OLD WORKS / NEW WORKS:

WHEN CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTWORKS HELD BY CANADIAN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS CHANGE AFTER ACCESSION

by

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Abstract

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Film and Photographic Preservation and Collections Management, Ryerson University

This thesis explores what is at stake when changes are made to artworks after Canadian public institutions have accessioned them. It argues that the materiality of an art object matters, and together with the narrative or history of the artwork, contributes to its interpretation. Changes at the object level can have an impact not only on the history of an artwork, but also on an artist's larger practice and on an institution's collection. Using case studies of photographic works by Michael Snow (1929), Gabor Szilasi (1928), and Arnaud Maggs (1926-2012), this thesis investigates alterations made to artworks as a result of preservation concerns, curatorial input, and shifts in an artist's thinking. Identifying the various subjectivities involved, this thesis examines how artists and institutions have responded to changes that affect art historical, curatorial, and collections management decisions and records.

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Introduction

In 2011, following reconstructive work to one of its holdings, the Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH) found itself the owner of what seemed to be a new work of art. The AGH purchased Liz Magor's mixed media sculpture, *Hut* (1998), in 2002. Over time, *Hut* suffered significant staining due to the deterioration of polyurethane rubber used in its construction, and it required conservation treatment in order to be exhibited (fig. 1). The artist commenced repairs in 2011. However, unable to find similar fabric, Magor used colourful, patterned blankets to replace the original plain, off-white material (fig. 2). The aesthetic of the work was dramatically altered. The artist and the institution decided to record a new date for the work (1998 / reworked 2011), one that acknowledges the transformation the artwork underwent after its initial execution.[1] This example illustrates not only that artworks *can* and *do* change after accession, but that such modifications can have collections management and curatorial implications.

Changes at the object level can have an impact not only on the history of an artwork, but also on an artist's larger practice and on an institution's collection. This thesis explores what is at stake when changes are made to artworks after public institutions have accessioned them. Using case studies of photographic works by Michael Snow (1929), Gabor Szilasi (1928), and Arnaud Maggs (1926-2012), it addresses alterations made to artworks as a result of preservation concerns, curatorial input, and shifts in artists' thinking.

Preservation is a significant issue in photographic collections because chemical changes to the works are most often irreversible. Characterized by a multidisciplinary approach and an

[1] Christine Braun, registrar, in conversation with the author, March 21, 2013. Corroborated by email correspondence between Liz Magor and Melissa Bennett, curator, Contemporary Art: Liz Magor artist file, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton ON. Braun explained that "there is some flexibility with wording," allowing for either "reworked" or "recovered" depending on the context.

emphasis on time and materiality, Snow's artistic practice highlights the complex artistic, curatorial, and custodial challenges faced by artists and institutions as a result of photographic deterioration. Looking at his seemingly divergent approaches to preservation, using two works that have each suffered deterioration — *Atlantic* (1967) and *Venetian Blind* (1970), both part of the Art Gallery of Ontario's (AGO) permanent collection — this study demonstrates the ways that the intellectual and practical, the artistic and the pragmatic, are not mutually exclusive and indeed have very real implications in the care, interpretation, and management of photographic works. How artists and institutions deal with artworks that have been altered due to their inherent chemistry is particularly pertinent to institutions holding twentieth century photographic material, which right now is starting to show its age.

Curatorial input led to the reordering of Gabor Szilasi's diptych, *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* (1978), held by the Ryerson Image Centre (RIC). Pairing a chromogenic photograph of an interior and a black and white gelatin silver portrait, the work is part of his *Portraits / Interiors* (1978-1979) series in which Szilasi explores the relationship between the sitter and the space. First conceived with the portrait on the right, the artist switched its position to the left before the work was ever published or exhibited. For clarity, I will refer to the iterations as *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor right] and *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left]. The RIC currently holds two prints of *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left] and a third awaits accession. In 2009, for an exhibition and accompanying catalogue curated by David Harris, Szilasi repositioned the portrait back to the right side of the composition — *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor right]. The RIC holds this revised diptych as well, which makes for a total of four prints of *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, three with Mr. Pásztor on the left and one with him

on the right. This example illustrates a shift resulting from curatorial input and an interest on the part of Harris in protecting the historical record of the artist's intent. Additionally, the mode of presentation — mounted diptychs — means that the prints comprising the diptych cannot be reordered. The four prints held by the RIC provide clear physical evidence of the change, and reveal the complexities involved when earlier and different versions of an artwork still exist.

Shifts in an artist's thinking about a project can also result in changes to a work after it has been accessioned. For instance, Arnaud Maggs revised the hanging scheme for *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views* (1980) 11 years after it was originally completed, and six years after the Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH) purchased it. The use of a grid has become a definitive aesthetic characteristic of Maggs's photographic practice, and in 1989, he revisited the arrangement of the grid in *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*. The revised scheme raises questions about an artwork's completion; when is it truly complete? Furthermore, it brings to focus questions about where an institution's role and responsibility lies. Museums have been called memory institutions, and scholars such as Helena Robinson have argued that curators can be seen as "arbiters of what should be considered historically significant."[2] Should the institution preserve the original arrangement as an historical record? Or, should the artist's revisions be respected?

My thesis investigates how artists and institutions have responded to changes that affect art historical, curatorial, and collections management decisions and records. Artists, curators, historians, conservators, and the public all have a stake in how records are managed and history is recorded. However, subjectivity complicates matters. Identifying the subjective nature of

[2] Helena Robinson, "Remembering Things Differently: Museums, Libraries and Archives as Memory Institutions and the Implications for Convergence," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 27, no. 4 (October 2012): 421. doi: 10.1080/09647775.2012.720188. Robinson identifies no less than nine articles with dates ranging from 2000-2010 in which scholars have used the "blanket" term "memory institutions" when referring to museums, libraries, and/or archives, 413.

collections building and management, Gaynor Kavanagh contends that, "historians working in museums have possibly the most creative and complex roles of all history-makers. …Curators have to decide what to collect and what to let go, what to record and what to ignore."[3] Because the processes involved in developing, caring for, and using collections are subjective, my investigation of post-accession alterations explores the impact of subjectivity and interpretation at the institutional level and asks questions such as: what is the task of the curator?

Using a variety of examples at a range of institutions, the objective of my research is to explore approaches in dealing with post-accession alterations to artworks, and to facilitate and extend dialogue around these concerns. The first section of this thesis is a survey of literature related to both museums and curating, as well as to the practices of each of the case study artists. While there is no shortage of material related to the narrative function of museums and curatorial practice generally, there is little emphasis on how these ideas relate back to the handling of specific objects, particularly when they change. Similarly, the literature on Snow, Szilasi, and Maggs reveals that although changes were made to fairly significant works by each of these artists, there exists a substantial lack of discussion by curators, art historians, and critics about any modifications these artworks have sustained, effectively rendering the alterations either a minor detail or forgotten altogether in the narrative around these works of art.

Section 2 outlines the methodological approach of this thesis. While many examples of post-accession changes to artworks exist across media, this project concentrates on contemporary photographic works. The relevance of this topic to photography is examined in section 2, through a brief outline of historical precedents and an exploration of the reprinting practices of

[3] Gaynor Kavanagh, *Making Histories in Museums* (New York: Leicaster University Press, 1996), 5, cited in Robinson, "Remembering Things Differently," 420.

photographer, Bill Brandt (1904-1983). Sections 3, 4, and 5 focus on case studies of works by Snow, Szilasi, and Maggs respectively, and examine the impulses behind and approaches in dealing with alterations after accession. Each artwork has been selected to illuminate various reasons for post-accession changes, and similarly, each case reveals nuanced possibilities when considering what is at stake.

Figure 1. Liz Magor (Canadian b. 1948), *Hut*, 1998, polyurethane rubber and fabric, 37 x 114 x 114 cm (14 9/6 x 44 7/8 x 44 7/8 in.), Art Gallery of Hamilton. Purchased with matching funds from the Canada Council Acquisition Assistance Program and the Marie Louise Stock Fund, 2002. Shown here during the conservation process. The original fabric used is visible in the bottom left part of the sculpture.

Figure 2. Liz Magor (Canadian b. 1948), *Hut*, 1998 / reworked 2011, polyurethane rubber and fabric, 37 x 114 x 114 cm (14 9/6 x 44 7/8 x 44 7/8 in.), Art Gallery of Hamilton. Purchased with matching funds from the Canada Council Acquisition Assistance Program and the Marie Louise Stock Fund, 2002. The work is shown here following conservation treatment.

