When I first encountered On Kawara’s Title nearly ten years ago, I had never seen a photograph of the painting or heard of its existence. The work hung by itself, highlighted on an oversized wall at the entrance to the National Gallery of Art’s display of modern and contemporary art [FIG. 1]. Title consists of three canvases, each a field of deep magenta punctuated by neatly lettered white text and — upon close inspection — tiny adhesive stars, one adorning each corner. Taken in at a glance, the words ONE THING / 1965 / VIET-NAM are immediately striking.

**ONE THING: VIET-NAM**

*American Art and the Vietnam War*

Created the year after Kawara settled in New York, *Title* was a breakthrough for the Japanese-born artist. It marked a turning point in his practice, initiating an engagement with time as subject matter that he pursued for the rest of his life. Following the triptych, Kawara embarked on his *Today* series of date paintings; he completed his last, of hundreds, in 2013. Each of these works records the date of its making on a monochromatic ground of gray, red, or blue and is free of overt emotional or topical content [FIG. 2]. The carefully rendered works refer again and again to “today,” conveying the shape and experience of time, how it cycles and accumulates, more than imparting the particulars of any historical moment.

*Title*, however, is endowed with powerfully specific connotations. Unique within Kawara’s oeuvre, it names a place, “VIET-NAM,” in combination with the year it was made, “1965.” In 1965 — and still for many Americans even today — the country of Vietnam was associated with one thing only: war. For the Vietnamese, the war being waged there was both a complex civil conflict and a chapter in a much longer history of armed struggle against foreign domination, fought previously against the Chinese, the Japanese, and the French. For Americans, 1965 ushered in a new phase in the fight against communist North Vietnam, which the United States had been involved in since the early 1950s. After years of providing massive economic and military support, first to France and subsequently to the state of South Vietnam, the United States took the consequential step of committing ground troops to the south and beginning a bombing campaign against the north.
At the time he created *Title*, Kawara could not have guessed that the war in Vietnam would continue another ten years, claiming millions of lives and resulting in a mass migration of refugees from Southeast Asia. Yet he understood enough of the human and geopolitical stakes to employ the words “ONE THING,” a phrase that seems to anticipate the overwhelming presence the Vietnam War would soon have in the public consciousness. As the war widened and casualties mounted, more observers in the United States would become alarmed by developments in Southeast Asia. That Kawara was already alert to the trauma unfolding there is perhaps unsurprising; he had direct experience of war—and of the force of U.S. military power—having been a twelve-year-old in Japan when atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.3

The brushwork in *Title* is uninflected and tidy.4 Yet the painting, through its understatement, broadcasts a strong sense of moral urgency. Kawara is well-known for his reticence. For most of his career—in fact, since 1965—he refused to grant interviews or make public statements. That such a self-effacing, reserved artist created a painting that so pointedly references a current event seemed to me remarkable upon first sight. It was evidence of how intensely the war in Vietnam was experienced even from afar. And it made me wonder, were there other unexpected traces of the Vietnam War to be found in the art of its time?

The 1960s had begun dominated by American art movements considered cool and autonomous. It ended with a small but influential wave of artists choosing to engage—with their present moment, with politics, and with the public sphere. Though far from the only social factor, America’s war in Vietnam profoundly influenced this shift from ideals of aesthetic purity toward a realm of shared conscience and civic action. Due to the military draft, unprecedented media coverage of combat, and mounting evidence of a “credibility gap” in the government’s account of events, the Vietnam War had pervasive impact. Indeed, by the late 1960s, the war loomed, for many Americans, as the “one thing.” Among visual artists, there was no consensus about how best to address the war through art, or even whether this was an appropriate goal. Some sought in their work to raise political consciousness about the Vietnam War and thus, it was hoped, to help end it. Many others, while not explicitly activist in their practice, produced work steeped in the iconography and emotions of the conflict. As we trace how the effects of the war interacted with broader developments in American art between 1965 and 1975, we see a revival of openly affective imagery, a widespread preoccupation with the body and its vulnerability, and an embrace of facts or information as material for art. New artistic genres, all oriented toward narrowing the gap between art and life, emerged—such as body art, institutional critique, documentary art. So too did an ever greater range of artistic voices, as people of color and women demanded to have their perspectives on the war heard. This catalogue brings together both well-known and rarely discussed works, presenting an era in which artists struggled to synthesize the turbulent times and participated in a process of free and open questioning inherent to American civic life.

Scope of the Exhibition
An exploration of the impact of the Vietnam War on American art is a weighty and sobering project. At its center is a traumatic event—the war itself—that, for many, makes this art history painful to contemplate. For those who lost family, comrades, culture, or homeland, the war is not over; their losses continue to be felt every day. Moreover, the Vietnam War is a subject that for years has caused either loud disagreement or terrible silence among Americans. It is a war of countless and often contradictory perspectives that, as a country, we have struggled
One thing: Vietnam to recognize and discuss. Reflecting the split state of opinion over the lessons and meanings of the Vietnam War, its historical study in the United States has been divided since the 1960s between a dominant, so-called “orthodox school” of left-liberal scholars and a “revisionist school” of right-leaning ones. Their interpretations differ on the case for the U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia, the origins and autonomy of the insurgency in South Vietnam, and the motivations of Hồ Chí Minh, among other topics. In recent decades, these clashing American narratives have been increasingly challenged by a new generation...
Colonel Quang Tho, *Untitled*, 1967, black ink and wash painting on handmade paper, The British Museum, Purchase from Mrs. Thu Stern. Quang Tho was an artist who served in the People’s Army of Vietnam during both the French and American wars.

FIG. 3

of historians who engage a more diverse range of arguments and sources on the conflict. Benefiting from improved access to archives in Vietnam and the former communist world, study of the war today focuses less on American motives and consequences, and more on wartime Vietnamese agency, society, and politics. The emergent field of critical refugee studies has further expanded the story of the Vietnam War beyond 1975, demanding that the lives and experiences of Southeast Asian refugees, and the forces that displaced them, be strenuously reckoned with.⁶

Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War, 1965–1975 is not a monumental narrative that attempts to tell the story of the war from all sides—military and civilian, communist and anti-communist, American and Southeast Asian, dove and hawk.⁷ Rather, it aims to historicize a specific perspective on the war not widely discussed—that of America’s fine artists. The shattering of national consensus in the United States over the Vietnam War prompted an intense questioning of authority, both political and aesthetic. The socially critical, formally innovative art that developed under these conditions, and which is the focus of this book, contrasts sharply with that made during the same period in Vietnam, where nationalism and wartime service were overwhelming concerns. In the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in the north, visual artists were required to join the artists’ union and follow Communist Party dictates of subject matter and style. Largely taking the form of posters, documentary photography, and combat art, visual production under the DRV stressed values of solidarity and sacrifice rather than individuality or opposition [FIG. 3]. In the Republic of Vietnam in the south, artists were permitted to experiment with abstraction and sell their work independently but, as in the communist north, antiwar commentary was forbidden. As Southeast Asian art historian Nora Annesley Taylor has observed, painters working in the south generally pursued a “romanticized realism” that yielded works not dissimilar from the landscapes and portrayals of workers and soldiers produced in the north.⁸

The fifty-eight artists and artist groups represented in this exhibition worked free of the deprivations and demands of total war endured by their counterparts in North and South Vietnam. With important exceptions, they experienced the war—as did the vast majority of Americans—at a physical remove. They lived it around the dinner table, in front of the television, sometimes in the streets. Included in this study are artists who, regardless of their country of origin or nationality, worked in the United States at the time or otherwise can be understood as participating in America’s cultural self-interrogation about the war, as well as in the formation of American art history. Many were deeply conflicted about the American-led war in Vietnam, if not openly critical of it. That no art in the exhibition expresses full-throated support for the U.S. war effort both reflects the widespread unpopularity of the conflict by the late 1960s⁹ and confirms the inclination of modern artists to identify...
with progressive or utopian projects. These were independent artists, creating work unsanctioned by government or industry. They took full advantage of their right to personal expression and public dissent.

Highlighting the period between 1965, the year the United States sent its first combat troops to Vietnam, and 1975, when the last Americans evacuated Sài Gòn, this gathering of works shows artists contending with the dilemmas of the war as it unfolded. Rather than exploring issues of commemoration and aftermath in relation to the Vietnam War, I have chosen to emphasize a “present-tense” experience of the war period, which reveals artists striving to absorb and address momentous events in real time. The moral urgency of the war both galvanized individual creators and inflected the course of entire movements, changing how art was talked about, created, and understood in the United States. The pieces in the exhibition have been selected for their aesthetic impact and ambition, and for the power with which they convey the pressures and debates of the Vietnam War era. Collectively, they demonstrate how the war ran as an undercurrent through consequential developments in art practice throughout the decade. They show, too, how deeply some American artists reflected on the costs and consequences of war and how their thinking led to new ways of visualizing and critiquing a distant conflict.

