and offers the potential for intersubjectivity that has yet to be recognised in cultural, social, and political realities.[244] Irigaray's reflections, however, refrain from

---

[242] Irigaray notes that young and adolescent girls tend to 'prefer a relationship with the other over a relationship with the object. Thus, when asked to give a sentence using the preposition "with" or the adverb "together," female adolescents and students, and many adult women, will respond with statements such as: "I'll go out with him tonight;" or "We'll always live together." Male subjects instead respond: "I came with my motorcycle;" "I wrote this sentence with my pencil;" or "Me and my guitar are good together."' For a more detailed discussion, refer to Irigaray and Guynn, 1995, pp. 15–17.
[243] Ibid., p. 16.
[244] Ibid.

providing a definitive definition of *the feminine* because, as she argues, the process of redefinition must be undertaken by women themselves. The historic task of transitioning from a singular subject to the existence of two subjects, both on a philosophical and political level, should be assigned to women because, given the context described above, they are 'destined to a relationship of two, and in particular to a relationship with the other.'[245] When translated into social and political terms, this mode of transitioning from the singular to the intersubjective 'allows us to promote the recognition of all forms of others without hierarchy, privilege, or authority over them.'[246] Therefore, as Irigaray concludes,

> [r]eplacing the one by the two in sexual difference thus constitutes a decisive philosophical and political gesture, one which gives up a singular or plural being in order to become a dual being. This is the necessary foundation for a new ontology, a new ethics, and a new politics, in which the other is recognized as other and not as the same: bigger or smaller than I, or at best my equal.[247]

This complex gesture, as well as Irigaray's broader body of work, can be understood as comprising three essential phases. The first phase unveils the masculine dominance within the Symbolic order. The second phase points to linguistic potentialities for the redefinition and reconstruction of female subjectivity. In the third and final phase, the aim is to foster intersubjective relations between two irreducible subjects, with the purpose of developing the necessary social, legal, and ethical conditions for both. All three phases are interconnected within a complex network of factors that shape the personal experiences of individual subjects which can result in either traumatised memories or soothing potentialities. Therefore, in the collective effort to establish "a new ontology, a new ethics, and a new politics," all fields of inquiry must engage in dialogue with each other to avoid perpetuating dualistic separations and instead strive to build connections by embracing *difference*.

Irigaray's philosophical stance which centres on embracing the difference between two and highlights the feminine inclination toward *being two,* provides both a conceptual and figurative resource for understanding and analysing the images of two women. In this context, the motif's resistance and insistence become coherent and insightful when viewed through the lens of a critique of the distorted subject formation within the Symbolic order. Conversely, when Irigaray's philosophical, linguistic, and psychoanalytic perspectives are enriched with examples from the realm of pictorial representation, deeper roots of female oppression and the future potentialities of intersubjective relation become more apparent. Since the reconstruction and redefinition of female subjectivity also necessitate a transition from a traumatised existence, it becomes crucial to

---

[245] Irigaray and Guynn, 1995, p. 18.
[246] Ibid., p. 19.
[247] Ibid.

reevaluate female relationships. This realisation, primarily from a female perspective, I argue, lays the fundamental groundwork for striving towards the yet-unrecognised potentiality of intersubjective relations outlined by Irigaray. The framework of philosophising *the feminine,* therefore, offers guidance for comprehending the paradoxical logic inherent in the mental image of two women that is full of potentialities.

Questioning the canonical paradigms of art history from a feminist perspective and introducing new possibilities for a different way of seeing becomes more effective when informed by a critique of the deeper structures of oppression inherent in the Symbolic order. The range of theoretical articulations presented here opens up the possibility of recognising a psycho-symbolic structure that extends beyond the individual art-historical context of each image of two women. *The Atlas of Two Women* can be viewed as an open invitation to perceive any representation of women in a new light, one that conveys not only oppression but also the potential for reconstructing female subjectivity. On the surface of the atlas, the dualistic separation can be perceived as unity, and vice versa; unity can be seen as a multiplicity of differences. The motif of two women, therefore, illustrates unity through difference and alludes to an elusive concept of polarity, something that offers a completely different perspective. While duality implies complete separation, the inherent nature of polarity is unity, oneness, and harmony. In the context of this thesis, the movement between two opposite poles is envisioned as a turbulent flux. The visual motif of two women, thus, serves to shift a perspective slightly and demonstrates a relationship characterised not by separation but by unity through acknowledging difference — an interrelation of dual subjects. While Warburg, as a psycho-historian, diagnosed Western culture as schizophrenic, manic, and depressive, there is something hopeful in the feminine side of thought which suggests the concept of double subjectivity that eluded him at that time. In this manner, the thesis delves into the other side of the coin — the feminine — and uncovers impurities within the progressive modes of history, language, and aesthetics, reaching toward something that transcends Warburg's "dialectic of the monster."[248] Here, the emerging redemptive aspect of history and memory becomes the question of the survival for the female subject.

When analysed through the lens of sexual difference and female subjectivity, the constellation of two women serves a dual purpose. Firstly, these images, as an under-recognised yet symptomatic visual motif, primarily illuminate the oppression of the feminine by highlighting the issue of the binary paradigm. They can be regarded as a conceptual framework of symbolic metaphors shedding light on philosophical and psycho-linguistic questions related to the exclusion of the feminine. Simultaneously, they underline the imperative of establishing new

---

[248] Didi-Huberman, 2001, p. 626.

ethics in both theoretical and visual studies, informed by theories centred on the other female subject. Secondly, employing a similar rationale, these images disrupt binary oppositions and unveil potentialities. They demonstrate that an irreducible relation is attainable. The motif of two women perceives the structure of duality as a problem and offers the structure of polarity as a solution. By altering the practice of *seeing* to reveal something different, a broader understanding of the Symbolic construction becomes possible.

Summary

In Chapter III, I present alternative approaches for analysing the image constellation of two women, challenging the dominant, rigid, and phallocentric interpretations traditionally employed by discourses within art history and visual culture. The chapter begins by expanding upon critical modes of thought related to issues of femininity. Additionally, it elucidates the significance of Aby Warburg's ideas and methodology, explicitly for feminist critique, shedding light on the complex interplay between the viewer and the image constellation depicting two women. This exploration highlights the role of personal and collective memories, emphasising their profound influence on the perception and interpretation of the image collection. Within this context, the motif of two women is interpreted as a symbolically rich and complex singular mental image, laden with mnemonic intricacies and imaginative potentialities. The chapter encourages a holistic approach, underlining that interpretations of the image constellation require tapping into the imaginative power inherent in both the image itself and the language used to describe it. Wolfgang Kemp's methodology of reception aesthetics, along with the five analytical levels of its forms of address, further enriches this strategy, facilitating a deeper apprehension of the motif at hand. The chapter also explores how this method can be adapted and modified to accommodate the multiplicity of images within the constellation.

      The construction of the atlas through the categories of *Glances* and *Gestures,* seen as modes of non-verbal communication, emphasises the interconnectedness between the optical and corporeal relationships of depicted figures and the viewer. This decision plays an indispensable role in deconstructing and subverting traditional methods of visual analysis, shedding light on and challenging the conventional prominence of the male gaze and scopophilia — the male-oriented pleasure derived from objectifying the female body through looking. The gentle act of surveying the surface of the atlas refrains from overpowering the images and allows for a nuanced exploration of the depicted femininity. In this manner, seeing the images of two women extends beyond mere visual identification and delves into an exploration of the feminine psyche, examining both its indivisible singularity and totality.

At the core of this chapter is the concept of *being two* as a means to expose the limitations of the progressive mode of art-historical analysis and transcend the underlying structures of oppressive binary paradigms. Luce Irigaray's concept of sexual difference further strengthens the understanding of the difference between subjects, leading to intersubjective relations based on mutual recognition. The notion of *the feminine* is a recurring theme throughout the chapter. It is examined from various angles, including its representation in visual culture, its relationship with language, and its potential for redefinition and reconstruction of female subjectivity.

Conclusion

The thesis focused on the under-investigated yet symptomatic visual motif of two women in connection with issues of female subjectivity, primarily by analysing the symbolic representations within the self-assembled image collection: *The Atlas of Two Women*. In this endeavour, I sought to view this circumstance as an opportunity to perceive representations of women in a fresh light, thereby challenging the conventional art-historical receptions of the female body. The central aim of this thesis was to comprehend the dynamic interplay between the viewer and the atlas, exploring the forces, desires, and demands that flow between them. To achieve this, I conducted a methodological exploration that navigated the tensions between the domains of art history and visual culture, establishing the foundation for analysing the image constellation. Consequently, I refrained from examining the individual histories and contexts of the images, choosing instead to survey the pictorial surface in order to grasp the imprinted mental image.

To establish the theoretical and methodological framework that holds the multiplicity of images together, I drew upon Walter Benjamin's concept of prelinguistic reading and introduced the epistemology of the constellation as a heuristic tool. This approach enabled an examination of the two-fold process of image reception: the chaotic viewing of images in today's image-saturated era and the structural methods of collecting and interpreting them from a subjective viewpoint. The act of collecting, indicative of the fluidity between curiosity and meaning creation, held equal significance within the context of this thesis. This openness to visual and conceptual sources is crucial for the feminist endeavour, as it raised questions concerning the ontological implications of the feminine.