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1. Literature Survey

Museums, Narrative, and Curatorial Practice:

Over the past two decades, museological literature has framed much of its discussion around the notion of narrative, or in other words, the ways in which stories — about the institution and/or its objects — are both constructed and shared (Alpers, 1991; Danet and Katriel, 1994; Greenberg, Ferguson, and Nairne, 1996; Kavanagh, 1996; Robinson, 2003; Macdonald, 2006; MacLeod, Hanks, and Hale, 2012). Suzanne MacLeod, Laura Hourston Hanks, and Jonathan Hale, the editors of *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions* (2012) — a collection of essays that explore the various intersections between museums, narratives, and spaces — situate narrative as a central preoccupation of researchers and practitioners from a range of disciplines who are involved in studying or developing museum experiences.[4] They suggest that the persistence of narrative in museological discourse relates in part to how storytelling and narrative "seem to capture something quite fundamental about what it is to be human."[5]

A survey of the literature reveals common focus on narrative as a construct. For instance, Bruce Ferguson, who calls for a critical examination of exhibitions, locates subjectivity in the construction of a museum's identity and museum experiences. He views exhibitions as central to the construction of a museum or gallery's identity: "Exhibitions are publicly sanctioned representations of identity…of the institutions which present them. They are narratives which use art objects as elements in institutionalized stories that are then promoted to an audience."[6] Ferguson, thus, suggests a narrative within a narrative, wherein both stories serve to shape

[4] Suzanne MacLeod, Laura Hourston Hanks, Jonathan Hale, eds., *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions* (New York: Routledge, 2012), xx.
[5] Ibid., xxi.
[6] Bruce W. Ferguson, "Exhibition Rhetorics: Material Speech and Utter Sense," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, ed. by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (New York: Routledge, 1996), 175.

audiences' perceptions and understandings of art. Similarly, where Ferguson positions exhibitions, scholars Brenda Danet and Tamar Katriel see collections. For them, a museum or gallery's collection is central to the construction of narrative. They argue that, "collecting is a 'world-making' activity … it involves processes of decontextualization on the one hand and recontextualization on the other."[7] Ferguson, Danet, and Katriel acknowledge the persuasive capacity of narrative, as do the scholars whose essays are included in *Museum Making*. But *Museum Making* also represents a shift in focus from the manipulative, authoritative possibilities of narrative to its potential for engagement and creative dialogue.[8] MacLeod, Hanks, and Hale declare that it is indeed *because* all narrative is constructed that it has real value. For them, an understanding of narrative as a construct is an acceptance of its creative potential. They assert that narrative is contested and therefore provocative, and they argue that narrative's "capacity for provocation is precisely where its creative potential lies," suggesting that, "the 'lie' of the story produces a creative spark."[9] Creativity has also become the focus in the literature on curating, in which writers identify the growing creative role of the curator.

Much of the literature in curatorial studies seeks to define curatorship and the role of the curator, and to reconcile gaps between theory and practice (White, 1996; Townsend, 2003; Rugg and Sedgwick, 2007; Bismarck, Schafaff, Weski, 2012; Smith, 2012). This struggle to define itself is likely due in large part to the relatively new practice of professional contemporary curation, which emerged in the 1990s (Rugg and Sedgwick, 2007; Bismarck, Schafaff, Weski,

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[7] Brenda Danet and Tamar Katriel, "Glorious obsessions, passionate lovers, and hidden treasures: Collecting, metaphor, and the Romantic ethic," in *The Socialness of Things: Essays on the Socio-Semiotics of Objects*, ed. Stephen Harold Riggins (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), 28.

[8] See, just as a few examples, the following texts in MacLeod, Hanks, and Hale, *Museum Making* that emphasize the powerful, positive, and creative capacity of narrative in the museum context: Rachel Morris, "Imaginary Museums: What Mainstream Museums Can Learn from Them," 5-11; Hanks, "Writing Spatial Stories: Textual Narratives in the Museum," 22-33; and Jenny Kidd, "The Museum as Narrative Witness: Heritage Performance and the Production of Narrative Space," 74-82.

[9] MacLeod, Hanks, and Hale, *Museum Making*, xxiii.

2012; Smith, 2012). A common emphasis on the creativity of the curator surfaces across the literature, which scholars such as Paul O'Neill and Dorothea von Hantelmann align with changes in the meaning and function of the exhibition. O'Neill, for example, thoroughly outlines the context for what he terms a "curatorial turn," which he asserts is rooted in the 1960s' shift in critical discourse around art and exhibitions, giving "the space of the exhibition … critical precedence over that of the objects of art."[10] Similarly, Hantelmann explains and questions the shift in curating from a scholarly endeavour to a creative practice. Linking what she calls the "radical subjectivization" of the curator's role with the transformation of the exhibition into a medium of self-expression, Hantelmann contends that curating has gained new significance and that the curator has achieved new status.[11] The curator, then, has emerged with an authorial and creative status akin to that of an artist. Moreover, the curator's position is authoritative. As Mari Carmen Ramirez asserts, "curators are, above all, the institutionally recognized experts of the artworld [sic] establishment, whether they operate inside an institution or independently. More than art critics or gallery dealers, they establish the meaning and status of contemporary art through its acquisition, exhibition, and interpretation."[12]

The material related to the narrative function of museums and rise of the curator is vast. But how might subjectivity and the heightened status of the curator impact objects? *The Thing about Museums: Objects and Experience, Representation and Contestation* (2012) is a

[10] Paul O'Neill, "The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse," in *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance*, ed. Judith Rugg and Michèle Sedgwick (Chicago: Intellect UK, 2007), 13.
[11] Dorothea von Hantelmann, "Affluence and Choice: The Social Significance of the Curatorial," in *Cultures of the Curatorial*, ed. Beatrice von Bismarck, Jörn Schafaff, and Thomas Weski (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 42-3. This is emphasized by an acknowledgment of the proliferation of the terms curator, curated, and curating outside of art-related disciplines (O'Neill, 2007; Smith, 2012), and by O'Neill who identifies a "changing perception of the curator as carer to a curator who has a more creative and active part to play within the production of art itself." (15) Indeed, his essay is an exhaustive overview of how this very topic has been addressed in the literature.
[12] Mari Carmen Ramirez, "Brokering Identities," in Greenberg, Ferguson, and Nairne, *Thinking about* Exhibitions, 22. See also: JJ Charlesworth, "Curating Doubt," in Rugg and Sedgwick, *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance*, 91-99.

compilation of essays written in honour of scholar Susan Pearce, whose writing on collecting and material culture has contributed to the rise of object-focused studies.[13] Each text insists that, "…from the most neglected to the most applauded, all objects, and the acts performed upon them, are equally deserving of recognition for their intricacies."[14] For instance, curator Geoffrey N. Swinney calls for the recognition of the museum register — the "documents and textual practices that construct collections and that record the career trajectories, or biographies, of objects" — as both a working tool and a museum object.[15] Notably, Swinney's language implicitly acknowledges the narrative function of the museum. In photography, Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart take a similar stance on the significance of the object in *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (2004). Scholars who contributed to this volume each emphasize that materiality is integral to meaning. For Edwards and Hart, "…photographs have inextricably linked meanings as images and meanings as objects…" and they believe that recognition of the import of materiality permits an understanding and use of images as objects of social significance.[16] As the museological and curatorial literature confirms, subjectivity is inherent in museum and curatorial work. And, while the growing emphasis on object-focused study both supports and provides the intellectual context for the subject of this thesis, there remains a gap in this literature on post-accession changes to art objects.

Robinson briefly acknowledges the subjectivity involved in cataloguing, describing, and preserving collection material, but a thorough examination of what this means falls outside the

[13] Sandra Dudley, the author of the book's introduction, locates the renewed interest in material culture studies and theory in anthropology in the 1980s and 1990s through the work of scholars such as Susan Pearce, Daniel Miller, and Ian Hodder.
[14] Jennifer Walklate, "Introduction," in *The Thing about Museums: Objects and Experience, Representation and Contestation*, ed. Sandra Dudley, Amy Jane Barnes, Jennifer Binnie, Julia Petrov, and Jennifer Walklate (New York: Routledge, 2012), 15.
[15] Geoffrey N. Swinney, "What Do We Know about What We Know? The Museum 'Register' as Museum Object," in Dudley et al., *The Thing about Museums*, 31.
[16] Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart eds., *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 2 and 15.

scope of her research.[17] Even texts focused on registration, such as Rebecca Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore's *Museum Registration Methods* (2010), fail to address what is involved in managing post-accession alterations to artworks, particularly those initiated by the artist. Likewise, a survey of the literature around the practices of Snow, Szilasi, and Maggs reveals that there is remarkably little detail about alterations made post-accession to their artworks generally and to the case study examples covered in this thesis specifically. With Snow, for instance, the changes to the artworks relate to deterioration and reprinting, and any direct discussion of these concerns in relation to the case study examples is missing from the literature. With Szilasi and Maggs, it is *how* the works are discussed in the literature that is significant to the case studies. Moreover, despite all of these works being owned by public institutions, the survey exposes a lack of discussion surrounding the institutional context and impact of the changes that were made to the artworks post-accession.