Currents of international influence and exchange naturally run through this story. Among American artists who actively opposed the Vietnam War are several—including Leon Golub, Hans Haacke, Jon Hendricks, Peter Saul, Nancy Spero, and May Stevens—who lived in Paris earlier in their careers. There they developed artistically at a distance from the dominant modernist discourse of the New York school. Many were familiar with the consequences of French colonialism and well aware of the role French artists had played in opposing the First Indochina War (1946–1954). That the French past in Vietnam was a direct antecedent to the American experience is referenced in an open letter published in the *New York Times* on June 27, 1965, one of the first public protests made by American artists against the Second Indochina War (that is, America’s Vietnam War). Initiated by the group Artists and Writers Protest, it reads: “A decade ago, when the people of Vietnam were fighting French colonialism, the artists and intellectuals of France—from Sartre to Mauriac, from Picasso to Camus—called on the French people’s conscience to protest their leaders’ policy as immoral and to demand an end to that dirty war—‘la sale guerre.’ Today we in our own country can do no less.”

Also notable in this collection are the number of U.S.-based artists who had personal experience of war, having either served in wars abroad or come from countries occupied or devastated in prior conflicts. The latter include Kawara, Yayoi Kusama, and Yoko Ono from Japan, Haacke from Germany, Jean Toche (of Guerrilla Art Action Group, or GAAG) from Belgium, and Tomi Ungerer of Alsace. Mark di Suvero is another example; born in China to Italian parents, he lived as a child in Japanese–controlled Tianjin and cites his first-hand witnessing of colonial occupation as the root of his eventual staunch opposition to the American war in Vietnam. These varied transnational perspectives and experiences prove significant in the context of a country whose population has largely been spared warfare within its borders since the nineteenth century. Fortunate to be so sheltered, the majority living in the continental United States has needed to be reminded that mass death and destruction are real phenomena—as Leon Golub insisted, not “make-believe” or “symbolism.” Significantly, it is often war veterans who strive to deliver this message. In *Artists Respond*, these include T. C. Cannon, Rupert García, Kim Jones, and Jesse Treviño, who fought in Southeast Asia; Mel (Melesio) Casas, Wally Hedrick,
and Robert Morris, who served in the Korean War; and Emile de Antonio, Douglas Huebler, and Leon Golub, all veterans of the Second World War. Other artists in the show, including Benny Andrews, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, and Malaquias Montoya, also served in the armed forces, though either not abroad or during a period of active war.¹⁴

Missing here from the spectrum of global American voices are artists of Vietnamese descent. In the 1960s, Asian Americans represented less than six-tenths of one percent of the U.S. population¹⁵ and had yet to become welcome participants in the mainstream art world. Concentrated in urban ethnic ghettos and on the islands of Hawai‘i, few traced their roots to Southeast Asia; one study estimates that only between 16,000 and 37,000 people originating from Vietnam lived in the United States before 1975.¹⁶ Due to the influx of refugees from

FIG. 4
Tiffany Chung, reconstructing an exodus history: flight routes from camps and of ODP cases, 2017, embroidery on fabric, Courtesy the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York

FIG. 5
Tiffany Chung, recipes of necessity (still), 2014, single-channel HD video, color, sound, 33 min., Courtesy the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York
Southeast Asia following the wars there, there are now more than 1.7 million Vietnamese Americans and over a million Americans who are of Lao, Hmong, Cambodian, or Thai descent. The lack of Southeast Asian American artists in this exhibition thus reflects the limits of perspective inherent to the historical moment it examines, even as the project demonstrates that American art, like American society, was then expanding and becoming more pluralist. Only after 1965—when discriminatory national origin quotas were eliminated—were immigrants from Asia able to begin arriving in more significant numbers. As the cultural contours of Asian America have stretched with each generation of newcomers from across the Pacific, and patterns of exclusion continue to be challenged, Asian American art unceasingly evolves. The contributions of Southeast Asian diasporic artists to contemporary visual art have been remarkable over the last two decades, with the work of Tiffany Chung, Dinh Q. Lê, Tung Andrew Nguyen, and the Propeller Group, among many others, pushing American cultural memory of the Vietnam War to become more unbounded, inclusive, and just.

Chung’s exhibition Vietnam, Past Is Prologue—organized and presented by the Smithsonian American Art Museum concurrently with Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War, 1965–1975—traces patterns of conflict, migration, and resettlement, highlighting the stories of Vietnamese refugees now living in Texas, California, and Virginia. Her art [figs. 4, 5] illuminates neglected accounts of the war and reveals how the contemporary United States has been shaped by the history and people of Vietnam. Such narratives are poignantly absent from art of the Vietnam War era itself.

The Vietnam War in American Art
There is by now a recognized American art of the Vietnam War. Certain works created in resistance to the violence and militarism of that era have become iconic—Nancy Spero’s searing wartime visions, for example, or Martha Rosler’s incisive House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home photomontages. Yet it took years for this art to gain critical attention, and a richly textured history still demands to be told. The passage of decades has made possible a broader view of the art created in response to the Vietnam War. So much of it, I have learned, was unseen, unexhibited, not written about, perhaps not even considered art at the time it was made. There are multiple reasons for this lack of visibility. In the late sixties and early seventies, galleries and museums had barely begun to acknowledge issues of institutional sexism and racism, which meant that war-related art by women and people of color was little seen or considered. Performance art, newly vitalized in this period, was also experienced by very few people. It was ephemeral by nature, often took place unannounced in public spaces, and was not always well documented. Other works fell outside discussion because they were anomalous within an artist’s career, perhaps created for a protest exhibition, and therefore deemed irrelevant. This was also true of work created explicitly as agitprop and distributed in unlimited numbers and without authorial attribution. In
these cases, the makers themselves often rejected the label of “art.” Documentary photography and film likewise were not considered established categories within fine art as they are today and had not entered the conversation.

Most telling, a few artists intentionally held back their war-related works. Philip Guston preserved but never publicly displayed his painting of Richard Nixon, San Clemente [p. 269], so deep was his ambivalence about addressing such topical subject matter. Other artworks were exhibited but remained undiscussed in relation to the war, like Dan Flavin’s monument 4 for those who have been killed in ambush (to P. K. who reminded me about death) [p. 58]. The sculpture was shown in the influential exhibition of minimal art Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptors at the Jewish Museum in 1966; but its war-inflected content, underscored by its title as well as Flavin’s status as a military veteran, went largely unexplored in the art historical record until recently.21 Another example is Kawara’s Title, whose direct allusion to the Vietnam War received little attention in scholarship until 2010.22 Although the painting was made in New York, it was not exhibited in the United States until three decades later, when it appeared in 1965–1975: Reconsidering the Object of Art at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 1995. That exhibition positioned Title as a work of art about art. Its catalogue states that the piece “proclaim[s] its own, physical presence as an abstract message concerning painting: an object (‘one thing’) whose creation is necessarily ‘located’ in time (‘1965’) and ‘takes place’ in history (‘Vietnam’).”21 In this reading, Kawara’s phrase “ONE THING” refers to the literal art object—not the consequences and effects of war.

These patterns of blindness and omission derive in part from the belief prevalent during the post-World War II era that art and politics should not mix. Today it is assumed that visual artists can and do engage with issues drawn from the broader world. Indeed, recent years have seen a resurgence of activist currents in contemporary art. But at mid-twentieth century, leading American artists and critics rejected the model of populist, Depression-era social realism to privilege high culture as a sphere of elevated purpose and integrity, separate from everyday life.24 The triumph of abstract expressionist painting gave rise to a critical orthodoxy that valued “advanced” art as abstract, timeless, and autonomous. Especially in New York, dominant art discourse assumed a division between aesthetic and political expression. The works assembled here, however, cast doubt about whether such a sharp distinction could really be made.

**Watching the War**

To consider the impact of the Vietnam War on the thinking and moral imagination of American artists, it is necessary to emphasize its scale and toll. The war known in this country as the “Vietnam War” and in Vietnam as the “American War” was an event that shaped the world. At war’s end, Vietnam became a single, independent state under communist rule, culminating a transformational period of Third World national liberation movements. The result also refuted clearly and for the first time the U.S. foreign policy of communist containment.25

The human cost of the war was staggering. The number of Vietnamese who died during the conflict is difficult to confirm but has been estimated at more than three million, when north and south, fighter and civilian, communist and noncommunist, are combined.26 There were vast casualties in Laos and Cambodia as well; while precise figures are elusive, close to a million likely died in those countries. The land itself was ravaged: between 1961 and 1975, an enormous volume of American bombs was dropped on Southeast Asia—approximately one million tons on North Vietnam, four million on South Vietnam, two million on Laos, and a quarter...
ton on Cambodia. Today leftover, unexploded ordnance, as well as the lingering effects of the use of tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange, continue to have dire health and ecological consequences. The U.S. intervention transformed South Vietnam's economy wholesale, fraying familial and societal bonds. Millions of rural people were forcibly displaced from land they were attached to by livelihood, tradition, and culture. By 1968 almost a third of the population had become refugees in their own country. Shantytowns outside of cities grew, swelling the urban population from 15 to 64 percent of the nation by 1974. After the communist victory, the new regime executed thousands who had served the South Vietnamese government and sent some 200,000 more to reeducation camps. By the late 1970s, roughly two million refugees had fled the conflict and wreckage of Southeast Asia to points around the world. Their migration redefined the region and beyond.