By delving into the radical questioning of canonical art-historical practices that emerged in the late 1960s and examining the ellipsis within visual narratives from a feminist perspective, the thesis explored a particular discursive tension between the realms of art history and visual culture. It also juxtaposed the use of the terms *artwork* and *image,* ultimately adopting Susanne von Falkenhausen's proposal to employ the term *seeing*. This choice acknowledged the subjective act of seeing as an objective fact while remaining receptive to the otherness of the visual realm. Following W. J. T. Mitchell's approach, I persisted in using the term *image* to underscore the aspects of pictorial power, desire, and the behaviour of visual representations. As a fundamental methodological foundation to comprehend the interrelation of desires between the viewer and the atlas, I embraced Wolfgang Kemp's theory of the aesthetics of reception, where the viewer is stimulated because the function of beholding is already embedded in the image through visual forms of address.

This thesis aligned with Aby Warburg's agenda of psychohistory, considering memory as an effective element in conducting an analysis that reimagines the past for the female subject. As this interpretation constitutes a complex mnemonic process, I relied on Benjamin's concept of historical materialism which enabled a redemptive approach to bygone history by viewing anachronistic images within the present moment. To map both personal and collective memories through symbolic representations, I created an image atlas which consists of 20 panels and 213 images, included as the second volume of this thesis. The process of selecting, categorising, and arranging these images on the Warburgian black background was guided by two primary reciprocal signals: *Glances* and *Gestures*. This categorisation challenged the ocularcentrism favoured by art history and visual studies, bringing a tangible dimension of seeing into the analysis. More precisely, it treated both glances and gestures as non-verbal, involuntary corporeal responses that provide insight into the condition of the feminine psyche.

The images of two women led me to adopt an ontological perspective: The glances and gestures observed within the atlas, I argued, manage to disrupt pure language and the progressive mode of history, illuminating the unknown condition of the feminine sphere. This analysis did not aim to provide a descriptive account of each image or panel; rather, through the softness of the glance, I endeavoured to sense the reciprocal exchange between the two women and myself. After introducing the paradoxical visual logic of the motif, I asserted that these images disrupt the male gaze, making it excessively complex even for female viewers to merely identify with them. The corporeal gesturality witnessed by the viewer reveals the incapacity to express the condition of the feminine psyche and the lack of a female subject position in language. Thus, the motif questions the dogmatic binary reception of pictorial phenomena and exposes the broader context of female oppression within the Symbolic order. In other words, through its paradoxical logic, the motif disrupts conventional pictorial and linguistic apparatuses and reveals the inaccessibility for female subjects to define their own subjectivity in (visual) language.

I further enriched the discussion with insights from Luce Irigaray's philosophy of sexual difference and female subjectivity. As evidenced by the usage of language by women, it became clear that the female subject inclines toward *being two*. Irigaray's conceptual framework provided an orientation to comprehend the paradoxical visual logic, thereby contributing to the project of understanding images, bodily gestures, psyches, societal pressures, and potentialities of *the feminine*. With this thought-provoking gesture, I aimed to highlight the inadequacy of the conventional paradigms of art history and visual studies in recognising the deeper complexities within the Symbolic.

The Atlas of Two Women, therefore, can be viewed as an open invitation to approach other representations of women from a new perspective. The perspective communicates not only the

oppression and objectification of the feminine but also the potentiality of recasting the understanding of subjectivity, aesthetics, and ethics. By embodying the structure of polarity, of *being two,* as opposed to well-established dual structures, these images of two women challenge preconceived notions. This movement can be seen as a proposition of a new ontology, politics, and ethics, one where the subject is not torn between two poles but moves freely between them.

This art-historical and visual enterprise carries significant weight for the critical reevaluation of women's representations for two primary reasons: Firstly, it accounts for the personal perspective of the viewer, who navigates a decentralised plurality of theoretical voices with a high level of self-consciousness. Secondly, by allowing the viewer to interrogate the progressive and canonical mode of history, which for women also represents a history of oppression and survival, it opens the possibility to discover new potentialities for the redemptive function within the past. Thus, the critical legacy of feminist interventions in canonical modes does not represent a homogeneous or unitary project but rather a negotiation among multiple voices, worldviews, and perceptions.

The Atlas of Two Women

GLANCES

GESTURES

Both of them looking back

half figure

Both of them looking back
full figure

One of them looking back
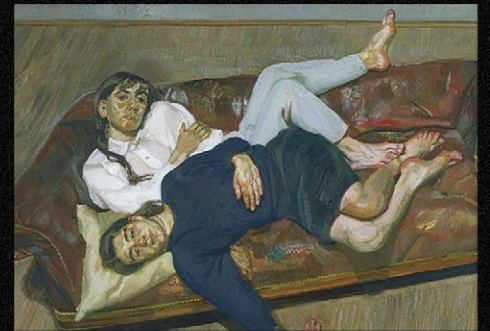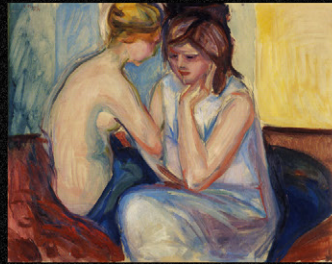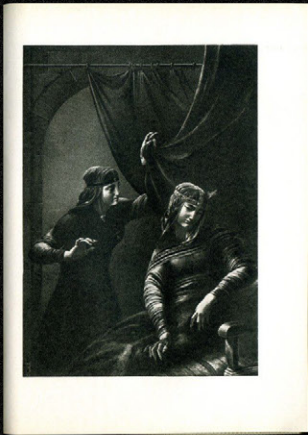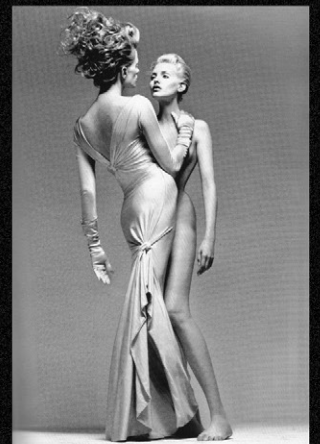
Looking scatteredly

One looking at another

Looking at each other

Behind their back

Close bodily contact

Lying on the grass

Reading together

Working together

Support in grief
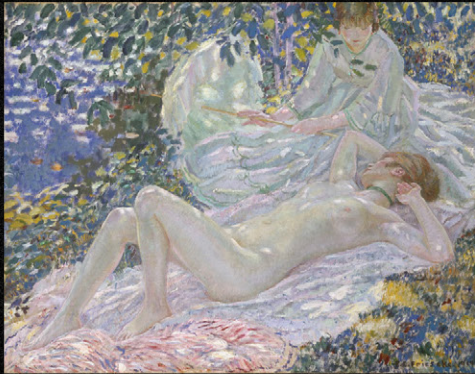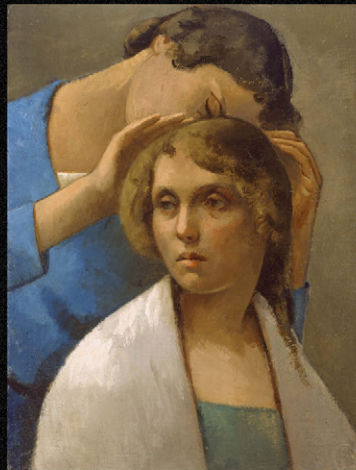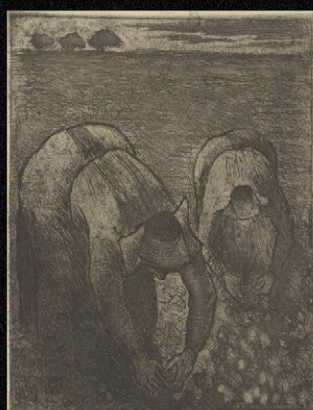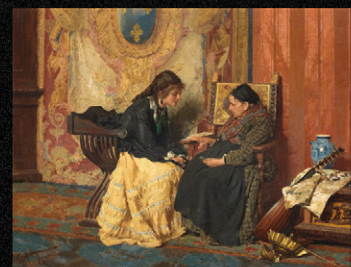
Appendices
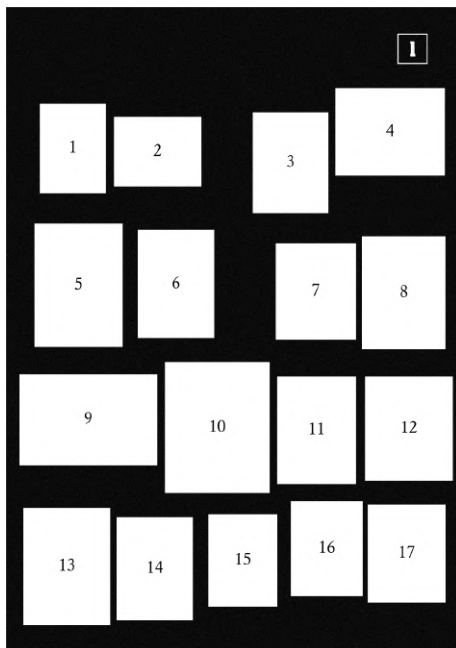
Panel. 1 GLANCES, *Both of them looking back,* half figure.
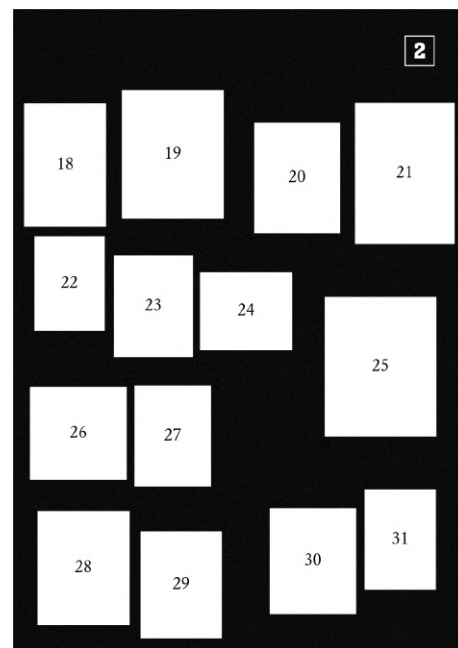
Panel. 2 GLANCES, *Both of them looking back,* full figure.