Michael Snow:

A significant amount of writing has been produced about Snow's artworks, life, and career, and his practice is often situated within the context of conceptual art. Scholar Alexander Alberro argues that conceptual art involves, "an expanded critique of the cohesiveness and materiality of the art object, a growing wariness toward definitions of artistic practice as purely visual, a fusion of the work with its site and context of display, and an increased emphasis on the possibilities of publicness and distribution."[18] Within the growing literature on conceptual art, there are two often-cited texts that help reveal some of the core ideas that contribute to an understanding of conceptual art. One is a statement by artist Jeff Wall: "Conceptual art's essential achievements

[17] Robinson, "Remembering Things Differently," 419.
[18] Alexander Alberro, "Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966-1977," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), xvii.

are either created in the form of photographs or are otherwise mediated by them."[19] The other, which is closer to Alberro's statement, is Rosalind Krauss's text, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." Krauss addresses the changing boundaries of sculpture, introducing the notion of an expanded field wherein categories and media are malleable and elastic, thereby expanding the possibilities of inclusion in what can be considered a work of art.[20] The literature regarding Snow's practice frequently addresses his multidisciplinary approach, which is in keeping with Krauss's expanded field idea, and scholars, such as R. Bruce Elder, have addressed the significance of photographic mediation in his work.[21] Critics, such as Annette Michelson, have traced the conceptual underpinnings of his work to Marcel Duchamp, whose focus on time and materiality she identified as a key influence on Snow.[22] Indeed, both time and materiality have played a significant role in Snow's process and output, as exemplified by works such as *Atlantic*. This artwork is at once sculptural, photographic, and cinematic, and Michelson positions it as a definitive work in his career, which initiates preoccupations that would subsequently define his practice.[23] Despite this emphasis on time and materiality, explicit discussion of preservation concerns related to *Atlantic* and *Venetian Blind* is entirely absent from the literature on these works. Remarkably little critical attention is paid to the preservation of Snow's artwork in

[19] Jeff Wall, "Marks of Indifference: Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art," in *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975*, ed. Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), 253.
[20] Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (New York: The New Press, 1998), 35-47.
[21] Bruce Elder, "On Sound, Sound Recording, Making Music of Recorded Sounds, the Duality of Consciousness and Its Alienation from Language, Paradoxes Arising from These Related Matters," in *The Michael Snow Project: Music/Sound 1948-1993*, ed. Michael Snow (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1994): 216-251. As just one example of a text that highlights Snow's multidisciplinarity, see: Bart Testa, "An Axiomatic Cinema: Michael Snow's Films," in *The Michael Snow Project: Presence and Absence, the Films of Michael Snow 1956-1991*, ed. Jim Shedden (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1995): 27. Testa outlines the range of forms Snow's production assumes: "…assemblages, sculptures, foldings in assorted media, decals, postcards, rubber stamps, sweatshirts, posters, calendars, and freestanding cut-outs."
[22] Annette Michelson, "About Snow," *October* 8 (Spring 1979), 112-13.
[23] Ibid., 113-14.

general, even outside of these two examples. However, there is one notable instance where Snow himself directly acknowledges questions around the preservation of his work.

In a statement published in *Artforum International* in 2012, possibly aiming to moderate the gravity of his situation, Snow jokes: "Some of the paintings and sculptures I have made since 1956 require medical attention, but many of my 'technological' works are in the emergency ward."[24] In this statement, he itemizes the various media he has used that are, or are soon-to-be, obsolete. His list includes both colour and black and white photography, implicitly addressing concerns that are relevant to both *Atlantic* and *Venetian Blind*. Proclaiming himself a "purist about medium specificity," he describes the process of replacement as painful.[25] In his brief statement, he acknowledges the need to address preservation concerns, hints at institutional pressures, and reveals some potential collections management solutions for dealing with updated works. When discussing the video documentation he has proposed for *Sink* and *Slidelength* (both 1970) as a way to record the works before the slides finally fade, he declares, "these new manifestations would have to be labeled as 'documentation' or 'depictions' of the original works. Ouch!"[26] His cursory discussion highlights very real and significant problems regarding the lifespans of artworks, which impact both artists and collecting institutions.

Gabor Szilasi:

The literature on Gabor Szilasi's practice is not as extensive or as theoretical as that on Snow. Its dominant focus is directed at Szilasi's humanist approach to documentary photography. According to curator David Harris, who organized the two most significant publications on Szilasi's practice — *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs, 1954-1996* (1997) and *Gabor Szilasi: The*

[24] Michael Snow, "Michael Snow," *Artforum International* 51, no. 1 (September 2012), 105.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

Eloquence of the Everyday (2009), both exhibition catalogues — "Szilasi's work is predicated upon an acceptance of the 'documentary' nature of the medium, and he has worked consistently within that tradition. In photography, he discovered a 'realist' medium that allowed him to respond in a sympathetic yet unsentimental way to aspects of his social and physical environments."[27] Franck Michel, who curated *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs, 1954-1996*, declares, "if I had to describe Gabor Szilasi in one word, I would say that he is a humanist."[28] Though his practice is not restricted to portraiture, Szilasi has produced numerous images of people — both formal and spontaneous — throughout his career, and the literature related to his portraiture draws particular attention to his humanism.

Szilasi's approach to portraiture, which writer and critic, John Bentley Mays, describes as "a commitment to down-to-earth, humane realism," is often portrayed as one that results in thoughtful portraits.[29] Indeed, the regard and respect with which Szilasi treats his subjects is largely undisputed. Scholar Martha Langford, for example, proclaims that, "one is struck by the absence of any authorial claims on the figure [in Szilasi's portraits]. When a subject stares into the camera…there is a spirit of cooperation that is truly 'consensual.'"[30] A picture emerges in the literature on Szilasi of a thoughtful photographer who carefully considers his subjects. This characteristic extends to his aesthetic and technical decisions as well, and serves as a reflection

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[27] David Harris, *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs, 1954-1996* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 21.
[28] Franck Michel, "A Humanist Way of Seeing," in Harris, *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs, 1954-1996*, 11. See also: John Bentley Mays, "Szilasi's Photos Celebrate the Ordinary: ART REVIEW," *The Globe and Mail*, September 20, 1997, C14; Lorraine B. Palardy, "Les Impatients According to Gabor," in *I Am: Photographer Gabor Szilasi's Journey into a World Seldom Visited*, Gabor Szilasi, Lorraine B. Palardy, and Pierre Henry (Montreal: Les editions Les Impatients, 2005), 9.
[29] Mays, "Szilasi's Photos Celebrate the Ordinary," C14.
[30] Martha Langford, "Gabor Szilasi: An Appreciation," *Ciel variable,* no. 84 (2010), 20. See also: Petra Halkes, "Gabor Szilasi," *Border Crossings* 29, no. 1 (February 2010), 80; Barbara Steinman, "In Looking, We Find Ourselves and the Places We've Been, Many of them Renamed, Transformed or Gone," *Canadian Art* 14, no. 3 (Fall 1997), 42. And, Szilasi himself acknowledges his respectful approach: "In my basic personality I have a sense of irony but I'm not cynical. I'm not nasty to people, and I think this shows in my photographs. There's a sense of humour but not at the expense of the subject." Szilasi quoted in Steinman, "In Looking," 42.

of how he engages with his practice. For instance, Michel and other writers highlight how Szilasi's technical decisions foster the respectful approach to portraiture for which he is known:

> The large-format camera leaves less room for spontaneity but allows for greater precision and better control of the image, two important qualities in Szilasi's work. What may appear at first to be a purely technical decision — the choice of a 4″ x 5″ format — also creates a situation where [he] establishes a real complicity with his subject… Szilasi always takes the time to get to know his subject; it is here that the humanist, who uses photography to establish contact with people, not to steal an image, comes to the fore.[31]

Mays argues that Szilasi's various portraits and photographs of interiors are his most popular images, and a good deal of writing on Szilasi's output centres on this work.[32] As outlined in the Introduction, the series in which portraits and interiors come together — *Portraits / Interiors* — is of particular relevance to the case study in Section 4, and as such, it is necessary to address how it has been discussed in the literature.