Americans at home did not experience the Vietnam War as the people of Southeast Asia did. As author and scholar Viet Thanh Nguyen has reminded us, there were “no massacres committed on American soil, no bombs dropped on American cities, no Americans forced to become sex workers, no Americans turned into refugees.” Yet the impact of the war cut deep. The conflict in Vietnam was arguably America's most divisive military action outside the Civil War itself. Many who lived through the period remember it as an ordeal during which, as author and Vietnam War veteran Tim O'Brien has described, “The only certainty... was moral confusion.” More than two and a half million Americans served in Vietnam. Some 58,000 died there. Many more came home bearing grave physical or psychological scars. In contrast to their parents, who returned from the Second World War victorious and celebrated for the role they had played in combating fascism, Vietnam veterans bore a far more uneasy legacy. They were associated not only with a war that ended in failure; it was a war whose purpose, legitimacy, and conduct were loudly and often bitterly debated in every sector of society for years.

As America’s war in Vietnam progressed, more and more citizens came to question the rationales their leaders gave for intervening there, for pursuing indiscriminately lethal military tactics, and for refusing to withdraw when they could not find a way to achieve their stated goals. By 1971, public opinion polls showed that 58 percent of Americans believed the war in Vietnam was not only a mistake, but “morally wrong.” Never before had so many U.S. citizens disagreed with their government’s exertion of military force. At the same time, equally significant numbers disapproved of antiwar protest and the counterculture associated with it — viewing such criticism as damaging not only to the country’s military aims, but also to its national pride and very way of life. By the late 1960s, the United States was in pitched conflict both in Vietnam, against a foreign enemy, and at home — between Americans for and against the war, for and against the status quo.

This catalogue presents art made amid this turmoil — during a long decade in which war began to feel like a never-ending condition, and no one understood how or when the conflict would finally come to a close. Considered chronologically, the works track an arc of artistic engagement that corresponds to the degree of Western media coverage and public awareness. Few Americans, artists or otherwise, closely followed events in Vietnam before the escalation of 1965 — even though the United States had been deeply involved there since at least the early fifties, when it bankrolled France’s war against Hồ Chí Minh’s recently declared Việt Minh government. (Still fewer were aware that the United States had previously supported Hồ Chí Minh and the Việt Minh in their resistance to Japanese
ARTISTS RESPOND

authority during the Second World War.) After the French attempt to regain colonial control over Vietnam failed in 1954, the Geneva Accords split the country at the 17th parallel and called for a nationwide plebiscite to take place in 1956—elections that many expected Hồ Chí Minh to win. American leadership, however, sought to halt global communist expansion in its tracks by establishing a permanent, noncommunist state in Vietnam and thus backed the anticommunist nationalist Ngô Đình Diệm as prime minister in the south in 1954. A year later, after a referendum marred by fraud, Ngô Đình Diệm became president of the newly created Republic of Vietnam (i.e., South Vietnam). Such moves were at odds with the aspirations and desires of many Vietnamese, as reflected in the growing, violent insurgency against the South Vietnamese government.

By the time most Americans began following these events in the mid-1960s they found themselves enmeshed in a complex and confounding war already well underway in a country whose history, culture, and politics were deeply unfamiliar. The military draft—which affected men aged eighteen to twenty-six and sent hundreds of thousands to war—ensured that younger Americans could not avoid thinking about the conflict in Vietnam, even if the more affluent and educated could often find ways to avoid combat if they desired. Further intensifying public discourse was the war’s unparalleled visualization. This was the first U.S. military conflict to be televised; never before had Americans been able to absorb in moving pictures ongoing scenes of a faraway war from the comfort of their living rooms. It was also a war heavily documented by photojournalists, at a time when picture and news magazines, such as Life and Time, still enjoyed widespread circulation and influence.40 Uniquely for a modern American war, Western photographers obtained credentials in South Vietnam with relative ease and operated free of military censorship.41 Thus, as the country’s leaders sought to reassure the American public that their goals in Vietnam could be honorably achieved, shock upon bloody shock unfolded, often underscored by unforgettable images: the self-immolation of Buddhist monk Thích Quảng Đức in protest of the South Vietnamese government in 1963, the stunning coordinated attacks of the Tết Offensive in 1968, the exposé of mass atrocities at Sơn Mỹ (My Lai) in 1969 [FIG. 6], the killing of student protesters on American campuses after the invasion of Cambodia in 1970. As citizens took in these developments in vivid pictures, the government’s account of events fell increasingly into question.

Mainstream America objected to the war in Vietnam most of all because American soldiers were dying there. In an effort to appease public discontent, President Nixon began a process of gradual troop withdrawal in June of 1969. By the end of that year, the draft was made a lottery, with men turning nineteen years old now eligible for only one year. The drawdown of U.S. troops was linked to Nixon’s policy of “Vietnamization,” an effort to shift the
fighting from American to South Vietnamese forces. For most American observers, the war effectively ended in 1973, with the signing of the Paris Peace Accords. Although the agreement officially declared a ceasefire and initiated the end of the draft and the homecoming of U.S. ground troops, it did not bring peace to Vietnam. It did lead to a drastic reduction in the number of Western journalists covering the unresolved struggle there. Contemporary artistic engagement with the war dwindled in the United States in the remaining two years before the North Vietnamese army entered Sài Gòn and the last American helicopter receded from view.

**Political Aesthetics**

*What is the relationship between politics and art?*

A. *Art is a political weapon*

B. *Art has nothing to do with politics*

C. *Art serves imperialism*

D. *Art serves revolution*

E. *The relationship between politics and art is none of these things, some of these things, all of these things.* — Carl Andre, 1969

With its intensely high costs and visibility, the Vietnam War prompted many artists — and Americans of all backgrounds — to become politically active for the first time. Modern visual artists, concentrated in urban centers, were in general left-leaning and took an antiwar stance. From their earliest collective actions organized in the spring of 1965, dozens of prominent artists in Los Angeles and New York signed letters of dissent, marched, staged demonstrations, and donated their work to benefit the cause of peace. These experiences did not necessarily alter their artistic practice. Several of the most politically dedicated and well informed, such as Carl Andre and Donald Judd, were also the least inclined to include overt references to the war in their production. Many of them did view their work as having the power to model new political and social ways of being; but, following the example of the “artist-citizen” established by senior figures such as Ad Reinhardt and Barnett Newman, they kept their activism out of their art and avoided taking a legible stand on topical issues.

As the tragedies of the Vietnam War accumulated, more artists were troubled by the disconnect between their work and real-world events. To be an “artist-citizen” became an unpleasantly divided existence. Painter Philip Guston described his “schizophrenic” state of mind in the late 1960s: “The war, what was happening to America, the brutality of the world. What kind of man am I, sitting at home reading magazines, going into a frustrated fury about everything — and then going into my studio to adjust a red to a blue?” With deep discord at home and horror abroad, the socially detached, “art-for-art’s-sake” dictum of modernism seemed more and more inadequate. Art that remained aloof from life, some argued, constituted a corrosive, self-deceiving lie — at least if you were an American who disagreed with the foreign policy of the government representing you. In a text written in 1967 but not published until 1986, painter Leon Golub wrote:

*What is the meaning of a symbolically perfect and physically faultless perfect art?*

It is impossible to export fascism and destruction, to burn and drive peasants from their homes, and maintain the dream of the perfectibility of art.

For if American aggression continues, the freedom we Americans have can only be a partial, privileged freedom, a privilege of affluence, and therefore a lie. And art and its dream of perfectibility and freedom is also a lie. Art is the record of a civilization and if America exports fascism, then its art — its art which claimed to speak of the possible — no matter its scale or intention, can only be an esoteric and frightened separation from what is the fearful truth.
An early activist against the war as well as an unapologetic figurative painter long critical of the cultural stranglehold of abstract expressionism, Golub forcefully voiced a motive shared by many of the artists collected in this volume. With U.S. justification for pursuing war in Vietnam under passionate debate, these artists oriented their work toward revealing and confronting what they considered the “fearful truth”—not deflecting from or offering relief from it. Americans were killing and being killed every day. Such circumstances demanded that the artist “shout fire when there is a fire; robbery when there is a robbery; murder when there is a murder; rape when there is a rape”—to borrow language from a manifesto signed by the fervently activist artists Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche (of the Guerrilla Art Action Group) in 1967.

Some antiwar works did shout, and little more. The Collage of Indignation—a ten-foot-high and 120-foot-long multipart painting created for Angry Arts Week in early 1967—was successful as a very visible political statement created by artists but fell short, many seemed to agree, as an aesthetic experience. The Collage consisted of a series of canvases that dozens of artists, working over the course of five days, filled with antiwar images and slogans; some simply signed their names to indicate their dissent [Fig. 7]. Critic Harold Rosenberg observed that the end result “expressed the hopelessness of artists in that almost all the works were dashed off without regard for style or standards, as if in a rush to return to the serious business of making paintings and sculpture.” Max Kozloff, with fellow critic Dore Ashton, had helped organize artist participation in the Collage and himself contributed to it a scene spattered in red paint. In the end, he saw the project as a “dismal” response to the urgency of the moment. Speaking years later, he recalled, “I didn’t think [the artists] were very imaginative. They weren’t allowing [his emphasis] the full scope and range and resources of their personalities to be affected and be sensitized by what was happening.” In a text written at the time of Angry Arts Week, Kozloff pointed out that the prevalent notion of autonomous art had creators in a bind; art was supposed to be “metaphorical and ritually self-contained,” and political action “pragmatic and literal.” They were thus on opposite expressive poles. Facing this contradiction and suffering a failure of imagination, the artists had created no more than a scrawled petition. There must be more room to operate, Kozloff lamented: “In our situation, both metaphor and action are vital to existence.”