Panel. 1

1. Théodore Chassériau, *The Two Sisters,* oil on canvas, 1843, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.
2. Paul Gauguin, *Two Women,* oil on canvas, 1901 or 1902, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.
3. Sir Samuel Luke Fildes, *Sisters: A Double Portrait of the Misses Renton,* oil on canvas, 1889, Private collection.
4. Ervin S. Hubbard, *Group Portrait, Two women Posing by a Tree,* photograph, year and location unknown.
5. Angelika Fratczak, Galleria Magazine Korea, fashion editorial, 2016.
6. Steven Meisel, *Iron butterflies,* Vogue Italia, fashion editorial, June 2004.
7. Shalva Kikodze, აჭარელი ჩაღრიანი ქალები, oil on canvas, 1921, location unknown.
8. Ellen von Unwerth, Vogue Italia, fashion editorial, January 1991.
9. David Baxter, *Portrait, Unidentified Women, Cabo Verde*, photograph, 1980, Artstor, library.artstor.org/asset/28069113.
10. Mario Sorrenti, *Kate Moss, Amber Valletta and Michele Hicks 'Couture,'* fashion editorial, Glamour France, September 1993.
11. Jean-Baptiste Mondino, Harper's Bazaar, fashion editorial, January 1996.
12. Rafael Pavarotti, Dries Van Noten Campaign, Women SS 2022.
13. Mikael Jannson, *A is for Androgyny,* Interview Magazine, fashion editorial, September 2008.
14. Satoshi Saikusa, Jane Magazine, fashion editorial, August 1998.
15. Karl Lagerfeld, *The Little Black Jacket,* fashion editorial, 2012.
16. Francesca Sorrenti, Vogue Germany, fashion editorial, April 2006.
17. Mert & Marcus, Versace Campaign, SS 2022.

Panel. 2

18. Francesco Scianna, Dolce & Gabbana Campaign, FW 1989.
19. Tim Walker, W Magazine, fashion editorial, December 2014.
20. Artist unknown, *Two Hindu Women in Elaborate Jewelry, Before Studio Backdrop with Palm Trees,* 1860s–70s, location unknown.
21. August Sander, *Sisters,* Gelatin silver print, photograph, 1927.
22. Ernest Benecke, *Two Women,* salted paper print from a paper negative, 1852, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.
23. Steven Meisel, *Renaissance Painting Metallic,* Versace Campaign, 1998-99.
24. Karin Szekessy, Dagmar and Daniela Bei Karin, photolithograph, 1972, The Thursday Auction: Art Salon, Melbourne, Australia.
25. Mert & Marcus, Versace Campaign, SS 2022.
26. Frida Kahlo, *Las dos Fridas,* oil on canvas, 1939, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, Mexico.
27. Patrick Demarchelier, Harper's Bazaar, fashion editorial, September 1993.
28. Charlotte Wales, *Clover Sisters,* POP Magazine, fashion editorial, Spring 2022.
29. Daria Svertilova, *Polina Anya,* 2016, photograph, Courtesy of the Artist.
30. Peter Lindbergh, *Mini Anden, Missy Rayder,* 1997, photograph, Courtesy of Peter Lindbergh Foundation.
31. Richard Avedon, Versace Couture Campaign, FW 1997–98.
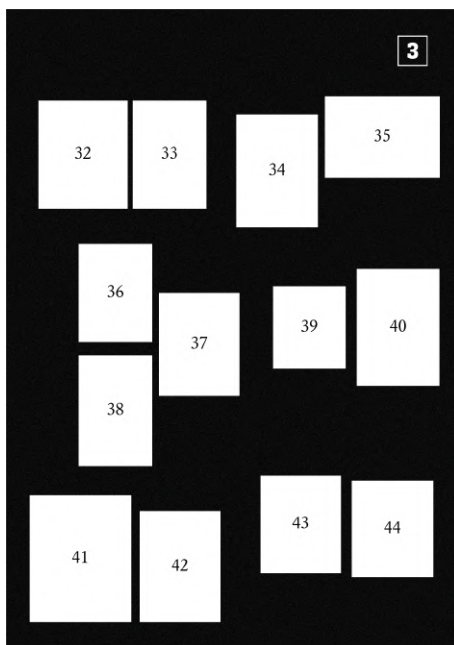
Panel. 3 GLANCES, *One of them looking back.*   **Panel. 4** GLANCES, *Looking scatteredly.*
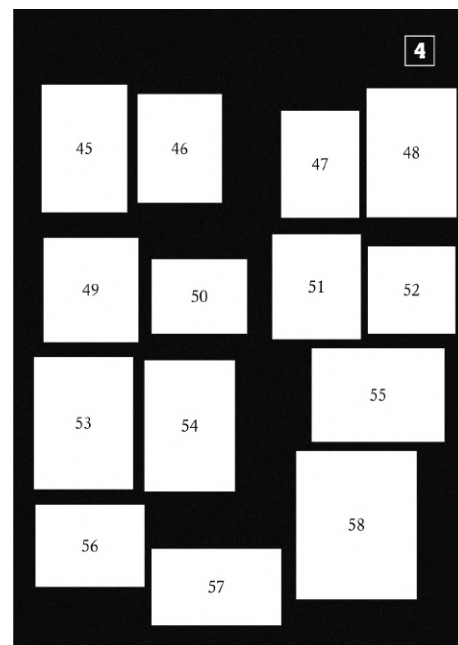
Panel. 3

32. Henri-François Riesener, *Portrait of Two Young Women,* oil on canvas, circa 1800s-1810s, location unknown.
33. Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, *Mendel Levin Nathanson's Elder Daughters, Bella and Hanna,* oil on canvas, 1820, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark.
34. Steven Meisel, Calvin Klein Campaign, SS 1998.

35. Edvard Munch, *Red and White,* oil on canvas, between 1899 and 1900, Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway.
36. Elizabeth Rigby (Lady Eastlake), *Two Women,* Graphite on paper, date unknown, Tate, London, UK.
37. Carl Wilhelmson, *Systrarna,* colour on canvas, 1922, location unknown.
38. John Singer Sargent, *Mrs. Fiske Warren (Gretchen Osgood) and Her Daughter Rachel,* oil on canvas, 1903, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts.
39. Clementina Viscountess Hawarden, *Two Women on Porch,* c. 1862, location unknown.
40. Bruce Weber, *In Uruguay,* Vogue Italia, fashion editorial, May 1998.
41. JeanLoup Sieff, *Two Women in Schwarz,* PhotoGravure, 1964.
42. Karin Szekessy, further information unknown.
43. Augustus John, *The Two Jamaican Girls,* oil on canvas, 1937, location unknown.
44. Edvard Munch, *Two Women, Seated,* oil on canvas, 1920s, Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway.

Panel. 4

45. Ryōhei Koiso, *Two Nude Figures,* oil on canvas, date and location unknown.
46. Paul Gauguin, *Two Tahitian Women,* oil on canvas, 1899, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, USA.
47. Unknown, *Plaque with two women,* ivory, 2nd half of 7th century BC, Greek Culture, Archaic Period, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, USA.
48. Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Crown Princess Louise of Prussia and her Sister Frederica of Mecklenburg-Strelitz,* sculpture, c. 1825–1850, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge, USA, Bequest of Crawford H. Greenewalt Jr.
49. Georg Schrimpf, *Zwei Mädchen am Fenster,* oil on canvas, 1937, Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany.
50. Edvard Munch, *Conversation,* oil on canvas, 1917, Private Collection.
51. Steven Meisel, *Campus Beat-Preppy,* Vogue Italia, fashion editorial, March 1994.
52. Paula Rego, *Dancing Ostriches,* pastel on paper mounted on aluminium, 1995, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK.
53. Tamara de Lempicka, *Les Juennes Filles,* c. 1930, Courtesy of David Benrimon Fine Art LLC.
54. Karlo Kacharava, Untitled, 1988, Tbilisi, Georgia, Private Collection.
55. Lucian Freud, *Bella and Esther,* oil on canvas, 1987, Private Collection.
56. Ludovico Mattioli, *Two Women, One in Right Profile,* Primi Elementi della Pittura, date and location unknown.
57. Winslow Homer, *Two Women on a Beach,* pencil and gouache on paper, 1871, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, USA.
58. Zhong Lin, *FAMILY TREE,* 2020, Courtesy of the Artist.
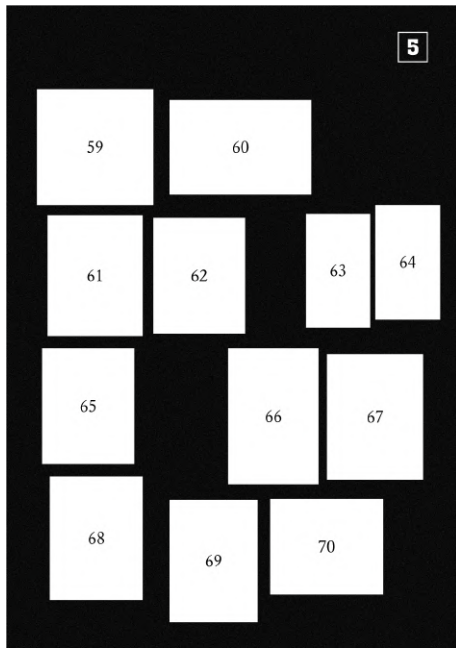
Panel. 5 GLANCES, *Looking fixedly.*
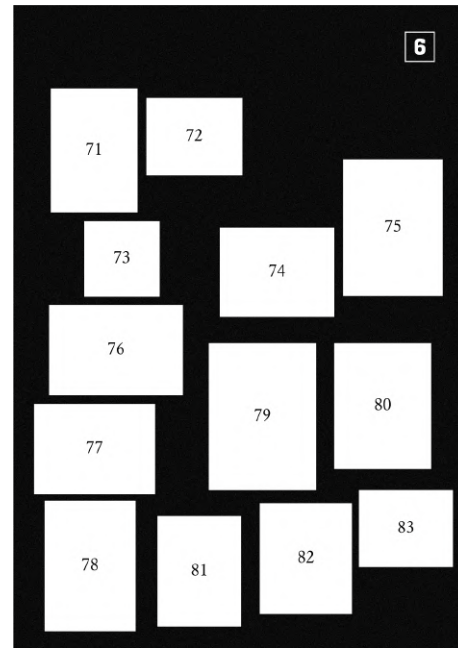