Analyses of *Portraits / Interiors* focus on the construction of the works as diptychs and demonstrate that both the structure of the works and content of the images are fundamental to interpretations of their meaning. Katherine Tweedie, for instance, posits that, "the juxtaposition is radical… Complementary and contradictory issues surface. Illusions of the photographic image fluctuate between imagined colour and given colour, between psychological and physical presence in the portrait and the informative details relinquished by the interior. The two photographs interact."[33] Similarly, Harris asserts, "in the deliberate juxtaposition of these two types of photographs, Szilasi was able to create far more psychologically complex portraits, partaking of both real and imaginary elements, than he had previously done."[34] *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, the case study example, is often addressed in discussions of the series. Despite the importance of the work's structure, the modification to the order of this diptych has

[31] Michel, "A Humanist Way of Seeing," in Harris, *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs*,13.
[32] Mays, "Szilasi's Photos Celebrate the Ordinary," C14.
[33] Katherine Tweedie, "The Human Lens of Gabor Szilasi," *Vie des Arts* 25, no. 100 (1980), 86.
[34] Harris, *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs*, 39.

received little attention. It is only in the endnotes to Harris's more recent text that the details of the alterations to *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* are revealed:

> His September 1978 portrait of Andor Pásztor, the second in the series, was originally conceived of with the colour photograph on the left and the black-and-white portrait on the right, but was incorrectly mounted. Plate 113 reproduces the diptych, for the first time, as it was intended.[35]

Harris's commitment to the historical record is evidenced by the inclusion of this note. It helps reveal a discrepancy that otherwise goes unnoticed because it is unacknowledged in the literature about Szilasi's practice. What is missing from the literature is a thorough examination of the contextual details about this error, including possible reasons for it, as well as its potential impact on the record of the work, on Szilasi's practice, and on the collections that own the work. Also absent is discussion of how the error affects the interpretation of this work.

Interestingly, despite the disparity noted by Harris in 2009, critic Penny Cousineau-Levine's 2003 book, *Faking Death: Canadian Art Photography and the Canadian Imagination* reproduces *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* — albeit entirely in black and white — in the original configuration with the portrait of Mr. Pásztor on the right.[36] What this inconsistency highlights is the need for an examination of this art object's history in terms of both its life in collections and in publications. A similar gap exists in the literature on Arnaud Maggs's work.

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[35] David Harris, *Gabor Szilasi: The Eloquence of the Everyday* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1997), 41 n. 37.

[36] Penny Couisneau-Levine, *Faking Death: Canadian Art Photography and the Canadian Imagination* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 99. Also of note in the publication record is the use of variant titles and dates. The artwork has been referred to as *Monsieur Andor Pasztor*; *Andor Pásztor, Montreal*; *Andor Pasztor, Montreal, Quebec*; *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*; and *Portraits / Interiors: Andor Pasztor*. It is the latter title that is used in Cousineau-Levine's publication, and the caption in her text notes 1979 as the date of creation. This thesis uses the title that can be found in both Harris's *The Eloquence of the Everyday* and in the RIC's database: *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* (1978).

Arnaud Maggs:

Doina Popescu, the founding director of the Ryerson Image Centre (RIC), argues that Arnaud Maggs's practice "build[s] bridges between modernism and conceptual art, while using photography to create dialogues between memories, archives, objects and people."[37] This is a succinct summation of the literature on Maggs, which often both implicitly and explicitly addresses the quality of interplay in his practice: between modernism and conceptualism, subject and structure, and subjectivity and objectivity. Curator Karyn Allen, for instance, asserts that, "Arnaud Maggs, the photographer, is a two-headed medusa. He has produced a body of work that on the one hand is romantic, even gothic, with its evocation of darkness and death, while on the other, it is restrained and analytical, evidence of an almost classical meditation on structure."[38] Similarly, Catherine Bédard argues that in Maggs's work, "…minimalism [of the grid] is woven through with an eminently human and sensuous content, yet shown with all the appearance of documentary objectivity."[39]

Significant emphasis is placed on Maggs's taxonomical approach in the literature on his work. Scholars and curators often identify affinities between Maggs's grid-based photographic portraits and nineteenth-century ethnographic studies of human physiognomy that used photography, including the mug shots of French criminologist and anthropologist, Alphonse

[37] Doina Popescu, "Introduction," *Arnaud Maggs*, Arnaud Maggs, Doina Popescu, Maia-Mari Sutnik, and Sophie Hackett (Göttingen: Steidl, Scotiabank, 2013), 22. She refers to a passage in an essay by curator Maia-Mari Sutnik: "Maggs's art is embedded in the modernist tradition of formalism that still involves pictorial problem solving, an issue that is richly resolved in his photographic portrait work. However, Maggs's artistic building blocks have programmatically evolved and taken on a different conceptual vocabulary." Maia-Mari Sutnik, "Portraits by Arnaud Maggs," in *Arnaud Maggs: Works 1976-1999*, Philip Monk, Arnaud Maggs, and Maia-Mari Sutnik (Toronto: Power Plant, 1999), 17.
[38] Karyn Allen, *Arnaud Maggs Photographs, 1975-1984* (Calgary: Nickle Arts Museum, 1984), 5.
[39] Catherine Bédard, "Arnaud Maggs, Front and Back," in *Arnaud Maggs: Notes Capitales*, ed. Russell Keziere (Paris: Services culturelles de l'Ambassade du Canada, 2000), 27.

Bertillon.[40] Repetition and the use of a grid are also definitive formal characteristics of both conceptual art and minimalism. Maia-Mari Sutnik, among others, has pointed to affinities between the formal characteristics of Maggs's work and the seriality of Andy Warhol, the minimalist sensibilities of Sol LeWitt and Carl Andre, and the photographic typologies of Bernd and Hilla Becher, whose systematic approach to photography relied heavily on the grid.[41] The literature about his work reveals that repetition and the grid were central to Maggs's practice, as writer and photographer, Michael Mitchell has noted: "Maggs has long been famous for his grids."[42] The grid served as both a conceptual and formal device that he would employ in several works over the course of his career, including *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*, which is the focus of the third case study in this thesis.

Maggs's portraits of the German performance and installation artist, Joseph Beuys — *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views* and *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views* (both 1980) — are among his better-known photographic compositions. It is rare to encounter a text about his work that does not mention them. As noted in the introduction, Maggs changed the hanging scheme for the portraits 11 years after he first completed them. Despite their renown, and despite the emphasis on the grid in the literature on his practice, there is a surprising lack of discussion about the modifications made to the grid in *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views* and *Joseph Beuys, 100*

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[40] Sophie Hackett, "Arnaud Maggs Takes a Turn as Pierrot," in *Arnaud Maggs*, Maggs et al., 118. See also: Philip Monk, "Life's Traces," in *Arnaud Maggs: Works*, Monk, Maggs, and Sutnik, 22. Curator Maia-Mari Sutnik also acknowledges that his portraits recall, "…photographic images that declare official recognition for identity purposes, be it the stare of the passport picture or the frontal and profile of police 'mug shots'…." Maia-Mari Sutnik, "The More One Looks, the More One Sees: The Portraits of Arnaud Maggs," in *Arnaud Maggs*, Maggs et al., 110. But in her essay, Sutnik cautions against seeing his portraits as sociological documentation, a point she makes emphatically in "Portraits by Arnaud Maggs," in Monk, Maggs, and Sutnik, *Arnaud Maggs: Works*, 12.

[41] Sutnik, "Portraits by Arnaud Maggs," in Monk, Maggs, and Sutnik, *Arnaud Maggs: Works*, 9. See also: Hackett, "Arnaud Maggs Takes a Turn as Pierrot," in Maggs et al., *Arnaud Maggs*, 118; and Robert Enright, "Designs on Life: an Interview with Arnaud Maggs," *Border Crossings* 31, no. 2 (June-August, 2012), 43. And, Philip Monk clearly and succinctly outlines the relationship of both photography and structural systems such as the grid to conceptual art, and he identifies Maggs's use of the grid as a conceptual strategy. Monk, "Life Traces," in Monk, Maggs, and Sutnik, *Arnaud Maggs: Works*, 20-1.

[42] Michael Mitchell, "Abracadabra: Arnaud Maggs Makes Portrait Magic," *Canadian Art* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2010), 144.

Profile Views. A survey of the literature reveals a single mention of Maggs's change to the hanging scheme. In a newspaper article in the *Globe and Mail*, writer Sarah Milroy acknowledges and describes the shift:

> Maggs arranged the images [of Beuys] in five rows of twenty, displaying the prints sequentially to reflect the duration of the meeting.
>
> …A later presentation of the works at Stux Gallery in New York moved the configuration to five rows of 17, with a last row of 15, leaving a little empty notch in the bottom right of the grid….[43]

But this revision goes unacknowledged in critical responses to his work. While curators Josée Drouin-Brisebois and Sutnik each discuss the structure of the Beuys portraits in catalogue essays about Maggs's practice, they do so in a manner that suggests the current hanging scheme was part of its original conception. (Section 5 will engage in a more thorough analysis of these instances.) For an artist whose practice so frequently made use of the grid as a structural element, which has been the focus of much of the literature on his practice, it is notable and surprising that the change in the hanging scheme for his Beuys portraits has received little attention.