Could art resist war and violence and have aesthetic significance and power? Could it break its contained limits yet rise above the clichés of blood spattering and angry slogans? Could it be both
politically meaningful and culturally “advanced”? The works in this publication suggest “yes”—but only if tired dichotomies are overturned and fresh forms pursued. Even as Kozloff was airing his complaint, individual and collective artistic responses to contemporary politics were, in fact, undergoing a crucial shift. In January 1967, Art in America published responses to an artists’ questionnaire devised by the critics Barbara Rose and Irving Sandler. The lead questions were: “Is there a ‘sensibility’ of the sixties?” and “Is there an avant-garde today?” As Rose summarized, it was widely agreed that the decade’s sensibility was “slick, hard-edge, impersonal.” Many of the respondents scoffed at the idea of an avant-garde. At a moment when the market was defining and sustaining artists as never before, they saw the notion as obsolete. Allan Kaprow, however, answered that there was an avant-garde. He saw it in the areas of “cross-overs, the areas of impurity, the blurs which remain after the usual boundaries have been erased.” The most important kind of mixing, he stated, takes place where “the identity of ‘art’ becomes uncertain and the artist can no longer take refuge in its superiority to life…. This is where, suddenly, decisions regarding human values [his emphasis] become imperative.”

Kaprow was correct. Between 1967 and 1971 especially—that is, at the height of U.S. military action in Vietnam and the corresponding peak of public outcry against it—American artists created not only notable works of explicit protest, but many more shot through with themes resonant with the war—themes of violence, power, the fragility of the human body, mourning, sacrifice, resistance. They brought their art into the realm of conscience and human values. As critic Pauline Kael commented in 1972, speaking of contemporary Hollywood film, “Everybody can feel what the war has done to us…. Vietnam we experience indirectly in just about every movie we go to.” In the art world, too, the impact of the war could be detected across virtually all movements and media. Close looking reveals works imbued with the psychological and emotional significance of the Vietnam War, if not always its literal depiction. This was accomplished, to use Kaprow’s words, in “impure, cross-over” ways. By turning to the real world as the material and means of their work, artists dramatically expanded their creative territory. New art forms emphasizing critical intervention and disruptive perspectives—conceptualism, feminist art, body art—were born in this fertile moment. Artists increasingly did not choose between aesthetic innovation and social relevance—they pursued both.

Growing Pluralism

Examining the late 1960s and early 1970s now from a considerable historical distance, we see that the pluralism of what we think of today as “contemporary art” is rooted in this moment of heightened political consciousness and imagination. By 1967, a growing number of artists rejected the social and aesthetic status quo, many of whom had the least to lose under the prevailing system: women, people of color, those at a geographic remove from the art world power center of New York. For these artists, opposition to the war frequently coexisted with
ARTISTS RESPOND

political engagement on other fronts, especially those of gender and race. Female artists have a significant presence here, reflecting the important role women took in organizing against the war (a subject Mignon Nixon addresses at length elsewhere in this volume) [Fig. 8].57 Their voices illustrate how the antiwar movement overlapped with and fed into the feminist revolution that transformed the country in the 1970s. Even before it had a name, feminist art offered a forceful critique of militarism and the constructs of masculinity, often underscoring the correlation between sexual and military aggression. Perhaps because their work was so roundly ignored by the art establishment, women were especially daring and transgressive in expressing their dissent. As Nancy Spero [pp. 48–52] remembered of her work during this time, “No one was looking; nobody cared.”58 Painters like herself and Judith Bernstein [pp. 53–56] consequently raged all the louder—even though it took years for their work to be acknowledged by art institutions or the market.

The Vietnam War also corresponded with growing racial and ethnic consciousness in American art. Both the Black Arts and Chicano art movements, ascendant at this time, insisted on art’s political role, critiquing white establishment aesthetics and emphasizing cultural self-determination. Works in the exhibition by African American and Latino artists demonstrate how the Vietnam-era draft—a system of deferments and exemptions that channeled working-class men into military service and college-bound students into fields of the “national interest”—became a galvanizing political issue in minority communities [Fig. 9]. Refusing to be inducted to the armed forces in 1967, boxer Muhammad Ali voiced an opinion then rising among young African Americans when he asked, “Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights?”60 The trenchant commentary of Faith Ringgold’s Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger [p. 146] and Asco’s Stations of the Cross [p. 235] reflect the multiple challenges Americans of color faced, struggling for full civil rights at home even as they fought for their country abroad—often in disproportionately high numbers.61 These included Native Americans, who served in combat in Vietnam at a higher rate than any other ethnic group.62 Experiencing oppression in their own lives, many artists of color came to view the war through the lens of racism and imperialism and sought to express solidarity with their Vietnamese “brothers and sisters.”

For artists of Asian descent, the sense of connection to this war was especially acute. At a time
when U.S. public discourse often reduced Southeast Asian lives to mere numbers or symbols, Asian Americans could hardly fail to register that the majority of those dying in the war looked like them and their family members. Racist and dehumanizing language directed at the Vietnamese during the war reminded Asian Americans of their perpetual “alien” status in this country, and that Asian lives were considered less precious than white ones [Fig. 10]. (Reflecting in 1974 on the conflict in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, who served as commander of Allied forces from 1963 to 1968, notoriously observed, “The Oriental doesn’t put the same high price on life as does a Westerner. Life is plentiful. Life is cheap in the Orient.”) The war in Vietnam was indeed an animating force in the formation of Asian American identity and politics beginning in the mid-1960s. James Gong Fu Dong’s *Vietnam Scoreboard* [p. 135] is a pioneering work that combines nascent Asian American consciousness with an antin war message. Born in San Francisco’s Chinatown, Dong was part of a generation of Asian American artists who created art with the aim of social impact at a grassroots, activist level. Other artists of Asian descent in the exhibition include several who are Japanese born, including Yoko Ono, who presented her *Cut Piece* in New York City less than two weeks after marines first landed at Đà Nẵng in 1965. In this work, audience members were invited to approach the artist as she sat onstage in her best outfit, and, one by one, cut away pieces of her clothing. The drama that unfolded placed spectators in a disconcerting position of complicity as the acts of aggression multiplied. Although problematic given Ono’s Japanese heritage, the artist’s racial “otherness” can’t help but inform the reading of this rendition of *Cut Piece*, taking place against the backdrop of mounting American intervention in Vietnam. In film footage of the performance, we do not see the artist interrupt or halt the stream of participants. She simply presents herself as a live presence, her open humanity confronting audience members as they consider whether to stop, interfere with, or escalate the action.

**Patterns of Response**

The fifty-eight entries in the plate section describe distinct case studies of how America’s artists responded to the Vietnam War between 1965 and 1975. Multiple themes and patterns emerge from
this kaleidoscopic gathering of works. While formally
diverse, the pieces in the exhibition have in common
an engagement with matters of civic conscience and
participation. Rather than focus on issues intrinsic to
art, they emphasize the intersection between art and
lived experience.

**CRITICAL PICTURES** In painting, we see artists depart
from the dominant norms of modernist abstraction
and the sunny, consumerist ethos of American
pop to create pictorial work that is overtly topical
and dissenting. Many turned to deliberately “low”
sources of inspiration and rhetorical extremes in an
effort to make painting sufficient to the emotional
and ethical exigencies of the times. Peter Saul and
Judith Bernstein knowingly channeled the dark
humor and taboo imagery of cartoons, bathroom
graffiti, and caricature to deliver a “cold shower”
as Saul put it) of bad conscience to the viewer.
Saul’s wild, allegorical Vietnam scenes link war
with racism and sexual aggression, combining the
extreme language of underground comic books
with fierce satire and a Day-Glo palette [p. 71]. In
skewering what he saw as a racist war, Saul puts on
display distinctly American stereotypes of Asians,
from buck teeth and yellow skin to the “chop suey”
typeface of American Chinese restaurant signs
[p. 71]. Bernstein likewise employs provocative
sexual imagery and transgressive language in A
Soldier’s Christmas [p. 55], further adding an over-
the-top array of found materials, including Brillo
pads and blinking lights, to underscore her out-
rage at what she considered an obscene war. Leon
Golub turned to extravagant size to convey what he
described as the “grotesqueness” of U.S. military
might [pp. 258–59]. The enormous, unstretched
canvases of his Vietnam series immerse the viewer
in harrowing scenes of heavily weaponed American
soldiers confronting unarmed Vietnamese; Golub
created these compositions based on photographs
he collected from newspapers and magazines. Nancy
Spero also referenced U.S. technological dominance
in her ferocious and disturbing War paintings, which
portray bombers and helicopters as monstrously
embodied machines of destruction. None of these
works were merely “dashed off” so that the artist
could quickly return to the “serious business” of
making paintings and sculpture. Rather, each repres-
ents a sustained and considered body of work that
purposely challenged the conventional criteria for
aesthetic “quality,” just as it challenged the excesses
of state power.