Panel. 6 GLANCES, *One looking at another.*

Panel. 5

59. Han Snel, *Mother and Child,* oil on canvas, 1962, location unknown.
60. Peter Lindbergh, *Le Touquet,* fashion editorial, 1986, France.
61. Unknown artist, *Portrait of two Japanese women,* albumen print, c. 1860–1880, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, USA.
62. Mary Cassatt, *The Loge,* oil on canvas, c. 1878-1880, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, USA.
63. Georges Jeanniot, *The Two Sisters,* woodcut on wove paper, c. 1900, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, USA.
64. Anonymous Ferrarese Engravers, *Profile Busts of Two Women in Fantastic Headdress,* c. 1450–1500, location unknown.
65. Eugène Carrière, *Two Women,* oil on canvas, c. 1895, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, USA.
66. Etienne Azambre, *The Louvre,* oil on canvas, 1894, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.
67. James Tissot, *Young Women Looking at Japanese Objects,* oil on canvas, c. 1869–1870, Private Collection.
68. Frida Kahlo, Dos Mujeres, oil on canvas, 1928, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA.
69. Jean Hey, *Madeleine of Bourgogne presented by St. Mary Magdalene,* oil on panel, 1490, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.
70. Emmanuel Benner, *Nus au Bois,* oil on canvas, date and location unknown.

Panel. 6

71. Sergo Kobuladze, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin,* Book Illustration, c. 1935, location unknown.
72. Edvard Munch, *Two Women in White on the Beach,* oil on canvas, 1920s, Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway.
73. Angelica Kauffmann, *The Artist in the Character of Design Listening to the Inspiration of Poetry,* oil on canvas, 1782, English Heritage, Kenwood.
74. Mai Trung Thứ, *Two Ladies,* ink and gouache on silk, 1964, location unknown.
75. Helmut Newton, Thierry Mugler, fashion editorial, 1998.

76. Édouard Manet, Olympia, oil on canvas, 1863, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

77. Gustave Courbet, *Bathers or Two Nude Women,* oil on canvas, c. 1858, location unknown.

78. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *The Two Friends,* oil paint on board, 1894, Tate, London, UK.

79. Juergen Teller, *A Rural Story,* fashion editorial, 1998, Vogue Italia.

80. Steven Meisel, *Portrait of Beauty,* fashion editorial, Vogue Italia, January 1996.

81. Information unknown.

82. Berthe Morisot, *Two Girls,* oil on canvas, c. 1894, location unknown.

83. Federico Zandomeneghi, *Al Caffé,* mixed media on cardboard, 1884, location unknown.
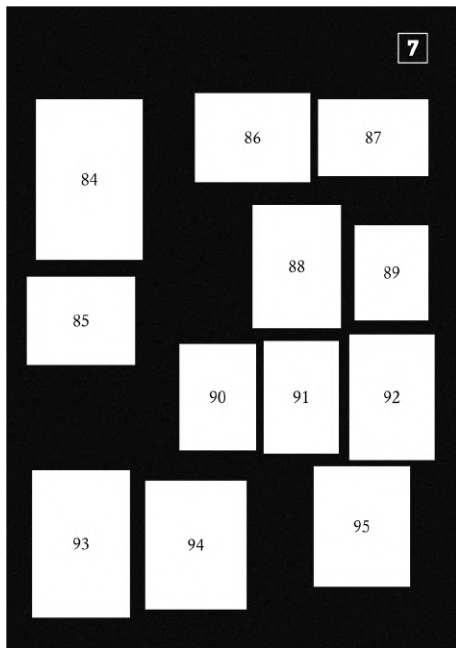
Panel. 7 GLANCES, *Looking at each other.*
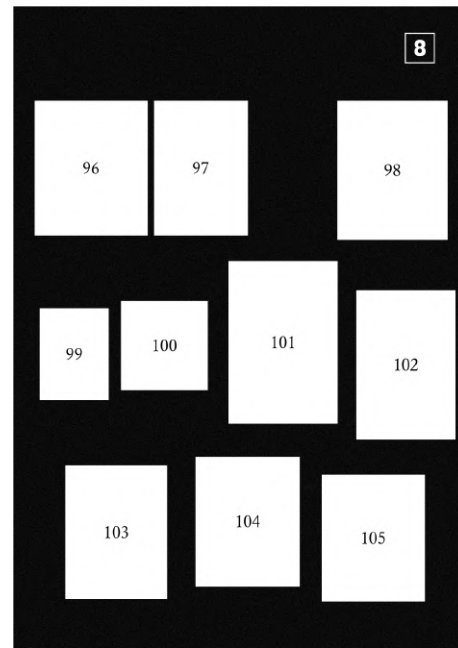
Panel. 8 GLANCES, *Behind their back.*

Panel. 7

84. Tung Walsh, Qvest #33, fashion editorial, August/September 2008.

85. Tono Stano, photograph, title and date unknown.

86. Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun, *La paix ramenant l'abondance,* oil on canvas, 1780, Department of Paintings of the Louvre, Room 420, Paris, France.

87. Steven Meisel, Versace Campaign, Fall 1998.

88. Katsukawa Shunsho, *Two Women in a Gusty Autumn Landscape,* colour woodblock print, 1766–1776, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA.

89. Adam Buck, *Two Sisters,* print, 1796, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK.

90. Henri Matisse, *Two Women,* bronze sculpture, c. 1908, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, USA.

91. Chris von Wangenheim, Gia Carangi and Sandy Linter, archival pigment print, photograph, 1979.

92. Richard Avedon, *Two Tall Women,* Versace Campaign, 1981.

93. Book of Hours, Use of Sarum, Folio #: fol. 005r, 14th century, parchment, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, UK.

94. Judy Dater, *Imogen and Twinka,* gelatin silver print, photograph, 1974.

95. Rafael Pavarotti, Dries Van Noten Campaign, Women SS 2022.

96. C.W. Eckersberg, *Ved et vindue i kunstnerens atelier,* pen, grey ink, and brown wash-over pencil framed in light blue watercolour, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark.
97. Caspar David Friedrich, *Die Schwestern auf dem Söller am Hafen,* oil on canvas, 1818–1820, The General Staff Building, Saint Petersburg, Russia.
98. Bill Brandt, title and date unknown, photograph.
99. Peter Lindbergh, title and date unknown, photograph.
100. Helmut Newton, *Models pose for a Wolford shoot in Monaco,* photograph, 1995.
101. Peter Lindbergh, *Le Touquet,* 1986, Courtesy Peter Lindbergh Foundation, Paris, France.
102. Giulio Campagnola after Ludwig Krug, *Allegory of Birth and Death: Two Naked Women with Skull and Hourglass,* engraving, early 16th century, Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, Connecticut, USA.
103. Pieter van den Berge, *Twee vrouwen in een landschap,* print, 1694–1737, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
104. Helmut Newton, *Women's Power,* fashion editorial, Vogue Russia, September 2003.
105. Daniela López, Milano, digital photograph, 2020.
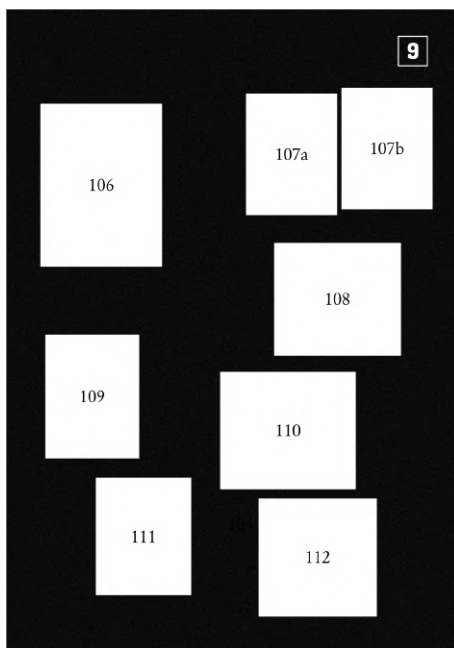
Panel. 9 GESTURES, *Whispers.*
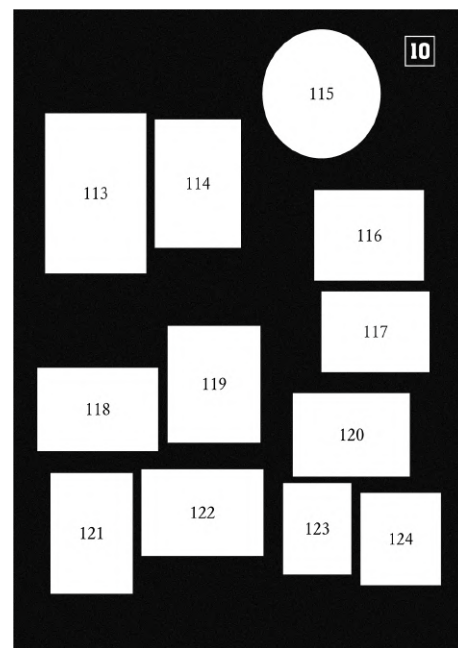
**Panel. 10** GESTURES, *Close bodily contact.*

Panel. 9

106. Francesco Hayez, *Il Consiglio alla Vendetta (Vengeance is Sworn),* oil on canvas, 1851, LIECHTENSTEIN: The Princely Collections, Vienna, Austria.
107a & 107b. Nhu Xuan Hua, fashion editorial, Styling Francesca Pinna, Metal Magazine, Nº 45 Autumn/Winter 2021–2022.
108. Friedrich Overbeck, *Italia und Germania,* oil on canvas, 1811–1828, Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.
109. Edmond Aman-Jean, *Confidences,* oil on canvas, date unknown, National Museum of Art of Romania, Bucharest, Romania.