To conclude, this literature survey demonstrates that while there are many reasons that artworks may change after accession, such alterations tend to attract very little critical attention. However, the growing recognition that the materiality of art objects, along with their histories, influences their meaning signals the significance of considering in greater detail post-accession changes and their impacts. Further, the increasing acknowledgement of the inherent subjectivity in the process of building and managing collections and in curatorial practice highlights the importance of facilitating dialogue around approaches to dealing with alterations after accession. After all, as Robinson argues, curators are "charged with the responsibility of interpreting which aspects of

[43] Sarah Milroy, "Maggs dusts off some old mugs," *The Globe and Mail*, May 12, 2004, R4.

material evidence from the past are not only retained but also represented in meaningful ways for contemporary and future generations."[44]

[44] Robinson, "Remembering Things Differently," 421.

2. Notes and Methodology

This research project involved artworks, records, and staff at three Canadian institutions: Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH), Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), and Ryerson Image Centre (RIC). As noted in the Introduction, this thesis is structured around three case studies involving the work and practices of three artists: Michael Snow, Gabor Szilasi, and Arnaud Maggs. Through the research process and discussions with curators, conservators, and registrars, it became clear there exist many examples of artworks that have undergone changes post-accession. And, indeed, there are historical precedents for modifications of this kind.

For instance, as a result of both destruction and loss, Man Ray (1890-1976) reworked and reproduced his sculptural assemblage, *Object to Be Destroyed* (1922-3) several times across almost fifty years following its initial execution (*Object to Be Destroyed*, 1922-3; remade and updated with Lee Miller's eye in 1933; *Lost Object*, 1945; *Indestructible Object*, 1958; editioned replica 1965; remade, updated, and editioned with a blinking eye as *Perpetual Motif*, 1970; and *Do Not Destroy*, edition issued by Mario Amaya, 1974).[45] The artwork comprises a functioning metronome with a photographic eye attached to the top end of the pendulum. On two occasions — in 1933 and 1970 — Man Ray updated the photographic image of the eye, demonstrating that some of the modifications were also artistic. There are discrepancies in the publication record between the various dates of execution for the artwork, and also in the number of existing iterations that exist.[46] These discrepancies highlight the challenges in maintaining clear and

[45] Sophie Howarth, "*Indestructible Object*, Summary," Tate, 2000, accessed July 14, 2014, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/man-ray-indestructible-object-t07614/text-summary.
[46] Howarth, for instance, provides a clear and succinct account of the circumstances that led to the various remakes and alterations. Howarth, "*Indestructible Object*, Summary." Similarly, Janine Mileaf outlines the various iterations. Janine Mileaf, "Between You and Me: Man Ray's *Object to Be Destroyed*," *Art Journal* 63, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 5. However, there are some discrepancies between the dates in Howarth's and Mileaf's accounts. For instance, Mileaf

accurate records for art objects that have been modified after their initial execution and/or completion. This thesis examines these challenges, which are often faced by institutions when dealing with artworks that have changed after they have entered the collection. Although there are many examples that could form the case studies in this thesis — within the artistic practice of Snow alone, for example, there are several additional instances of works that have been modified after they have been accessioned — the artworks discussed in the sections that follow were carefully selected according to two criteria: first, each case raises a different set of issues related regarding what is at stake when artworks are altered post-accession; and second, they emphasize preservation and collections management concerns that are relevant to photography.

Photography in particular lends itself to change. The medium is susceptible to chemical deterioration — particularly colour photography, which will be discussed in Section 3 with the case study of Michael Snow's work — and as such, deteriorated photographs will sometimes require reprinting or a willingness on behalf of the artist and/or institution to accept the chemical changes taking place. Furthermore, photographs are reproducible, making photography an art of multiples. And unlike printmakers, who will destroy or damage their plates upon the completion of an edition, photographers generally do not destroy their negatives. The ability — or the necessity, as the case may be — to reprint photographs, along with the seemingly endless variables, both artistic and technical, in the printing process itself, can lead to subtly variant prints. (Section 4, which addresses Gabor Szilasi's work, will touch on this.) But the result of revisiting and reprinting photographic negatives at a later date can also be dramatic. For example, dramatic changes in printing process characterize a shift in Bill Brandt's body of work.

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suggests an additional iteration (*Last Object*, 1966), the date she assigns *Perpetual Motif* is 1972, and she makes no mention of the edition issued by Amaya in 1974.

Bill Brandt's (1904-1983) early prints, which document England of the 1930s, were atmospheric and rendered in mid-tones. But by the 1950s, his approach to printing shifted, resulting in photographs with a much harsher, more graphic sensibility. Much of the literature on Brandt's work addresses this shift, noting his willingness to sacrifice detail in the mid-tones in favour of higher contrast (For examples: Coe, 1981; Sutnik, 1983; Delaney, 2004; Campany, 2006; Haworth-Booth and Durrell, 2013; Meister, 2013). His new preference for bold, graphic contrast was also reflected in his own publications, including later reprints of his earlier books. Both Paul Delany and Sarah Hermanson Meister provide illuminating examples of images that were printed in both the 1966 and 1977 editions of Brandt's *Shadow of Light*, with the later reproductions clearly reflecting his growing emphasis on high contrast intensity and his diminishing interest in the subtlety of detailed mid-tones characteristic of his earlier works.[47] Similarly, Brandt would often reprint his old negatives. Citing correspondence between Edward Steichen, MoMA's then-director of Photography, and Brandt, Meister reveals that Brandt's graphic printing style was a carefully considered aesthetic decision that he felt compelled to apply to both new and old work alike:

> It is true that ten years ago I printed differently. But just as my way of taking pictures has changed, so has my printing also. And when, today, I am asked to produce prints of old pictures I just cannot bear printing them in soft muddy greys any more.
>
> I think the hard black and white effect suits my pictures better. The prints are perhaps less atmospheric but crisper and more different from colour pictures, and I don't mind the superficial resemblance to newsprint reproduction. This may be one of my passing fads, but I don't think so. I feel very strongly about it.[48]

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[47] Paul Delany, *Bill Brandt: A Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 269-70. And, Sarah Hermanson Meister, *Bill Brandt: Shadow & Light* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2013, exhibition catalogue), 25-6.

[48] Bill Brandt to Edward Steichen, January 17, 1959, Department of Photography correspondence files, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in Meister, *Shadow & Light*, 27. Brandt's letter was written in response to correspondence from Steichen in which he expresses his disappointment at the quality of Brandt's new prints: "…But I am upset about the quality of the prints. These are not in any way up to the standard of the prints you sent us for your one-man show here. They were all prints with carefully balanced photographic quality, whereas the new prints fit more in to the character of black and white effects for newsprint reproduction." Edward Steichen to Bill

Printing was a significant component of the photographic process for Brandt, and his practice highlights the potential in photography to rethink and revisit works after their initial execution. In addition to reproducing the correspondence between Steichen and Brandt, Meister's exhibition catalogue for *Bill Brandt: Shadow and Light* (March 6-August 12, 2013) provides a thorough examination and analysis of Brandt's changing printing style, painting a portrait of an artist who was open to experimentation. For Brandt, the image captured on the negative could be just the beginning, and he often made adjustments — both corrective and enhancing — in the printing process to achieve his desired effect: "Intensification of my effects is often done in the process of printing… I consider it essential that the photographer should do his own printing and enlarging. The final effect of the finished print depends so much on these operations…."[49] His extensive range of finishing and retouching techniques and his propensity to reprint old negatives, indeed, present challenges to collections.

Drew Sawyer, curatorial fellow in the department of Photography at New York's MoMA who worked with Meister on the exhibition, argues that dating Brandt's work became a significant task. While he cites connoisseurship and provenance as effective in the dating process of many of Brandt's prints, he asserts that the artist's tendency to reprint complicated matters, and the museum turned to Lee Ann Daffner, a conservator of photographs, to assist with difficult-to-date prints[50]. Daffner completed a technical examination of Brandt's photographs dating from 1930 to 1965, and she produced an exhaustive glossary for the exhibition catalogue

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Brandt, January 7, 1959, Department of Photography correspondence files, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in Meister, *Shadow & Light*, 26.

[49] Bill Brandt, "A Photographer's London," in *Camera in London* (London: The Focal Press, 1948), 14.

[50] Drew Sawyer, "Dating Brandt," *Inside/Out: A MoMA/MoMA PS1 Blog*, March 7, 2013, http://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2013/03/07/dating-brandt.

of the extensive finishing techniques used by the artist.[51] Sawyer indicates, for instance, that testing for the presence of Optical Brightening Agents (OBAs) allowed them to more easily categorize prints with unknown dates as either pre- or post-1955.[52] Dating Brandt's prints is a practical concern for institutions, related to the management of their collections, but the chronology of Brandt's output was also central to Meister's curatorial project. Meister asserts that in critical assessments of his work there is an overreliance on his later reproductions: "…even the most valuable, serious considerations of Brandt's artistic legacy have included great numbers of reproductions made from the photographer's later prints. This, in combination with a disregard for inconvenient chronological facts, has compromised an understanding of his art."[53] As Sawyer posits, "one of the underlying principles of [the exhibition]…is the importance of vintage prints to understanding Brandt's oeuvre."[54] Clément Chéroux, curator of Photography at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, makes a similar case with his recent exhibition and publication on the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson.