**ABSTRACTION** As we have seen, most abstract artists
resisted making the Vietnam War legible in their
work—or at least, found it difficult to do so. In a few
instances, however, the language of abstraction is
powerfully employed to confront themes of mortality,
mourning, and resistance. Dan Flavin’s monument 4
for those who have been killed in ambush (to P. K. who
reminded me about death) evokes the aggression and
terror of combat through color and form—and by
activating an expanded aesthetic field that includes
the viewer’s perceptual and kinesthetic experience
of the object in real space. This minimal sculpture
immerses the spectator in thick red light and menac-
ingly trains one of its fluorescent tubes at roughly
head level. For Wally Hedrick, a turn to abstraction
was a political act of refusal, part of a wider “with-
drawal of his services from mankind,” akin to the
walk-outs, boycotts, and moratoria that proliferated
along with rising antiwar sentiment in the later
1960s. Many of his Vietnam series of monochromes
were made by literally obliterating his existing
pictorial works in thick black paint. Having himself
suffered the trauma of combat during the Korean
War, Hedrick likened his negated paintings to
“wounded veterans.” Especially in the context of
news media saturated with war images, Hedrick’s
black paintings—which culminated with the
immersive War Room — demonstrate that powerful statements could be made through the denial of pictorial content.

A WAR OF INFORMATION The Vietnam War era witnessed the coalescence of conceptual art in the United States.50 Circumventing traditional aesthetics, conceptualism privileges concept over object and thinking over form. The notion that a work of art could exist as an idea — and that art practice could consist of the gathering and distribution of facts — had special valence during a war in which the control of public information was so heavily contested. Knowing that government dissemblance and the general public’s lack of historical awareness about the conflict in Vietnam had made possible the U.S. escalation of the war, peace activists had since the earliest teach-ins sought to educate Americans about the country of Vietnam and U.S. policy there.20 (A representative antiwar flyer circa 1970 reads, “We must fight a war of ideas, not bullets....Read! Think! Educate!”21) Revelatory eruptions of knowledge, such as with Seymour Hersh’s exposé of atrocities at Sơn Mỹ or Daniel Ellsberg’s leaking of the Pentagon Papers, challenged official accounts of the war and helped shift public opinion. Against this background, conceptual artists like Hans Haacke and Douglas Huebler [p. 149] embraced practices of research and reportage, restaging journalism as art. Their amplification of real-world information in the supposedly “neutral” context of the gallery or the museum — as Haacke did in his milestone work News [p. 156] — demanded that these settings shift from being places of passive contemplation to arenas of active questioning. Haacke’s MoMA Poll [p. 189], shown in the 1970 exhibition Information at the Museum of Modern Art is another emblematic work. Designed specifically for this context, MoMA Poll asked viewers to register their opinion of Nelson Rockefeller, the New York State governor and a long-time trustee of the museum, given his failure to denounce President Nixon’s conduct of the war, which then recently included the invasion of Cambodia. The piece invites viewers to participate in its realization by casting votes in transparent ballot boxes [fig. 12] — making visible a process of participatory citizenship and highlighting the live connections between artist, audience, museum, and larger power structures.

Self-consciously engaged in interrogating the boundaries of art, conceptual artists relied on art world institutions and conventions as context to generate meaning. Participating more directly in the public flow of war-related information were documentary artists. This book includes only a very
narrow slice of documentary practice related to the war in Vietnam. Through mid-twentieth century, “photojournalism” and “art photography” remained largely distinct categories, with most documentary photography being created on assignment with a client or employer (usually the government or a commercial news organization) exercising ownership and editorial control. However, the cooperative structure of Magnum Photos, founded in 1947, allowed its photographer-members to pursue stories of their own choosing and to retain intellectual control over their work. By the 1960s, a few were developing new modes of long-form documentary representation that transcend the genre of on-the-spot reporting. Welsh photographer Philip Jones Griffiths (who later served as president of Magnum New York) was one such pioneer, whose creative independence and sustained engagement with the Vietnam War deserves inclusion in this discussion. Griffiths spent years in Vietnam pursuing a book-length examination of the conflict for which he produced both pictures and text. His *Vietnam Inc.* [pp. 211–19] is a searing analysis of the war, unusual for its emphasis on sustained observation over incidents of sensational violence. Emile de Antonio’s *In the Year of the Pig* [pp. 132] is an equivalently independent and deeply researched work, the first American film that sought to contextualize the war in Vietnam within a larger historical framework. Both artists sought to inform and influence the public through what de Antonio called “the mass of facts” and did so via media that could reach beyond the cloistered limits of the art world.

While most photojournalism of the Vietnam War was produced on assignment or distributed without the photographer’s editorial control, thus falling outside the scope of this project, its influence can be readily seen and felt throughout. The Vietnam War is regarded as both the first television war and the last great photojournalist’s war. War images sourced from news and picture magazines appear again and again in the art of this period, sometimes quoted directly, sometimes considerably transformed. The constant visual transmission from combat zones to home front rendered the conflict vivid and present for many Americans, yet could also have a numbing or trivializing effect. Edward Kienholz’s living room tableau *The Eleventh Hour Final* [pp. 116–17] shows mass death reduced to the scale of a television screen—in the background and easily ignored. Artists debated both the ethics and efficacy of appropriating images of real suffering and death. Some worried that exposure to brutal photographs only cultivated indifference—Susan Sontag’s 1973 essay “In Plato’s Cave” [p. 107] powerfully articulates this view—while others deployed upsetting images

![FIG. 12](image-url)
exactly to activate and mobilize the viewer. In her *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* series [pp. 94–98], Martha Rosler cut and collaged pictures from popular magazines, bringing scenes from the war into affluent American homes, thereby forcing “here” and “there” into one representational space. She distributed the images as black-and-white photographs at protests and demonstrations and (as she describes in her contribution to this publication) refused to show them as art while the war continued. In Carolee Schneemann’s short film *Viet-Flakes* [p. 64], the camera stutters and jitters over scenes of war violence, abruptly pulling in and out of focus. The effect is disorienting and sickening, an acknowledgment of the mix of helplessness, outrage, and apathy with which Americans regarded images of faraway anguish and death.

The use of such documentary images by artists remains ethically fraught. Antiwar artists (and the antiwar movement in general) recognized the evidentiary power of photography to stir empathy and political action. It was, for example, seeing images of Vietnamese children burned by napalm that pushed Martin Luther King Jr. in early 1967 to loudly denounce his government’s conduct of the war. Similarly, atrocities committed by U.S. soldiers at Sơn Mỹ became undeniable to the American public when photographs of the victims circulated in the media and protest art [p. 169]. But the camera also flattens and dehumanizes as it transforms human lives into political symbols—especially when wielded across vast power differentials of race, wealth, and nationality. We cannot today regard Vietnam War-era works that incorporate unidentified images of Vietnamese suffering without pausing to recognize the human agency and subjectivity lost behind these pictures. Liliana Porter’s *Untitled* (*The New York Times, Sunday, September 13, 1970*) [p. 195] is a rare work contemporary to the war that quietly makes this point. Text added by the artist to a photograph of a nameless, captive Vietnamese woman poetically leads the viewer from a position of representational privilege through acts of identification with the female, the colonized, the “other.” Porter’s verse begins, “This woman is northvietnamese” and ends with “my mother, my sister, you, I.”

**PRINTS FOR PEACE** Affordable and easy to distribute, prints have long been a medium for social critique and raising awareness. The outpouring of graphic art during the Vietnam War ranged from conventional protest posters with clear texts and a strong message to more experimental pieces that reflected contemporary developments in pop, conceptualism, and even land art. During the war years, American art experienced a “Print Renaissance” that revived interest in printmaking as a creative medium and led to the establishment of new, ambitious workshops across the country. Artists created fine-art prints to sell as limited editions to raise funds for the antiwar movement, and they also produced prints cheaply, anonymously, and in quantity to give away at demonstrations, sell at low cost, or post in the streets. This catalogue focuses on graphic art created for specific antiwar protest events, circumstances that gave artists like Donald Judd [p. 225] and Ad Reinhardt [p. 81], who normally eschewed activism in their work, a rare pretext to engage directly with political content. The project also highlights artists who, by contrast, had an ongoing commitment both to the medium of printmaking and to political discourse—such as Rupert García [fig. 13 and p. 192], James Gong Fu Dong, and Corita Kent [pp. 88–92]. García and Dong were both young artists in the San Francisco Bay area, developing their work in the context of the burgeoning Chicano, Asian American, and Third World Solidarity movements. Kent was a Roman Catholic nun in Los Angeles, teaching and making art in the midst of the Second Vatican Council’s call for a more open and modern Church. All embraced printmaking for its democratic
ARTISTS RESPOND

qualities and sought to apply the language of mass media (and pop art) to the work of promoting social justice—which for them included trying to end the war in Vietnam. As Kent said in 1965, “The idea is to beat the system of advertising at its own game….To oppose crass realism, crass materialism, with religious values, or at least with real values.” These artists embraced the visual impact and accessibility of pop aesthetics while eschewing the movement’s association with consumerism and the impersonal, banal qualities of contemporary American life.