110. Käthe Kollwitz, *Maria und Elisabeth,* 1929, Woodcut on paper, Risd Museum, Providence, USA.

111. Giulio Romano, *Two Women,* pen and brown ink, brown wash, 1492–1546, location unknown.

112. Risa Iseda, *Untitled (Secret),* oil on canvas, ca. 2015, location unknown.

Panel. 10

113. Peter Lindbergh, fashion editorial, Vogue Italia, September 1997.

114. Nick Knight, Dior Campaign, Spring/Summer 2000.

115. Maurice Blot after Jean-Baptiste Regnault, *Jupiter sous la forme de Diane, seduit Calisto,* lithograph, 1800, location unknown.

116. Federico Zandomeneghi, *Il Bacio,* pastel on paper, c. 1894, location unknown.

117. Louis-Marie-Joseph Ridel, *Deux jeunes femmes dans une barque,* lithograph in four colours on China paper, c. 1900, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

118. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *L'abandon (Les deux amies),* oil on board, 1895, Private Collection.

119. Milt Kobayashi, *Cool Night,* oil on canvas, date unknown, Private Collection.

120. Circle of Antiveduto Gramatica, *La Giustizia e la Pace che si Baciano,* oil on canvas, 1841, location unknown.

121. Vũ Cao Đàm, *Le repos après le bain,* ink and gouache on silk, c. 1938, location unknown.

122. Vanina Sorrenti, Comme des Garçons Campaign, date unknown.

123. Circle of Pompeo Batoni, *Allegory of Peace and Justice,* oil on canvas, date and location unknown.

124. Rosalba Carriera, *Peace and Justice,* pastel, date and location unknown.
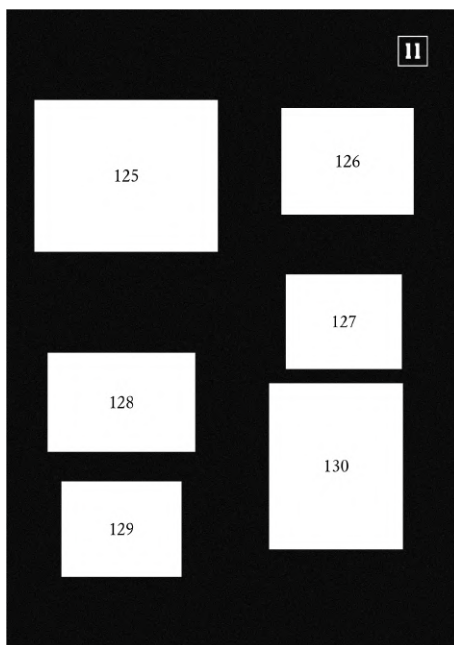
Panel. 11 GESTURES, *Sleeping.*
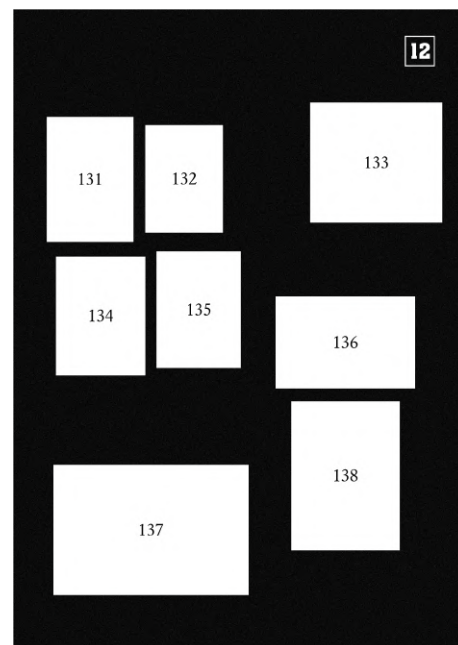
Panel. 12 GESTURES, *Kissing.*

Panel. 11

125. Augustus Leopold Egg, *The Travelling Companions,* oil on canvas, 1862, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, UK.

126. Balthus, T*he Dream,* oil on canvas, 1955, Private Collection.
127. John Singer Sargent, *Two Women Asleep in a Punt under the Willows,* oil on canvas, 1887, location unknown.
128. Gustave Courbet, *Le sommeil,* oil on canvas, 1866, Petit Palais, Paris, France.
129. Albert Marquet, *The Two Friends,* oil on canvas, 1912, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie de Besançon, Besançon, France.
130. Nicolas Di Felice, Courrèges Campaign, SS 2022.

Panel. 12

131. Pamela Hanson, *Flower Child,* fashion editorial, Vogue Australia, October 1998.
132. Photographer unknown, Dolce and Gabbana Campaign, 1994.
133. Pompeo Batoni, *La pace e la giustizia,* oil on canvas, 1739, Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, Montréal, Canada.
134. Michael Thompson, fashion editorial, W Magazine, February 2008.
135. Artist unknown, a remake of Mert Alas and Marcus Piggot, Love Magazine, issue. 5, 2020.
136. Helmut Newton, *2 Models in my Studio,* Paris, 1974.
137. Mario Sorrenti, *The Play Of Seduction,* fashion editorial, Vogue Italia, 2007.
138. Information unknown.
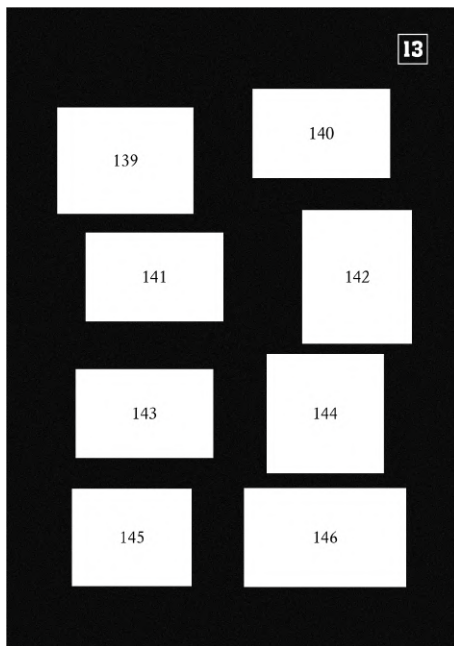
Panel. 13 GESTURES, *Lying on grass.*
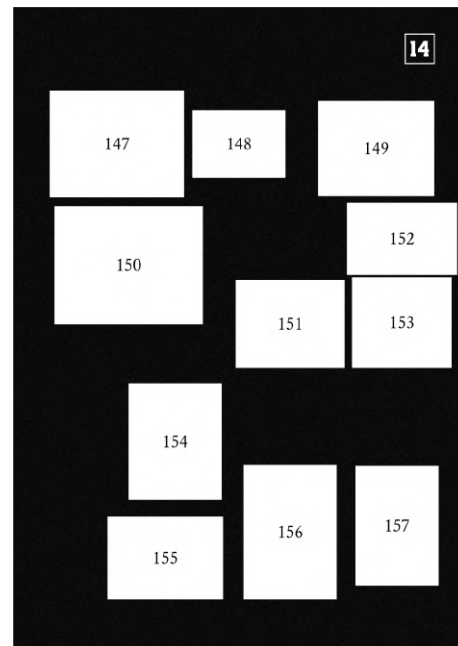

Panel. 14 GESTURES, *Daily rituals.*

Panel. 13

139. Frederick Carl Frieseke, *Summer,* oil on canvas, 1914, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.
140. Ernest Bieler, *Two Young Ladies in the Crocus Field,* oil on canvas, date and location unknown.
141. Guy Bourdin, Vogue Paris, October 1983, The Guy Bourdin Estate, 2017, Courtesy Art Commerce.
142. Sir George Clausen, *The Spreading Tree,* oil on canvas, 1901, Private Collection.
143. Berthe Morisot, *The Flageolet,* oil on canvas, 1890, Private Collection.

144. Bill Brandt, *Workers Relax,* photograph, September 1942.
145. John Singer Sargent, *Two Girls on a Lawn,* oil on canvas, c. 1889, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.
146. Franz Marc, *Two Women on the Hill,* oil on canvas, 1906, location unknown.