Chéroux contends that Cartier-Bresson's work is frequently and restrictively summed up by the concept of "the decisive moment," and he identifies two dominant critical responses — an American and a French — to Cartier-Bresson's works; the emphasis on his photographs as works

[51] Lee Ann Daffner, "'No Rules': An Illustrated Glossary of Bill Brandt's Retouching Techniques," in Meister, *Shadow & Light*, 186-193. In a footnote on page 187, Daffner identifies the various characteristics surveyed in the examination of 133 photographs by Brandt: "UV fluorescence, borders, mounts, paper weight, surface finish, inscriptions, variant printing/cropping, retouch, additive techniques, reductive techniques, character of retouching (corrective or enhancing)."

[52] "OBAs are dyes used to make paper, and other materials, appear whiter or brighter, and are widely thought to have been introduced into the paper industry between 1950 and 1955. If OBAs are present, then the prints fluoresce a distinctive bluish-white glow. We began testing both those where the print date is known and those we hoped to identify. For example, *Coal-Searcher Going Home to Jarrow*, a photograph that Brandt made during his trip to Northern England in 1937, was acquired by MoMA in 1973 and did not have a known print date. When examined under U.V. illumination in a darkened room (using scientific grade U.V. protective goggles), the print fluoresced, suggesting that Brandt likely made the print sometime after 1955." Sawyer, "Dating Brandt."

[53] Meister, *Shadow & Light,* 27. Meister provides examples on page 28 of gaps in his chronology and some of the "awkward compromises" made to accommodate them.

[54] Sawyer, "Dating Brandt."

of art and the focus on the documentary value of his work, respectively.[55] He proposes exhibition prints as contributing factors in the oversimplification of Cartier-Bresson's practice: "Until his death in 2004, most of the exhibitions that he supervised were designed specially for the occasion, comprising a selection of prints in one or two formats, on paper of the same quality, tone and surface. The result was an overall uniformity, which tended to put all the works on a single level."[56] Chéroux's approach, similar to that of Meister, was to emphasize the historical sequence of production in an effort to reveal the evolution of the work. The focus on the historical context of the work insists that a singular perspective — whether that of the artist, a curator, or a scholar — is too rigid and restrictive and fails to capture what Chéroux refers to as the heterogeneity of Cartier-Bresson's work.[57] These examples underscore the potential for an overly simplified narrative to skew one's understanding of an artist's overall practice, and they highlight the value of examining the details in the chronology and the resulting physical objects of an artist's production.

As the literature survey demonstrates, and the Brandt and Cartier-Bresson examples reveal, there is a growing emphasis across a range of disciplines, including museum studies and photography, on the importance of materiality of the art object to discerning its meaning. Following this line of thought, this thesis argues that materiality matters, and together with the narrative or history of the artwork, contributes to its interpretation. My study was object-focused; the materiality of the artworks and their modes of display were of central focus in my investigation. Further, there are fitting alignments between my approach to this project and the aforementioned text by Geoffrey

[55] Clément Chéroux, *Henri Cartier-Bresson*, trans. by David H. Wilson and Ruth Sharman (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2014), 13-4. Originally published as *Henri Cartier-Bresson* (Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 2013).
[56] Ibid., 14.
[57] Ibid.

N. Swinney. Swinney asserts that museum records are themselves museum objects, arguing that, "registers do not simply record collections, they construct them."[58] It is important to note then, that the museum records themselves form a significant and integral part of the body of work that this thesis investigates. I relied on exhibition and artist files, conservation documents, and correspondence, while examining possible reasons for post-accession changes and how institutions responded to them. Additionally, in order to deepen the record of contextual detail surrounding the changes related to the specific case study examples, I conducted a series of interviews with artists, curators, and registrars. Interviews and discussions regarding the work by Snow included the following individuals: the artist; Maia-Mari Sutnik, curator of Photography, Special Projects at the AGO; and, Katharine Whitman, photography conservator at the AGO. For Szilasi: the artist; David Harris, associate professor, School of Image Arts, Ryerson University and curator; and, Peter Higdon, collections curator, Ryerson Image Centre. For Maggs: Christine Braun, registrar, AGH; Katya Doleatto, Maggs's longtime assistant; Susan Hobbs, gallerist; Ihor Holubizky, curator, McMaster Museum of Art and past curator, AGH; Spring Hurlbut, artist and Maggs's widow; and, Sutnik.

Finally, because post-accession changes happen for a wide variety of reasons, across a wide range of disciplines, and to works in many different types of institutions, developing a best practice model for dealing with modifications made to artworks after accession would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Instead, I believe that significant value exists in asking questions and facilitating dialogue. It is my hope that such a dialogue will prompt and eventually lead to new models for dealing with changes to artwork post-accession. In particular, I would like to see models that emphasize — rather than simply record — post-accession modifications as remarkable details in the narrative of an artwork and, by extension, an artist's practice.

[58] Swinney, "What Do We Know about What We Know?" in Dudley et al., *The Thing about Museums*, 31 and 43.

Perhaps digital media, interactive databases, and the Internet might become the right tools for such a task. An important methodological approach for this project, then, was to raise questions as a way to illuminate and expand upon key intellectual and practical considerations involved in post-accession changes to artworks.

3. Case Study: Michael Snow

As an artist whose career has spanned more than five decades, Michael Snow's body of work is vast and has assumed many forms. Indeed, Snow underscores the cross-disciplinary nature of his practice in the following, often-cited statement: "My paintings are done by a filmmaker, sculpture by a musician, films by a painter, music by a filmmaker, paintings by a sculptor, sculpture by a filmmaker, films by a musician, music by a sculptor … sometimes they all work together."[59] Time, perception, and materiality are central preoccupations of his practice, and his work frequently emphasizes or pushes the capabilities of various media.

Wavelength (1967), for instance, Snow's deceptively simple, revolutionary experimental film, pairs the sound of a rising sine wave with a slow progressive zoom from a long shot inside a loft space to an extreme close up of a photograph on its far wall. Often referred to as a single zoom shot, the work is decidedly more complicated. Snow started in the middle of the sequence, filming over the course of a week and using 16 to 18 rolls of 16mm colour film of various stocks to achieve its 45-minute length. Snow held colour filters by hand in front of the camera, which was on a tripod, creating additional movement in front of the camera. As scholar Elizabeth Legge points out, "…it was actually made as a complexly layered, handled, handmade, accretive physical project, in which film was marked, spliced and optically altered."[60] Snow deftly works with the physical medium, manipulating and manoeuvring the material to achieve the outcome he mapped out. *Wavelength* addresses time and perception, and both the final work and the way it was constructed underscore his emphasis on materiality.

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[59] Michael Snow, "Statements / 18 Canadian Artists," in *The Collected Writings of Michael Snow*, Michael Snow and Louise Dompierre (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1994), 26. Ellipses his.
[60] Elizabeth Legge, *Michael Snow: Wavelength* (London: Afterall Books, 2009), 19. Legge publishes a detailed account of Snow's process, including an outline of materials and the order of events, which the artist sent to her by email.

Snow took the photograph of the ocean that was used at the end of the film at South Ferry in New York in 1966. Legge asserts that, "projected over time…[the photograph is] both film and still, and it concisely touches on the theorising of photography in film as a series of stills. …It 'stills' the waves, reminding the viewer of the stillness beneath film's illusion of motion, the death beneath the pulse."[61] On that same occasion, Snow took the photographs of the ocean for *Atlantic* (1967) (fig. 3), another artwork he completed in 1967.

Atlantic, owned by the AGO, is a three-dimensional structure based on a grid of five rows and six columns, and it is constructed of aluminum, wood, arborite, and 30 gelatin silver photographs of the Atlantic Ocean. The wood and arborite are structural elements hidden from view, and the photographs are adhered to the back of each segment of the grid. Whereas *Wavelength* "stills" the waves, as Legge suggests, in *Atlantic* there is movement within each photograph, the splashing waves reflecting kaleidoscopically in each aluminum compartment. Just as *Wavelength* calls attention to film as a series of stills, the grid-based framing of the photographs in *Atlantic* evokes cinema. The aluminum structure almost has the appearance of a metal shelving unit, but the four sides of each frame are angled in, sloping toward the photograph at the back. The images are tonally cool, and the geometry is rigid. As Snow explains:

> The photos of waves (fixed images of organic flux) are mounted in crystalline geometry, slightly mirroring perspectival metal 'boxes.' Each view is separately framed but part of the accumulation of 30 chosen view-directors which (in a very modest way, compared to the immensity of the sea) mimic the parameters or limitations of our vision (in an almost metaphoric way) when regarding almost infinite vistas and the purity of geometry.[62]

But the crystalline nature of Snow's sea views began to change.