SHOOT, BURN, RESIST: THE BODY The later years of the Vietnam War also coincided with the flourishing of another, very different art form: performance. With bodily injury and death on routine media display, the vulnerability of the human form emerged as a key theme in the art of the period. Beyond performance art, it can be seen in the disembodied “warrior” limbs of Paul Thek [p. 69], the chafed and blistered surfaces of Leon Golub’s *Napalm* canvases [Fig. 14], and the tenderly indexical and politically charged body prints of David Hammons [p. 109]. However, it was most strikingly addressed in the incipient field of body art, which tapped into the immediacy and visceral power of live corporeal experience. Early body-based work by Chris Burden [pp. 230–31] and Yoko Ono [pp. 44–45] pushed artists to extremes while challenging viewers to consider their participation as potential perpetrators or witnesses of violence. Burden’s landmark performance piece *Shoot*, in which the artist was shot through the arm with a rifle before a group of onlookers (the shooter was a friend who had trained as a marksman in the army77), enacted literal bloodshed and the constitution of a willing audience around it.78 The work uncomfortably encapsulates the experience of the bulk of the American people as onlookers to the Vietnam War79—and is a reminder that, as Viet Thanh Nguyen wrote, “War is not just about the shooting, but about the people who make the bullets and deliver the bullets and, perhaps most importantly, pay for the bullets.” Wars are fought by soldiers, but the “distracted mass of citizenry” at home helps pull the trigger.80

Human bodies not only fought the war, they became tools of protest as well. Inspired by the accomplishments of the black civil rights movement, antiwar activists adopted techniques of direct action and civil disobedience. By the later 1960s, “putting your body on the line” had become a common precept for demanding social change, and political action meant moving oneself physically in marches, rallies, and strikes that took place nationwide. Artists echoed these actions, unleashing antiwar Happenings in public spaces. Yayoi Kusama employed nudity to celebrate freedom and denounce militarism in her series of *Anatomic Explosions* staged at sites across New York City during the run-up to the 1968 presidential election [pp. 119–20]. Asco marched down Whittier
Boulevard in East Los Angeles, enacting a passion play that ended as they blocked the entrance to a U.S. Marine recruiting office with an oversized cardboard cross [p. 235]. The Guerrilla Art Action Group bloodily “died” in the lobby of the Museum of Modern Art, giving physical presence in a rarified art space to the damage behind euphemistic “body counts” [p. 159]. In its insistence on the continuity between life and art and in its aggressive foregrounding of the body as both subject matter and artistic means, performance art is deeply characteristic of art forged in the Vietnam War years.

**SELECTIVE SERVICE** Many works here share not only common artistic practice but also a concern with thorny issues of patriotism and sacrifice, issues that animate civil discourse in a democracy, especially during wartime. Pieces like Rosemarie Castoro’s *A Day in the Life of a Conscientious Objector* and Timothy Washington’s *IA* reflect how conflicting perspectives on military service divided the American body politic, families, and the consciences of individuals. Castoro’s twenty-four-part work of visual poetry channels and contrasts the imagined perspectives of a draft evader, a soldier at war, and a political revolutionary [pp. 138–39], while Washington depicts himself and his older brother as nearly identical figures in painful opposition over the draft [p. 239]. In airing these discordant views, artists were participating in an ongoing debate about democratic rights and responsibilities and the tension between the values of dissent and service.

Roughly one-third of the Americans who served in Vietnam were volunteers, another third “draft-motivated” volunteers (who, knowing of the likelihood of being drafted, signed up in order to retain greater control over their assignment within the armed forces), and the final third conscripts.81 Hundreds of thousands of others resisted induction, pursuing conscientious objector status, leaving the country, going into hiding, or serving time in prison rather than participate in what they considered an unjustified war. On both sides, individuals were motivated by deeply felt conviction and love of the country’s ideals. But it was those who accepted military duty and lost their lives that paid the harshest price. In the later years of the conflict especially, artists created works acknowledging the country’s sacrifice of its young. In 1966 Edward Kienholz had declined to participate in group actions against the war.82 But after 1968, he made multiple works calling out its terrible human cost (or, at least, U.S. losses) [pp. 116–17, 291]. His last, *The Non-War Memorial* [p. 205], proposes a visionary “living” memorial that would consist of surplus army uniforms—numbering the same as American soldiers killed so far in the war83—filled with clay and placed in a chemically destroyed meadow in Northern Idaho. After the “bodies” eventually decomposed, the area would be plowed over and reseeded with alfalfa and wildflowers.

By the early 1970s as well, more artists who had served in Vietnam had come home and were creating works informed by their wartime experiences. Jesse Treviño, who lost an arm due to injuries sustained in Vietnam, reinvented his painting practice as he

---

**FIG. 14**
Leon Golub, *Napalm Man*, 1972, oil on canvas, The Jewish Museum, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Isidore Samuels

© Copyright, Princeton University Press. No part of this book may be distributed, posted, or reproduced in any form by digital or mechanical means without prior written permission of the publisher.
recovered, newly asserting his experiences and perspective as a military veteran and a Chicano [p. 263]. T. C. Cannon, a Kiowa who volunteered for service in Vietnam, took pride in his tribal warrior tradition but considered the U.S. mission in Southeast Asia a tragedy. His ambivalence informs the war-related drawings and poems he created years after departing the army [p. 271]. Kim Jones developed his Mudman performance persona following his time as a marine stationed in Đông Hà. In Wilshire Boulevard Walk [pp. 275–76], performed nine months after the war’s end in 1975, he marched eighteen miles across Los Angeles, first from sunrise to sunset and then from sunset to sunrise. Wearing combat boots, his face covered by a stocking and his body slathered in mud, Mudman traveled with an oversized, exoskeleton-like structure of bound sticks strapped to his back. Both imposing and vulnerable, Jones as “walking sculpture” embodies the outsider status assigned to many Vietnam veterans upon their return to what U.S. soldiers abroad call “the world.” In the years since Wilshire Boulevard Walk, Jones has continued his public forays as Mudman in cities, including Washington, D.C., where in 1983 he ended his march at the then newly dedicated Vietnam Veterans Memorial [fig. 15]. It is Jones, a single figure traveling on foot, who brings this gathering of works to its chronological conclusion. Negotiating the terrain between military and civilian worlds, Mudman bears, as if on behalf of the entire body politic, the cumulative baggage of war.
Cultural Impact

Paintings don’t change wars. They show feelings about wars.—Leon Golub, 1967

Two months before his death in 1970, Barnett Newman recalled that the mass devastation of the Second World War had compelled him and his New York school peers to “start from scratch.”

The old stuff was out. It was no longer meaningful…the lazy nude, the flowers, the bric-à-brac that in the end had been reduced to a kind of folklore. We introduced a different subject matter that the painting itself entails…. People [had been] painting a beautiful world, and at that time we realized that the world wasn’t beautiful….The only way to find a beginning was to give up the whole notion of an external world.

In 1970, the circumstances were again different, as was the response of a new generation of American artists. With the United States pursuing a war that fewer and fewer of its citizens supported and Americans debating uncomfortable but essential questions about their country and its role in the world, a radical reimagining of the relationship between the aesthetic and the social took place. As curator Kynaston McShine wrote that year in the exhibition catalogue for Information, his groundbreaking presentation of conceptual art at the Museum of Modern Art, “Art cannot afford to be provincial, or to exist only within its own history, or to continue to be perhaps only a commentary on art. An alternative [is] to extend the idea of art, to renew the definition, and to think beyond the traditional categories.”

Art in the late 1960s and early 1970s did expand, becoming more critically motivated and socially engaged. Rather than pursue a new beginning, it opened itself up to the external world in all its ugliness and tumult. Facing pervasive social and political crisis, artists pushed against established conventions of form and medium. A very young Martha Rosler had initially nurtured “utopian” aims in her practice as an abstract painter. By the early seventies, she abandoned these aspirations because, she said, “I had another agenda. I felt that I had an obligation to take part in political structures, not only deciding eventually to become involved in antiwar work and antimilitarism but to make work that expressed that.” She had come to believe that the “closure” of modernism was “a mistake”: “I guess I was more comfortable with the idea of asking questions. And, of course, if a work is involved with asking questions, the first thing that has to go is the notion of closure.”

In the spring of 1969—roughly two and a half years after the “Sensibility of the Sixties” survey appeared in Art in America—Barbara Rose wrote in Artforum of the emergence of a “new art,” describing it as “constantly reactive to political, social, and environmental as well as aesthetic factors, [and] defying absolutes and fixed definitions.” Art and artists, she observed, were being “desanctified” and “brought down to earth.” The new art “is not a mystery but a fact; it may have content, but that content is not absolute, not transcendent, above all, not spiritual.”

What was lost in transcendence was gained in immediacy and social relevance. In giving up its aspiration to timelessness, art was free to become corporeal, personal, evidentiary, environmental, durational, participatory. It could call into question the gallery’s status as a neutral arena; it could convey real-world stories and information; it could act to stir outrage, empathy, and opposition; it could (as voiced by William Copley’s print [p. 80]) simply exhort audiences to “THINK.” Vis-à-vis the war in Vietnam, art could register emotional and factual truths about events that continued to be repressed or misrepresented by official sources.