Panel. 14

147. Edouard Vuillard, *Deux femmes sous la lampe,* oil on canvas mounted on wood, 1892, Le Centre Pompidou, Paris, France.
148. Edward Munch, *Rose and Amelie,* oil on canvas, 1893, The Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway.
149. Berthe Morisot, *La broderie,* oil on Canvas, 1889, location unknown.
150. Lubaina Himid, *Five,* acrylic on canvas, 1991, Leeds Museums and Galleries, Leeds, UK.
151. Emily Carr, *Women of Brittany,* 1911, location unknown.
152. Thomas Rowlandson, *Two Women Sewing by Candlelight,* watercolour and graphite on paper, date unknown, Tate, London, UK.
153. Mary Cassatt, *Two Women at a Lamp,* further details unknown.
154. William McGregor Paxton, *Tea Leaves,* oil on canvas, 1909, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.
155. Bertha Wegmann, *Two Friends Drinking Tea in the Artist's Studio,* oil on canvas, date and location unknown.
156. Mary Cassatt, *Afternoon Tea Party,* drypoint and aquatint, printed in colour from three plates, 1890–91, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.
157. Harold Harvey, *My Kitchen,* oil on canvas, 1923, Gallery Oldham, Oldham, UK.
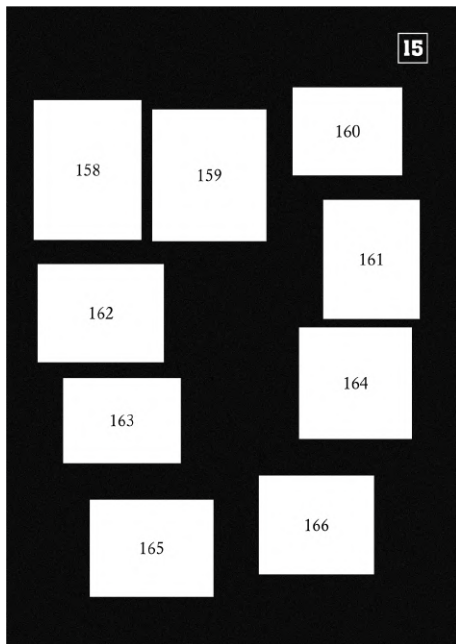
Panel. 15 GESTURES, *Reading together.*
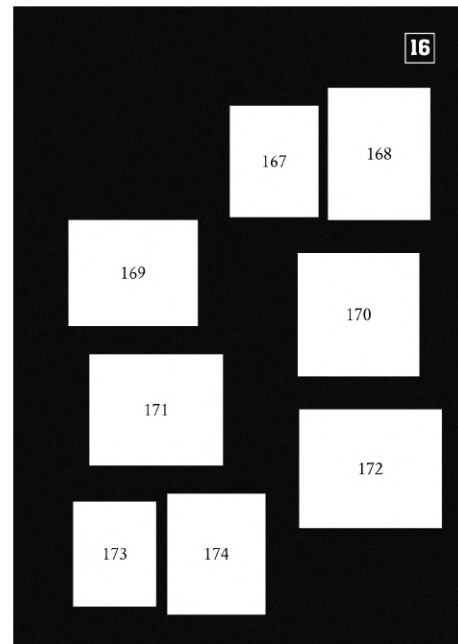
**Panel. 16** GESTURES, *Conversation.*

Panel. 15

158. Paul Gavarni, *Two Women, Bed, and Chair,* lithograph, date unknown, Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Wellesley, USA.
159. Henry Caro-Delvaille, *Devant la Maison Blanche,* oil on canvas, 1910, location unknown.

160. Suzanne Valadon, *Deux Femmes à Table,* paste, 1897, location unknown.
161. Berthe Morisot, *The Mother and Sister of the Artist,* oil on canvas, 1869–1870, National Gallery of Art, Washington, USA.
162. William Rothenstein, *The Browning Readers,* oil on canvas, 1900, Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford, UK.
163. Ivan Gorokhov, *У постели выздоравливающей,* oil on canvas, 1886, The National Museum of the Republic of Buryatia, Ulan-Ude, Russia.
164. Aman-Jean Edmond, *Intimité,* oil on canvas, undated, location unknown.
165. Helene Schjerfbeck, *Lukevat tytöt,* watercolour, pastel chalk and pencil and paper, 1907, National Gallery, London, UK.
166. Gioacchino Toma, *Il romanzo nel convento,* oil on canvas, 1888, La Galleria Nazionale, Rome, Italy.

Panel. 16

167. Raimundo de Madrazo y Garreta, *Confidences,* oil on canvas, c. 1870, Private Collection.
168. Frank Bramley, *A Truce,* oil on canvas, 1912, Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, UK.
169. Federico Zandomeneghi, *Interesting Conversation,* oil on canvas, 1895, Private Collection.
170. Myron G. Barlow, *Tea for Two,* oil on canvas, date unknown, Private Collection.
171. Ester Almqvist, *Systrar,* oil on canvas, 1907, Malmö Konstmuseum, Malmö, Sweden.
172. Louis-Jean-François Lagrenée, *Philosophy Unveiling Truth,* oil on copper, 1771, location unknown.
173. Max Ernst, Ilustration for *Une semaine de bonté,* 1934.
174. Yannis Moralis, *Composition,* oil on canvas, 1951, Private Collection.
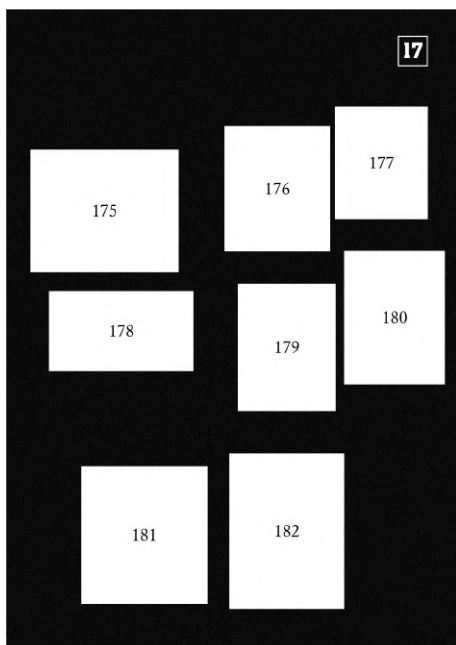
Panel. 17 GESTURES, *Helping out.*
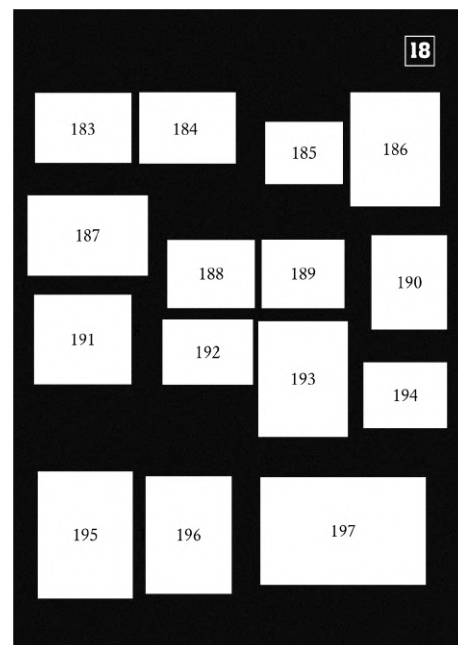

Panel. 18 GESTURES, *Working together.*

Panel. 17

175. Laura Knight, *The Ballet Girl and the Dressmaker,* oil on canvas, 1930, Private Collection.
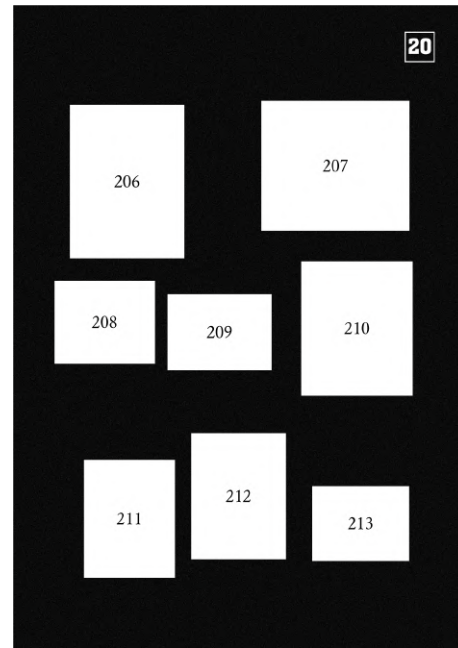
176. Berthe Morisot, *La Coiffure,* oil on canvas, 1894, National Museum of Fine Arts, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
177. Berthe Morisot, *L'hortensia,* oil on canvas, 1894, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.
178. Guy Bourdin, *Charles Jourdan,* photograph, Autumn 1977.
179. Suzanne Valadon, *The Two Bathers,* oil on canvas, 1923, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Nantes, France.
180. Julio González, *Dos Mujeres,* oil on canvas, c. 1920, location unknown.
181. Information unknown.
182. Joseph-Marie Vien, *Greek Lady at the Bath,* oil on canvas, 1767, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Panel. 18

183. Louise Moillon, *A Market Stall with a Young Woman Giving a Basket of Grapes to an Older Woman,* oil on canvas, c. 1630, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, USA.
184. Louise Moillon, *The Fruit and Vegetable Seller,* oil on canvas, 1630, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.
185. Paul Gauguin, *Landscape with Two Breton Women,* oil on canvas, 1889, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA.
186. Artist unknown, *Landschap met twee vrouwen met takkenbossen,* gouache on paper, 1793, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
187. Natela Grigalashvili, *The Final Days of Georgian Nomads,* photograph, date unknown.
188. Charles Tunnicliffe, *Dry Clothes and Rain,* oil on canvas, 1927, West Park Museum, Macclesfield, UK.
189. Vincent van Gogh, *Two Peasant Women Digging,* chalk on paper, 1890, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Netherlands.
190. Paul Gavarni, *Two Women,* medium unknown, 1937, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, USA.
191. Edgar Degas, *Two Laundresses,* oil on canvas, 1884, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.
192. Vincent van Gogh, *Two Peasant Women Digging Potatoes,* oil on canvas, 1885, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands.
193. Camille Pissarro, *Peasant Women in a Field of Beans,* etching and soft-ground etching in black on laid paper, 1891, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Netherlands.
194. Niko Pirosmani, *კურს აცხობენ,* oil on canvas, date and location unknown.
195. Steven Meisel, *Living Green,* fashion editorial, Vogue Italia, February 2008.
196. Jules Breton, *Fin du jour,* oil on canvas, 1865, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, USA.
197. Information unknown.
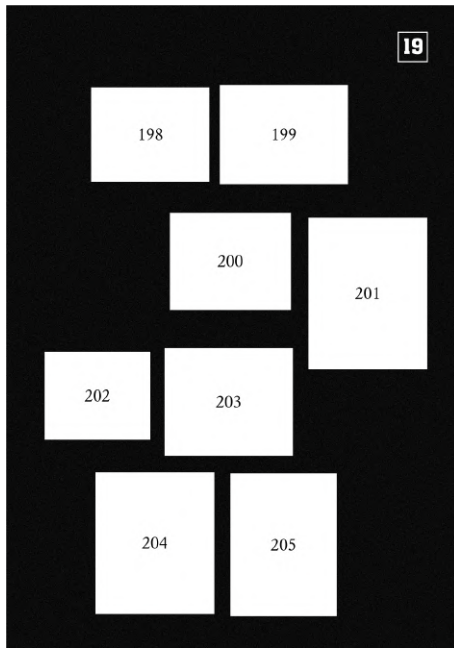
Panel. 19 GESTURES, *Support in grief.*   **Panel. 20** GESTURES, *Fortunetelling.*