[61] Legge, *Wavelength*, 66.
[62] Ibid.

Atlantic and *Venetian Blind* (1970), another photographic work, form the basis of this case study. Having both deteriorated, they highlight conservation and preservation concerns related to twentieth century photographic material. For an artist whose practice centres on questions of time and materiality, and who has declared that he "…work[s] with the physicality of mediums,"[63] how might he respond to physical changes to his artworks due to their construction or inherent chemistry? His approach to each was seemingly contradictory. As such, examining both *Atlantic* and *Venetian Blind* alongside each other emphasizes the significance of the museum record, and highlights the potential for what Swinney refers to as "slippages" in the register.[64] This case demonstrates the mutual impact of the relationship between the record and the object, and it signals potential complications in the care, interpretation, and management of photographic works. Furthermore, it emphasizes that subjectivity adds another layer of complication to cases involving post-accession changes to artworks.

Photography alone presents a number of preservation concerns, but these can be amplified when combined with other materials. Over time, the black and white photographs of *Atlantic* began to show dark brown discolouration, likely due to the use of adhesives. Both the physical prints and the interpretation of the work changed as a result of the materials used in its construction. The brown staining transformed Snow's cool, vast sea into murky, brown waters (fig. 4). Maia Mari-Sutnik, curator of Photography, Special Projects at the AGO, believed the work had shifted dramatically enough to warrant conservation:

> [The staining] troubled me with *Atlantic* because it was changing the piece. …[T]he aesthetic of the piece was changing too much, I think, because the very fact that it's in these metal [frames] gives it a hard edge feeling…and you expect a kind of pristine look. And then you have the waves that are more lyrical, [and] that contrast [is] very important.

[63] Andrea Monti and Philippe Dijon de Monteton, "Michael Snow in Interview," *Experimental Conversations* 3, Spring 2009. http://www.experimentalconversations.com/articles/185/michael-snow-in-interview/, accessed March 10, 2014.
[64] Swinney, "What Do We Know about What We Know?" in Dudley et al., *The Thing about Museums*, 42.

> So the black and white idea is important. And when it was turning brown, it kind of romanticized the piece in a weird way because of the brownness. It was just transforming into something that wasn't as crisp and as cool and as distancing [anymore]. So I thought fundamentally the piece was changing too much.[65]

Sutnik felt that the original artistic intent was at stake if the work were left to deteriorate. In response, Snow was consulted and the decision was made to reprint the photographs with his approval.

Conservation files at the AGO reveal that the original photographs were printed on resin-coated paper, dry-mounted to mat board, and covered with a clear protective film. Through physical examination, conservation staff was able to determine that the discolouration happened to the photographs and not to the protective film layer.[66] In November 1991, following testing for durability and image matching, two complete sets of the photographs were reprinted on fibre paper and were selenium toned for greater stability. In addition, in an effort to further ensure the longevity of the work, a coating was applied to the photographs to protect them from the oil-based cleaning agents that the AGO uses on the aluminum surface of *Atlantic*. In December 1992, the photographs used in the sculpture were changed to the new, reprinted photographs. The original, deteriorated photographs were deaccessioned, and a deaccession record for the material exists in the AGO's digital database. Similarly, the artwork's record in the database reflects the reprint date — though the date of creation remains 1967, and exhibition labels include only that date — and hardcopies of institutional documents that clearly outline the details of both the materials used and the approval process are maintained in Conservation files. *Atlantic* represents a fairly clear-cut example of how institutions tend to deal with post-accession deterioration of

[65] Maia-Mari Sutnik, in discussion with the author, March 14, 2014, Toronto ON.
[66] Documentation dated November 26 and 28, 1991. Michael Snow, *Atlantic*, Conservation file, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto ON.

photographic material. The example of *Venetian Blind*, by comparison, is undoubtedly more complex.

Venetian Blind (fig. 5) is a grid of four rows of six framed Ektacolor photographs — snapshots — of Snow's face taken in Venice, Italy. Each softly bevelled wooden frame is painted black, and the photographs are hung with the frames butted right up against each other, no space between them. In the AGO's edition, the photographs are mounted behind glass that has a black border painted directly on its outer surface, right at the inner edge of the wooden frame. A verbal and visual pun, Snow's face is centrally located within each photograph, and his eyes are closed as if blinded by the glare of the Venetian sun. Snow subverts the figure-ground convention in photography wherein the focus is on the figure or another centrally located subject. In *Venetian Blind*, the artist's face is always out of focus. Instead, the tourist sites of Venice in the background — its bridges, Basilica San Marco, Palazzo Ducale (Doge's Palace), for instance — are in focus, though frustratingly obscured by Snow's head which, akin to venetian blinds, blocks the view. And so, the viewer is also blinded. As Tila L. Kellman asserts, "Snow's image is … like a pop-up getting in the way, annoyingly, over and over."[67] *Venetian Blind* highlights the medium specificity of photography itself by disrupting its formal conventions and by documenting the act of photographing.

For Snow, rendering images on a two-dimensional plane can have a democratizing effect. He explains:

> The three-dimensional to two-dimensional transformation in photographs means this: just as in representational painting, forms that were in three-dimensional life separate and hierarchical (i.e., a human being is more important than a chair), are now equal. They may maintain their moral hierarchy in our reading of a photograph of the 3D world but,

[67] Tila L. Kellman, *Figuring Redemption: Resighting My Self in the Art of Michael Snow* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2002), 91.

> in fact, as an incredibly thin distribution of chemicals, they are now all on the same physical plane…[68]

Photography, then, can act as an equalizing force. Snow plays with this possibility in the staging of his images in *Venetian Blind* by shifting the figure-ground rubric. As both *Atlantic* and *Venetian Blind* confirm, Snow's work is often concerned with framing and seriality, which connects to cinema. In *Venetian Blind*, the frame becomes a device through which Snow explores materiality and conventions of both looking at and making a photographic image. Although he sets up the photographs, Snow asserts that he leaves the act of "taking" the image to the camera:

> How, and in what direction, a camera is placed ('upside down' of course is possible) determines the framing of the image. …Amongst these ways of asking the camera to take a new picture is *Venetian Blind*, where I held the camera at arm's length, pointed more or less at my out-of-focus face, with the lens set at infinity to capture what remained visible of the scene behind me.[69]

The images used to make *Venetian Blind* began as Polaroids. They were taken when Snow was in Venice representing Canada at the 1970 Venice Biennale. Snow would select a location and extend his Polaroid Land camera in his hands in preparation for his self-portrait.[70] He would then have an assistant check the viewfinder to be sure that part of the tourist site was still visible in the background. Then, in a rather amusing and almost performative act, Snow would shake or

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[68] Snow, "Notes on the Whys and Hows," in *Panoramique,* 113.
[69] Ibid., 114.
[70] As an interesting side note that provides yet another example of a way in which a work is altered post-accession, it is worth mentioning that when first acquired in 1982, *Venetian Blind* was a two-part artwork: *Venetian Blind (Part I)* and *Venetian Blind (Part II)*. *Part I* was the grid of 24 Ektacolor prints I have described, and *Part II* was a black and white gelatin silver photograph (fig. 6) taken by Joanna Marsden, which documents Snow in the process of photographing himself. On the verso of *Part II* (fig. 7), Snow adhered exhibition instructions that outline where *Part II* should be positioned in relation to *Part I*. However, as AGO records attest, in 1998 when Snow reviewed the various works considered for inclusion in the Brussels exhibition, "he decided that he would like *Venetian Blind (Part 2)* to be a study work only, to be used in a documentary context, i.e. not to be exhibited with *Venetian Blind (Part 1)*." In 1999, the AGO made a formal record change to adjust the titles and designations accordingly. Snow clarifies: "…not a study, but a documentation. …I think it sort of weakens the work itself by having an example of how it was done. Because I think you should just see [in the colour photographs], because of the position of the arms, that the photographs were taken by the subject of the photographs." Michael Snow, March 21, 2014. Section 5, which focuses on the work of Arnaud Maggs, will provide a more thorough example of a change as a result of a shift in thinking.

nod his head constantly as he pushed the button of his camera, ensuring the blurriness of his face. Moreover, he was on a boat, which, because of the rocking, exaggerated the shift in the horizontal line in the ground of the photographs, further disrupting the perspectival convention of a parallel horizon line. Snow's account condenses this process. Nevertheless, the choices he made when constructing his images amplify the venetian blind pun. Additionally, by blurring what would conventionally be in focus — the centrally placed image of a human face — Snow challenges the viewer to look differently at the photographs, forcing the viewer to register the two-dimensionality of the picture plane. Snow had colour negatives made of the Polaroid photographs, from which were made the 24 Ektacolor enlargements that comprise the final work.