None of this meant that antiwar artists during the era were confident that their art—or even their activism outside of art—had particular political efficacy. To the contrary, they were well aware that their
work addressed a select, minority audience and that its power and reach paled in comparison to that of mass cultural forms such as television, popular music, and film. In the face of brute economic and political instruments—such as, in Allan Kaprow’s listing, “guns, strikes, price wars, embargos, taxes, and the daily decisions of international diplomacy”—art appeared even weaker. By the end of the 1960s, too, there was a common sense of alienation and helplessness as the war rolled on despite a broad social movement having risen up against it. Some American artists against the war (notably Mark di Suvero and Carolee Schneemann) physically removed themselves from the United States for a number of years, such was their personal anguish and exhaustion over the continuing social and military conflicts.

But art’s inability to mobilize immediate political change was not sufficient reason for artists to stop making it or to stop engaging with the wider world. Giving a public lecture in April 1968—and reeling from the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. only days earlier—Hans Haacke admitted that artists were, as he put it, “unsuited” for “making society more humane.” He continued, “This in fact is probably not their task. Their profession does not lend itself to a meaningful contribution.” Despite this pained perspective, Haacke concluded, “Rather than staying aloof…artists should speak out against society’s attempts to use their work as a means to cover up the failure of tackling urgent issues.” The comment anticipated a significant shift in the artist’s own practice. Haacke thereafter reoriented his focus from biological and physical systems to social ones, leading to the creation of works like News and MoMA Poll, which underscore the continuity between artistic production and reception and the circulation of power beyond the studio and the gallery. Not incidentally, Haacke directed his critique at a system in which he was a player and had some hope of influence—the art world. The museum became for many artists during the Vietnam War era what the university was for students: the institutional locus of authority at which they could direct their demands for change.

Haacke’s work, like Rosler’s, is committed to opening art up and asking questions. This critical, interrogative orientation, formed in the crucible of the Vietnam War era, is a prime reason this chapter of American art history is important to explore and remember. Art with a moral imperative—art that refuses to participate in the “covering up” of urgent issues—is invaluable to our civil society and the historical record. This is especially true in regards to the Vietnam War, an event that U.S. leaders kept out of sight for as long as possible and on which, once finally concluded, they urged the public not to dwell. After 1975, few Americans were eager to continue the agonizing debates of the prior decade. Weary from years of loss and division, the country was anxious to move on and to restore national power and pride. However, as the Vietnam War recedes further into history, we must continue to reckon with the facts of its events and its ethical complexity. “Present-tense” works of art from the Vietnam War era do not offer commemoration or closure. Nor, as mentioned at the outset of this essay, can they provide a fully inclusive memory of the war. But they make vivid the moral questioning and spiritual pain of that time—and demonstrate how, during a period of profound national crisis, there were American artists who challenged conventional thinking, imagined and made visible revelatory perspectives, and mobilized the practice of dissent central to ideals of democracy and citizenship. They approached art-making as a principled civic obligation and right.

Art does not lead the larger culture—it reflects and influences. The responses of artists to the Vietnam War were in a real sense ordinary; that is, shared by millions of other Americans. What was exceptional was their ability to express their
feelings and opinions in meaningful artistic form, to make lasting and profound works of art. Artists’ voices speak to the present and the future. Works of art move through time and across geographies, forming strands in our collective history and self-understanding. As those of us in middle age and beyond can attest, we live in a society transformed not only since the Vietnam War, but also since just ten or fifteen years ago. When cultural change occurs, it can seem to manifest suddenly, but such shifts take place over the course of years, through innumerable incremental steps. A work of art can be one of those steps that serves to unsettle established thought and thus move consciousness forward. “A picture never changed the price of eggs,” Allan Kaprow observed, “But a picture can change our dreams; and pictures may in time clarify our values.” All of us are participants in this work. When the art in this exhibition was created, the outcome of the Vietnam War was unknowable—just as today our nation’s future is still unfixed and open to change. We the people must decide what is acceptable, what is ethical, what is valued, what is just. Art is a part of that process and helps us imagine what is yet to come.

1 The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., acquired On Kawara’s Title in 2006.
2 The left-hand canvas of Title originally bore the words “RED CHINA,” indicating the ongoing ideological conflict in Asia. Kawara replaced these words with “ONE THING” after a studio visit from Honma Masayoshi, then curator of the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo. Artist and curator shared concern that an overt reference to the Chinese regime would provoke a negative response among audiences in Japan, a country then in the grips of “anticommunist paranoia.” See the account of Jung-Ah Woo, “On Kawara’s Date Paintings: Series of Horror and Boredom,” Art Journal 69, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 62.
3 Kawara may also have been aware that Japanese civilians were involved in the current U.S. war effort. The island of Okinawa, then under American governance, provided a crucial hub for the movement of American troops and materiel in and out of Vietnam, activity that came to employ some 50,000 Japanese. Over the course of the war, about 75 percent of U.S. supplies to Vietnam passed through the island’s military ports. Jon Mitchell, “Vietnam: Okinawa’s Forgotten War,” The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus 13, no. 16 (April 20, 2015): 2.
4 Unlike the date paintings, which Kawara lettered by eye, the text in Title was executed using stencils. Artist questionnaire, August 30, 2006, National Gallery of Art curatorial records, Washington, D.C.
5 For more on these conflicting views, see Andrew West and Michael Dodge, eds., Triumph Revisited: Historians Battle for the Vietnam War (New York: Routledge, 2010).
6 A helpful introduction to the field of refugee studies is provided by Critical Refugee Studies Collective of the University of California at http://criticalrefugeestudies.com/.
7 The “all voices” approach was pursued in epic projects like Christian Appy’s oral history, Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides (New York: Penguin, 2003); and Ken Burns and Lynn Novick’s public television documentary series The Vietnam War (PBS, 2017).
9 Between 1965 and 1973, Gallup regularly polled Americans on the question of whether the United States had “made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam.” The year 1968 was the tipping point after which more than half of those polled responded that it had been a mistake. Lydia Saad, “Gallup Vault: Hawks vs. Doves on Vietnam,” Gallup Vault, May 24, 2016, https://news.gallup.com/vault/191828/gallup-vault-hawks-doves-vietnam.aspx
10 There are a few examples of popular art made during the Vietnam War that sought to stir patriotic feeling and rally support for the war effort—for example, the John Wayne movie The Green Berets (1968) and the song “The Ballad of the Green Berets” (1966), written and performed by Sgt. Barry Sadler, both of which were commercial successes.
11 To read the advertisement in its entirety, see Matthew Israel, Kill for Peace: American Artists against the Vietnam War (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 25, fig. 2.
12 Di Suvero was born in China in 1933 and lived there until the age of seven, when his family was able to emigrate to America. He recalled that during the Japanese occupation, his family lived in Tianjin near a prison “where women would come and wait outside, all night long, for bodies to be thrown out on the street after they were, quote, ‘interrogated’ [by the authorities]. So we really saw a vicious part of colonialism....That part was quite clear in our memory.” Mark-di Suvero, conversation with author, November 2, 2017. For more on di Suvero’s early life in China and his opposition to the Vietnam War, see the film directed by François de Menil and Barbara Rose, North Star: Mark di Suvero (1977).
13 Leon Golub, quoted in Kate Horsfield, “Profile: Leon Golub” (interview), Profile 2, no. 2 (March 1982): 22.
1993, https://chinati.org/programs/donald-judd-in-conversation-with-regina-wyrwoll. Dan Flavin was in Korea with the air force in the mid-1950s, after the end of the war. Dan Flavin, “... in daylight or cool white: an autobiographical sketch,” Artforum 4, no. 4 (December 1965): 20–24. Malaquias Montoya served tours as a marine in Japan, the Philippines, and Taiwan between 1957 and 1960. Teresa Romo, Malaquias Montoya (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Research Center Press, 2011). Although it is known that Carlos Izarra served in the army, we have not been able to confirm when or where.

16 The U.S. Census counted 877,534 Asian Americans in 1960; by 1970, this number had increased to 1.4 million, and by 1980, to 3.4 million. Helen Zia, Asian American: An Evolving Consciousness, in One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now, ed. Melissa Chu (New York: The Asia Society, 2006), 10–14. By contrast, as of the 2010 U.S. Census, Asian Americans accounted for 5.6 percent of the population. Elizabeth M. Hoeffel, Sonja Rastogi, Myoun Ouk Kim, and Hasan Shahid, The United States at this time were almost 100% white, and the people of color were ignored or repressed.


18 The number of Chinese allowed to come to the United States, for example, went from 250 to 20,000 per year. Before then most immigrants to the United States were of European descent. See Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, “Asian Immigrants in the United States,” Migration Policy Institute, January 6, 2016, fig. 2, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/asian-immigrants-united-states.


20 Author and scholar Viet Thanh Nguyen has been influential in arguing for a “just memory” of the wars in Southeast Asia, meaning one that is truly transnational and acknowledges the humanity and inhumanity of all participants. See his book Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 144.