Panel. 19

198. Charles Cottet, *Deuil a Ouessant,* oil on canvas, 1903, Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent, Belgium.
199. Nick Alm, *Supporter,* oil on canvas, 2016, location unknown.
200. Lionello Balestrieri, *Pittrice e Pianista,* oil on canvas, 1910, location unknown.
201. Teodoe Axentowicz, *Pod brzemieniem nieszczęścia,* oil on canvas, 1990, Lwowska Galeria Obrazów, Warsaw, Poland.
202. Augustus Leopold Egg, *Past and Present,* no. 2, oil on canvas, 1858, Tate, London, UK.
203. Philipp Veit and T. W. Huffam, *The Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene Sit Outside the Tomb of Christ,* mezzotint with etching, date and location unknown.
204. Auguste Toulmouche, Consolation, oil on canvas, 1867, Private collection.
205. Emily Mary Osborn, *For the Last Time,* oil on canvas, c. 1864, Private Collection of Paul Harris since 1974.

Panel. 20

206. Artist unknown, *An Old Fortune-teller is Looking at a Beautiful Young Woman's Palm,* engraving, 1670–1700, location unknown.
207. Nicholas J. Crowley and Charles William Sharpe, *An Old Fortune-teller is Reading a Young Woman's Fortune by Looking at Tea Leaves at the Bottom of a Cup,* engraving, 1842, location unknown.
208. Jacques-Louis David, *The Fortune Teller (La Bonne Aventure),* oil on canvas, 1824, Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano, Naples, Italy.
209. Harry Roseland, *Looking into the Future,* oil on canvas, date and location unknown.
210. Franz Seraph Hanfstängl, *A Fortune-teller is Talking to a Young Woman,* lithograph, 1832, location unknown.
211. Edouard Frederic Wilhelm Richter, *The Fortune Teller,* oil on canvas, date and location unknown.
212. Marina Mniszech and Klavdy Stepanov, *Перед постригом в монахини,* oil on canvas, 1889, location unknown.
213. Cesare Maccari, *The Fortune Teller,* oil on panel, date and location unknown.

Bibliography

Books

Agamben, G., *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy,* ed. and trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999.

Agamben, G., *Means Without End: Notes on Politics,* trans. V. Binetti and C. Daniel Heller, Minneapolis and London, Regents of the University of Minnesota, 2000.

Aristotle, 'On Memory and Reminiscence,' orig. ca. 350 B.C., trans. J. I. Beare, Originally published in W. D. Ross (ed.), *The works of Aristotle Vol. 3,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930.

Bal, M., *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide,* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2002.

Benjamin, W., 'On Language as Such and on the Language of Man' and 'On the Program of the Coming Philosophy,' in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913–1926,* ed. M. W. Jennings et al., Cambridge & London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996.

Benjamin, W., *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, orig. 1925–1928, trans. J. Osborne, London, New York, Verso, 1998a.

Benjamin, W., *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* orig. 1936, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt, Berlin, Schocken: Random House, 1998b.

Benjamin, W., 'Doctrine of the Similar' and 'On the Mimetic Faculty,' in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part 2, 1931–1934,* ed. M. W. Jennings et al., Cambridge & London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999a, pp. 694–697 and pp. 720–722.

Benjamin, W., *The Arcades Project*, Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999b.

Benjamin, W., 'On the Concept of History,' in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 4, 1938–1940,* eds. H. Eiland and M. W. Jennings, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 389–400.

Bryson, N., *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1983.

Burgin, V., 'Perverse Space', in *Sexuality & Space,* ed. B. Colomina, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton Architectural Press, 1992.

Cothren M. W. and D'Alleva A., *Methods & Theories of Art History,* Third Edition, London, Laurence King Publishing Ltd, 2021.

De Beauvoir, S., *The Second Sex*, orig. 1949, trans. C. Borde and S. Malovany-Chevallier, New York, Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 2011.

De Brigard, F., 'Memory and Imagination,' in S. Bernecker and K. Michaelian (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory,* London and New York, Routledge, 2017, pp. 127–140.

Deleuze, G., 'The Image of Thought,' In *Difference & Repetition,* trans. P. Patton, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 129–167.

Didi-Huberman, G., 'Before the Image, Before Time: The Sovereignty of Anachronism,' in C. Farago and R. Zwijnenberg (eds.), *Compelling Visuality: The Work of Art in and out of History,* Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, pp. 31–44.

Didi-Huberman, G., *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017.

Didi-Huberman, G., *Atlas, or the Anxious Gay Science*, trans. Shane Lillis, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Elkins, J., *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing,* San Diego, New York and London, A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace & Company, 199

Falkenhausen, S. von, *Beyond the Mirror: Seeing in Art History and Visual Culture Studies,* trans. Nicholas Grindell, Berlin, transcript publishing, 2020.

Fliedl I. B. and Geissmar C. (eds.), The *Einleitung* to *Mnemosyne,* in *Die Beredsamkeit des Leibes: Zur Körpersprache in der Kunst,* Salzburg, Rezidenz Verlag, 1992, pp. 156–173.

Freud, S., 'Female Sexuality,' orig. 1931, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXI (1927- 1931): The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents, and Other Works*, trans. J. Strachey, London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1961, pp. 221–244.

Goethe, J. W. von, *Maximes et réflexions,* orig. 1809–10, trans. P. Deshusses, Paris, Payot & Rivages, 2001, English edition: Maxims and Reflections, trans. E. Stopp, London, Penguin, 1998.

Gumbrecht, H. U., *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey,* California, Stanford University Press, 2004.

Hamacher, W., '"Now:" Walter Benjamin on Historical Time,' in A. Benjamin (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and History,* London and New York, Continuum, 2005, pp. 38–68.

Hatt M. and Klonk C., *Art History: A Critical Introduction to Its Methods*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006.

Hofmannsthal, H. von, *Der Tor und der Tod,* Oxford, Bloomsbury Academic, 1998.

Irigaray, L., *This Sex Which Is Not One*, orig. 1977, trans. C. Porter and C. Burke, Ithaca and New York, Cornell University Press, 1985.

Irigaray, L., *Between East and West,* org. 1997, New York, Columbia University Press, 2002.

Iser, W., *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett,* Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

Iser, W., *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response,* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Jauss, H. R., *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Jung, C. G. and Kerenyi K., *Essays on a Science of Mythology: The Myth of the Divine Child and the Mysteries of Eleusis,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series, 1969.

Kemp, W., 'The Work of Art and Its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception,' in M. A. Cheetham, M. A. Holly, and K. Moxey (eds.), *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 180–196.

Larsson, C., *Didi-Huberman and the image,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2020, pp. 69–97.

Levin, N., 'Montage Mahagonny: Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht's Theatre of Interruptions,' in (eds.) F. Voigt et. al., *Material und Begriff: Arbeitsverfahren und theoretische Beziehungen Walter Benjamins,* Hamburg, Argument, 2019, pp. 145–159.

Malraux, A. *Museum Without Walls,* orig. 1947, trans. S. Gilbert and F. Price, New York, Garden City: Doubleday, 1967.

Mitchell, W. J. T., *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Mitchell, W. J. T., *Picture Theory*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Mitchell, W. J. T., *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Mitchell, W. J. T., *Image Science: Iconology, Visual Culture, and Media Aesthetics,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Moxey, K., *Visual Time: The Image in History,* Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2013.

Mulvey, L., 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' orig. 1975, in C. Penley (ed.), *Feminism and Film Theory,* New York, Routledge, 1988, pp. 57–68.

Olin, M., 'Gaze,' in R. S. Nelson and R. Shiff (eds.), *Critical Terms for Art History,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 208–219.

Pollock, G., *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive,* London and New York, Routledge, 2007.

Pollock, G., 'Writing from the heart,' in J. Stacey and J. Wolff (eds.), *Writing Otherwise: Experiments in Cultural Criticism,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2013, p. 19.

Ratnam, N., 'Art and globalisation,' in G. Perry and P. Wood (eds.), *Themes in Contemporary Art,* London, Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 277–313.

Rose, G., *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials,* Fourth Edition, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016.

Ruprecht, L., 'Gestures between Symptom and Symbol in Aby Warburg and Sigmund Freud,' *Gestural Imaginaries: Dance and Cultural Theory in the Early Twentieth Century,* New York, Oxford Academic, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190659370.003.0007, Accessed 13 Jul. 2022.