21 In the exhibition catalogue Drawings and Diagrams 1963–1972 from Dan Flavin, the entry for a drawing for monument 4 for those who have been killed in ambush...noted that the work’s title “refers to the then most typical way for being killed in South Vietnam.” Emily S. Rauh and Dan Flavin, Drawings and Diagrams 1963–1972 from Dan Flavin [Saint Louis, MO: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1973]. The Swiss painter and writer Grégoire Müller was rare in discussing the title further, calling out “the deep emotional charge of the title, as opposed to the cold simplicity of the work” as well as citing Flavin’s experience as a soldier. Grégoire Müller, The New Avant-Garde: Issues for the Art of the Seventies (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 9–10.


26 This figure represents one-tenth of the total prewar population of Vietnam. Cited in Nguyen, Nothing Ever Dies, 7.

27 At times, some of these figures have been estimated as much higher. Technical analysis of the Department of Defense’s Southeast Asian bomb- ing databases is known to be challenging, and as a result estimates of the volume of U.S. bombs dropped during the Vietnam War have fluctuated over the years. See Ben Kiernan and Taylor Owen, “Making More Enemies than We Kill? Calculating U.S. Bomb Tonnages Dropped on Laos And Cambodia, and Weighing Their Implications,” The Asia-Pacific Journal 13, April 27, 2015, https://apjjf.org/Ben-Kiernan/4313.html.


29 Roughly 5 million out of a population of 17 million in South Vietnam were classified as refugees. Young, The Vietnam Wars, 1945–1950, 177.

30 Ibid.


32 Rubén G. Rumbaut, “A Legacy of War: Refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia,” in Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America, ed. Silvia Pedraza and Rubén G. Rumbaut (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1996), 318. Some 130,000 South Vietnamese escaped the country before Sáï Gôn was captured by the North Vietnamese Army. Addington, America’s War in Vietnam, 158.

33 Nguyen, Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War, 114.
34 This quote comes from Tim O’Brien’s autobiographical short story “On the Rainy River,” collected in The Things They Carried (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), 38.


36 Even today, strong disagreement continues about the conclusions to be drawn from this war. Although the majority of historians consider the U.S. war in Vietnam a mistake, others have described it as justified or necessary. For instance, see Mark Moyer, Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War 1954–1965 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).


38 A Harris Poll conducted after the March on the Pentagon in 1967 showed growing disapproval of anti-war demonstrations, with 76 percent of respondents agreeing that such protests “encourage communists to fight all the harder,” and 68 percent agreeing that “they are acts of disloyalty against the boys in Vietnam.” Quoted in William Conrad Gibbons, The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War: Executive and Legislative Roles and Relationships, Part IV, July 1965–January 1968 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 868. While many Americans associated the antiwar movement with the youth counterculture, many different kinds of Americans were involved in protesting the war. For a survey of the antiwar movement, see Simon Hall, Rethinking the American Anti-War Movement (London: Routledge, 2011); and Rhodi Jeffrey-Jones, Peace Now!: American Society and the Ending of the Vietnam War (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

39 At the beginning of 1964 there were only about forty press correspondents in South Vietnam. Their number grew to almost three hundred by the end of 1965. William M. Hammond, Reporting Vietnam: Media and Military at War (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 63.

40 For more on the joint influence of television and photographic coverage of the Vietnam War, see Liam Kennedy, Afterimages: Photography and U.S. Foreign Policy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).


43 For more on these early antiwar actions, see Francis Frascina, Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America (New York: Manchester University Press, 1999); and Therese Schwartz, “The Politicalization of the Avant-Garde,” Art in America 59, no. 6 (November/December 1971): 97–105.


48 Co-sponsored by Artists and Writers Protest, the Greenwich Village Peace Centre, and the New York University chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Angry Arts Week took place January 29 to February 5, 1967. The Collage of Indignation was exhibited at NYU’s Loeb Student Center. It was just one of many offerings: the week also included poetry readings, dance performances, film screenings, Broadway and off-Broadway peace activities, folk rock and classical music programs, writers’ forums, an antifare float, street theater, and public discussions. See Frascina, Art, Politics and Dissent, 115–19; Matthew Israel, Kill for Peace: American Artists against the Vietnam War, 70–77; and David McCarthy, American Artists against War, 1935–2010 (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 78–80.


52 Ibid.


54 Kapor had since the 1950s predicted an expanded field of art; see “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock,” 1958, reprinted in Essays on the Burning of Art and Life (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1–9. However, Kapor avoided overt political content in his work. Asked in 1967 if his art could be effective as a political tool, he responded, “I don’t feel that my work lends itself to this kind of an end. When I’ve been asked to prepare Happenings for this or that political function, peace movement or protest, I have said no in all but one case (and that was a fiasco). I felt that to the extent that my work was politically useful as a tool, it would be bad as a Happening. The more the end was literally a kind of reward, that is, the achievement of a political goal, the less the work would have the broader philosophical implications that I’m interested in. So you might say that my work is not strictly topical, although its materials are topical.” Allan Kaprow, “Interview,” in Allan Kapor (Pasadena, CA: Pasadena Art Museum, 1967), 9.

55 Allan Kaprow, quoted in Rose and Sandler, “Sensibility of the Sixties,” 45.


57 Women Strike for Peace and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom led early protests against the war. The sexism many women encountered within the larger antiwar and New Left movements contributed to the creation of female-led peace groups. Later groups include Another Mother for Peace and the Jeannette Rankin Brigade. For further discussion of the role of women in the antiwar movement, see Amy Swedlow, Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); and Rhodi Jeffrey-Jones, Peace Now!: American Society and the Ending of the Vietnam War (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).
made up approximately 4.5 percent of the U.S. population in 1970, and one analysis, based on the summates of service members, estimates that Hispanic Americans made up 5.5 percent of the casualties that year. Most of these casualties came from California and Texas, with smaller numbers from Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Florida, New York, and other states. “Vietnam War Casualties by Race, Ethnicity and National Origin,” accessed July 17, 2018, www.americanwarlibrary.com/vietnam/vactio.htm. Another study estimates that 20 percent of American casualties in Vietnam between 1961 and 1969 were Chicanos or other Latinos.


62 More than 42,000 Native Americans served in Southeast Asia as military advisors or combat troops between 1960 and 1973. Representing less than 1 percent of the overall population, they made up 2 percent of soldiers. For more on the experiences of Native Americans in the Vietnam War, see Tom Holm’s thorough and groundbreaking book, Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls: Native American Veterans of the Vietnam War (Austin: University of Texas, 1996).

63 Peter Davis, director of the documentary film Hearts and Minds (1974), interviewed General William Westmoreland. This quotation and interview are in the finished film by BBC Productions.


66 Peter Saul to Allan Frumkin, November 1966, reprinted in Peter Saul from Pop to Punk: Paintings from the ‘60s and ‘70s (New York: Venus, 2015), 36.


68 “The most notable such action in the art world was the New York Art Strike on May 22, 1970, which saw galleries and museums shut down and artists withhold their work in a one-day act of “symbolic denial” in opposition to the war. See Julia Bryan-Wilson, Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 199n22.


70 The first teach-in was organized by faculty and members of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and was held on March 24–25, 1965. It took the form of an all-day program of events that included lectures, debates, films, musical performances, and workshops, addressing topics such as the military-industrial complex and the role of the university, U.S. intervention in the Third World, Cold War rhetoric, and mechanisms for changing U.S. foreign policy. See Jeremy Allen, “U-M Professors’ First Teach-in 50 Years Ago Launched a National Movement,” Michigan Live, March 23, 2015, https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2015/03/u-m_plans_50th_anniversary_cal.html.

71 The text is printed in an unattributed “found” piece from the book by Lucy R. Lippard, papers, 1930s–2010, bulk 1960s–1990, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.


74 “It would be obscene to show. These are pictures of real people. We are in a war.” Martha Rosler, in conversation with the author, February 26, 2016.


77 The shooter was Bruce Dunlap, who was drafted and served in the army but never went to Vietnam. “I became a marksman, we all became marksmen, but... I didn’t relate to guns and I didn’t relate to shooting. It was something I had to do, going through that process.” Eric Kutner, “Shot in the Name of Art,” New York Times, May 20, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/05/20/opinion/shot-in-the-name-of-art.html.

Of Shoot, artist Chris Burden said, "I'm not exactly sure when I first came up with the idea. I mean...first of all, you saw a lot of people being shot on TV every night, in Vietnam. Guys my age." Kutner, "Shot in the Name of Art." 79

Nguyen, Nothing Ever Dies, 2–3.


In 1965, Irving Petlin telephoned Kienholz seeking his participation in a meeting of artists against the war, but the sculptor refused, apparently out of solidarity with American soldiers fighting overseas. Frascina, Art, Politics and Dissent, 28.

Kienholz's notes included in The Non-War Memorial Book indicate that the figure "45,647" corresponds to Americans "K.I.A....through Feb. 24-'72."


Martha Rosler, quoted in Craig Owens, "On Art and Artists: Martha Rosler" (interview), Profile 5, no. 2 (spring 1986): 8.

Ibid., 21.


Carolee Schneemann left the United States for London in 1968 and stayed abroad for four years. Mark di Suvero removed himself from the country twice—first in the late 1960s, when he went to live for a short time on Vancouver Island, Canada; and between 1971 and 1975, when he went into self-described exile in Europe.