Sprung, J., *Bildatlas, åskådning och reproduktion: Aby Warburgs Mnemosyneatlas och visualiseringen av konsthistoria, kring 1800/1900,* Diss., København, Københavns Universitet, 2011.

Sprung, J., 'Ways of losing oneself in an image: Notes regarding Aby Warburg and the artistic investigations of Elsebeth Jørgensen,' in *Elsebeth Jørgensen,* vol. 4, Dublett, Hordaland Kunstsenter, Bergen, 2016, pp. 38–63.

Thürlemann, F., *More Than One Picture: An Art History of the Hyperimage,* trans. Elizabeth Tucker, Los Angeles, The Getty Research Institute, 2019.

Warburg, A. 'Souvenirs d'un voyage en pays Pueblo,' unpublished notes for Warburg's Kreuzlingen conference on the Serpent Ritual (1923), trans. S. Muller, in P.-A. Michaud, *Aby Warburg et l'image en mouvement,* Paris, 1998.

Journal Articles

Bal, M. et al., 'Art History and Its Theories,' *The Art Bulletin,* vol. 78, no. 1, 1996, pp. 6–25, https://doi.org/10.2307/3046154. Accessed 1 May 2022.

Bal, M., 'Working with Concepts,' *European Journal of English Studies,* vol. 13, no. 1, 2009, pp. 13–23.

Barzilai, S., 'Borders of Language: Kristeva's Critique of Lacan,' *PMLA*, vol. 106, no. 2, 1991, pp. 294–305. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/462664. Accessed 7 Jul. 2022.

Beiner, R., 'Walter Benjamin's Philosophy of History,' *Political Theory,* vol. 12, no. 3, 1984, pp. 423–34, http://www.jstor.org/stable/191516. Accessed 1 Dec. 2021.

Bredekamp, H., 'A Neglected Tradition? Art History as *Bildwissenschaft,*' *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2003, pp. 418–28. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.1086/376303. Accessed 17 May. 2022.

Cappelletto, C., 'Trace and Source in Walter Benjamin's Thought: About a Polarity,' *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics,* no. 63/64, 2013, pp. 161–72, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23647761. Accessed 17 Nov. 2021.

Didi-Huberman, G., '*Dialektik des Monstrums:* Aby Warburg and the symptom paradigm,' *Art History*, vol. 24, no. 5, 2001, pp. 621–645.

Didi-Huberman, G., 'The Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology,' *Oxford Art Journal,* vol. 25, no. 1, 2002, pp. 59–70.

Didi-Huberman, G., 'Artistic Survival: Panofsky vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time,' *Common Knowledge,* vol. 9, no. 2, 2003, pp 273–285.

Didi-Huberman, G., 'The Album of Images According to André Malraux,' trans. E. Woodard and R. Harvey, *Journal of Visual Culture,* vol. 14, no. 1, 2015, pp. 3–20.

Didi-Huberman, G., 'IMAGE, LANGUAGE: the other dialectic,' trans. E. Woodard et al., *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities,* vol. 23, no. 4, 2018, pp. 19–24.

Doane, M. A., 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator,' *Screen,* Volume 23, Issue 3–4, Sep/Oct 1982, Pages 74–88, https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/23.3-4.74.

Douglas, D., 'The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction (An Evolving Thesis: 1991-1995),' *Leonardo,* vol. 28, no. 5, 1995, pp. 381–86, https://doi.org/10.2307/1576221. Accessed 13 Apr. 2022.

Downing, E., 'Divining Benjamin: Reading Fate, Graphology, Gambling,' *MLN*, vol. 126, no. 3, 2011, pp. 561–80, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23012677. Accessed 25 Apr. 2022.

Francis, J., 'The Three Graces: Composition and Meaning in a Roman Context,' *Greece & Rome*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2002, pp. 180–98. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/826905. Accessed 15 Jun. 2022.

Goldberg, V. L., 'Graces, Muses, and Arts: The Urns of Henry II and Francis I,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 29, 1966, pp. 206–18. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/750716. Accessed 15 Jun. 2022.

Irigaray L. and Guynn N., 'The Question of the Other,' *Yale French Studies*, no. 87, 1995, pp. 7–19, https://doi.org/10.2307/2930321. Accessed 5 Oct 2021.

Iversen, M., 'Retrieving Warburg's Tradition,' *Art History,* vol. 16, no. 4, 1993, pp. 541–553.

Jameson, F., 'Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject,' *Yale French Studies*, no. 55/56, 1977, pp. 338–95, https://doi.org/10.2307/2930443. Accessed 7 May 2022.

Johnson, K. N., 'Portraits of Modern Life: The Camden Town Group and Working-Class Women Subjects,' *The British Art Journal*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2019, pp. 74–81. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48617290. Accessed 15 Jun. 2022.

John, K., 'The End of Morality? Theory, Practice, and the "Realistic Outlook" of Karl Marx,' *Nomos,* vol. 37, 1995, pp. 403–439, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24219536. Accessed 15 Apr. 2022.

Krauß, A. 'Constellations: A Brief Introduction,' *MLN*, vol. 126, no. 3, 2011, pp. 439–45, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23012670. Accessed 12 Apr. 2022.

Latour, B., 'Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together,' *Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present,* Jai Press vol. 6, 2012, pp. 1–40.

Leacock, N. K., 'Character, Silence, and the Novel: Walter Benjamin on Goethe's "Elective Affinities."' *Narrative,* vol. 10, no. 3, 2002, pp. 277–306. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107294. Accessed 3 Aug. 2022.

McFarland, J., 'Sailing by the Stars: Constellations in the Space of Thought,' *MLN,* vol. 126, no. 3, 2011, pp. 471–85, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23012672. Accessed 25 Apr. 2022.

Milleker, E. J., 'The Three Graces on a Roman Relief Mirror,' *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, vol. 23, 1988, pp. 69–81. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/1512847. Accessed 15 Jun. 2022.

Millet, C., 'Georges Didi-Huberman on Atlas: How to Store the World,' Art Press, no. 373, 2010, pp. 48–55.

Pignarre-Altermatt, T., 'More Than One Picture: An Art History of the Hyperimage,' *European Review of History,* 2021, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 612–613, https://hdl.handle.net/1814/70006.

Pollock, G., 'To Inscribe in the Feminine: A Kristevan Impossibility? Or Femininity, Melancholy and Sublimation,' *parallax,* vol. 4, no.3, 1998, pp. 81–117.

Pollock, G., 'WHITHER ART HISTORY?,' *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 96 no. 1, 2014, pp. 9–33, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43947704, Accessed 06 Jan. 2022.

Pollock, G., 'Is Feminism a Trauma, a Bad Memory, or a Virtual Future?,' *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2016, pp. 27–61.

Rabinbach, A., 'Introduction to Walter Benjamin's "Doctrine of the Similar,"' *New German Critique,* no. 17, 1979, pp. 60–64, https://doi.org/10.2307/488009. Accessed 21 Apr. 2022.

Rampley, M., 'Iconology of the interval: Aby Warburg's legacy, Word & Image,' *A Journal of Verbal/ Visual Enquiry,* 2001.

Schwartz, V. R., 'Walter Benjamin for Historians,' *The American Historical Review,* vol. 106, no. 5, 2001, pp. 1721–43, https://doi.org/10.2307/2692744. Accessed 01 Dec. 2021.

Sjöholm, C., 'Crossing Lovers: Luce Irigaray's Elemental Passions,' *Hypatia*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2000, pp. 92–112, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810526. Accessed 5 Oct 2021.

Sperling, J., 'A Feminist Picture Atlas: Images of Lactation in Medieval and Early Modern Art,' *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal,* vol. 13, no. 1, 2018, pp. 118–132.

Sprung, J., *A few comments on Aby Warburg's phrase: "Kritik der reinen Unvernunft,"* La Rivista di Engramma, no. 125, 2015.

Video

Georges Didi-Huberman: Discharged Atlas: Uprising as 'Pathosformel,' [online video], 2016, https://youtu.be/wPbzta4zVqE, (accessed 23 November 2021).

The Holberg Symposium in honour of Griselda Pollock: "Is Feminism a Bad Memory?," [online video], 2021, https://youtu.be/LChmeAPhpUs, (accessed 12 March 2022).

Electronic Resources

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Atlas." *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 25 Nov. 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Atlas-Greek-mythology. Accessed 11 April 2022.

"clinging on by fingertips." *Farlex Dictionary of Idioms,* 2015, Retrieved May 9, 2022, from
    https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/clinging+on+by+fingertips.

Harper. D., "Etymology of icon." Online Etymology Dictionary.
    https://www.etymonline.com/word/icon (accessed April 10, 2022).

Harper. D., "Etymology of phantasm." Online Etymology Dictionary.
    https://www.etymonline.com/word/phantasm (accessed April 10, 2022).

"pathos, n." *OED Online,* Oxford University Press, March 2022,
    www.oed.com/view/Entry/138808. Accessed 5 May 2022.

Films Mentioned

La Notte, Michelangelo Antonioni, Italy and France, Dino de Laurentiis Distribuzione and United
    Artists, 1961.

Mullholand Drive, David Lynch, United States and France, Universal Pictures, 2001.

Parallel Mothers, Pedro Almodóvar, Spain, Sony Pictures and Entertainment Iberia, 2021.

Persona, Ingmar Bergman, Sweden, AB Svensk Filmindustri, 1966.

Swimming Pool, François Ozon, France and United Kingdom, Mars Distribution and UGC Films,
    2003.

The Double Life of Véronique, Krzysztof Kieślowski, France, Poland and Norway, Sidéral Films and
    Miramax, 1991.

The Silence, Ingmar Bergman, Sweden, AB Svensk Filmindustri, 1963.