Like *Atlantic*, *Venetian Blind* deteriorated over time. However, with *Venetian Blind*, the changes to the artwork are a result of the inherent chemistry of the photographs themselves. Colour photographs are generally subject to deterioration in two ways: fading and yellow staining. The chromogenic colour process is a dye-based process using cyan, magenta, and yellow.[71] Shifts in the colour of a chromogenic print happen because each dye fades at a different rate. The highlight staining that occurs in chromogenic prints results from the yellowing of residual, unreacted couplers from the development process. Ektacolor is a reversal printing paper manufactured by Kodak used in the chromogenic process. As Henry Wilhelm declares, "The problem with Kodak Ektacolor prints is simple: they fade. The prints not only fade when they are

[71] "Chromogenic color materials are composed of three gelatin silver emulsion layers sensitive to red, green, or blue light, with color couplers (color-forming chemicals) suspended in each layer on a either a film or paper support. During development of the silver images, the color couplers react with the used (oxidized) developer solution to form complementary color dyes of cyan, magenta, and yellow (subtractive color, CMY) in proportion to the amount of silver throughout the image. The silver is then bleached out, leaving only dye (in the form of an image) and residual, unreacted couplers, which are invisible to the eye." Sarah Kennel, *In the Darkroom: An Illustrated Guide to Photographic Processes before the Digital Age* (Washington: Thames & Hudson, 2009), 23.

on display and exposed to light…; much worse, Ektacolor prints also fade in the *dark*."[72] And, the AGO's version of *Venetian Blind* demonstrated deterioration characteristic of chromogenic prints; the overall appearance was both faded and yellowed.

In order to protect them against the loss of potentially expensive collections material, some institutions — the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), for example — have a policy to purchase two copies of chromogenic works at the time of acquisition.[73] The AGO does not have this policy. But, as demonstrated in the example of *Atlantic* with black and white gelatin silver prints, institutions will reprint. Quentin Bajac, chief curator of Photography at MoMA, has suggested that, "the fading of the colour print is a kind of elephant in the room. All institutions have to address and face these issues."[74] Despite its cold storage facilities, and duplicate copies, MoMA does still need to reprint photographic material occasionally, which Bajac explains involves a process of consultation with the artist or the estate: "So either coming back to the photographer or the estate and trying to find ways to be either closest to the original print or have a totally different interpretation if the photographer, the artist, is still alive, and *of course* keeping the original print."[75] It is noteworthy that for MoMA, the reprinting process can involve the estate and/or can potentially be interpretative. The AGO, by contrast, will only reprint when the

[72] Henry Wilhelm, "The Problems of the Kodak Ektacolor Print System," in *Fugitive Color*, ed. David Litschel (Ann Arbor, Michigan: School of Art, University of Michigan, 1981), unpaginated.
[73] Generally, the first work is purchased at the market price and for the second print the institution covers the printing costs. The Museum of Modern Art, for instance, says that it will not exhibit faded colour material. The institution has a policy to buy two prints. Quentin Bajac, keynote address, "Collecting and Curating Photographs: Between Private and Public Collections," May 1, 2013, Ryerson University, Toronto ON. The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) had a similar two-print policy for colour material. One work was housed per archival specifications in their cold storage vault. Due to spatial restrictions in the vault, the CCA has since discontinued its practice of purchasing a secondary backup print. Louise Désy, in conversation with the author, July 9, 2013, Montreal QC.
[74] Bajac, May 1, 2014.
[75] Ibid.

artist is able to supervise, and the original, deteriorated work is then deaccessioned and destroyed.[76]

Declaring, "I'd like my stuff to be preserved," Snow has recently confirmed that when possible, his preference is to protect the original artistic intent of his work by reprinting deteriorated photographs, providing he authorizes the outcome.[77] This is in keeping with his reaction to the deterioration of *Atlantic*. But an institutional understanding of his position on reprints was initially complicated by a decision he made in 1999 not to reprint *Venetian Blind*. So why did Snow decide not to reprint *Venetian Blind* at that time? How did the situation differ from that of *Atlantic*, which as outlined earlier, was reprinted eight years prior in 1991?

Even though the work had deteriorated, Snow initially did not insist that the 24 photographs of *Venetian Blind* be reprinted when the topic first arose at the AGO in the late 1990s. On the occasion of an outgoing loan request by the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels for a retrospective of Snow's work to be exhibited in the fall of 1999, several of his works from the AGO collection were reviewed for their suitability for travel and extended display. According to Sutnik and the AGO's records, the AGO felt *Venetian Blind* was "fading away" and conservation treatment was recommended.[78] But as a meeting summary in the Conservation records attests, "Michael Snow has determined that the appearance of the existing photographs is acceptable as

[76] Maia-Mari Sutnik, in discussion with the author, March 14, 2014. Corroborated by Katharine Whitman, in email to the author, June 9, 2014: "…if the artist is still alive and active with the AGO, reprinting faded photographs can happen." Canada Council Art Bank's policy also involves the destruction of the deteriorated photographs after reprints are made: "The damaged works are either destroyed by the Art Bank or the artist." Nancy Smith, in email to the author, July 16, 2014.
[77] Snow, March 21, 2014.
[78] Sutnik, March 14, 2014. Corroborated by documents in the AGO's Conservation files: Michael Snow, *Venetian Blind*, Conservation file, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto ON.

is."[79] The summary, however, does not include an explicit explanation of the reasons Snow arrived at that conclusion.

It is perhaps because his decision not to reprint the photographs seemed inconsistent with his other choices related to deterioration that the *Venetian Blind* example initially lent itself to speculation. As discussed in the literature survey, Snow asserts that he is a "purist about medium specificity."[80] Was his decision not to reprint the photographs in 1999 reflective of an acceptance of the material's inherent chemistry? After all, black and white gelatin silver prints are not generally subject to the sort of brown staining seen in *Atlantic*, whereas fading and colour shifting in chromogenic prints is to be expected. As such, a decision to reprint the photographs used in *Atlantic* but not those that comprise *Venetian Blind* would seem to demonstrate a consistent position on reprinting — one that relates directly to the fundamental physical characteristics and expected behaviours of the respective processes and printed materials. But, Snow has authorized post-accession reprints of colour photographic material in examples at the AGO and elsewhere.[81] For instance, when the colour photograph used in his mixed media work, *iris-IRIS* (1979) displayed fading, the work was reprinted.[82] *iris-IRIS* is a two-panel work, in which an Ektacolor print on the left panel mirrors the placement and subject of a commercially printed postcard mounted on the right panel atop an acrylic painting of an interior space. As Snow explains: "…the wall in the photograph should look like the other panel, [but] under other light conditions … because it's in a room with possibly sunlight. So there's a really…very, very, very subtle or small variation between the colour of the panel, which is paint, and the colour of

[79] Correspondence from Margaret Haupt, AGO Conservation files, January 29, 1999.
[80] Snow, "Michael Snow," *Artforum International,* 105.
[81] For example, *Bees Behaving on Blue* (1979) held by the Canada Council Art Bank was reprinted post-accession. Snow, March 21, 2014.
[82] Sutnik, March 14, 2014; Michael Snow, *iris-IRIS* Conservation file, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto ON; Snow, March 21, 2014.

the photograph."[83] The colour shifting apparent in the photograph caused the relationship between the two panels, even if subtly, to deviate from Snow's original intent. As such, the photograph was reprinted. As Sutnik suggests, "it needed to be fixed…because [of] the aesthetic demands on the print," whereas in *Venetian Blind*, there are "not those [same] demands."[84]

Snow's choice to leave the colour photographs of *Venetian Blind* as they were can also be interpreted as an artistic decision. As Sutnik explains:

> We feel it's fading away and he seems to like that factor of it. …I think to some extent he likes that play on the fading of a picture as a memory that fades. But also, that it has to do with blind, and that kind of disappearance of the image. I don't think he's deliberately thinking about that, but there's something about the photograph actually disappearing as sight disappears and so on.[85]

From a curatorial point of view, then, his decision not to reprint can be viewed as an extension of the artistic intent of the work, his face continuing to be blinded by the light, its blurriness intensified as the colour continues to fade. This interpretation of his decision has the potential to affect both the meaning of the work and its care. What happens when the work fades to the point it can no longer be exhibited? Does subjective interpretation risk jeopardizing the physical care and lifespan of the object?

A thorough examination of Conservation and accession files reveals implicitly that Snow's decision not to reprint *Venetian Blind* for the 1999 retrospective in Brussels was likely a result of practical considerations, namely time and money. Several works were being considered for the exhibition, some of which also required conservation treatments. However, funds for conservation were limited at both the Palais des Beaux Arts and the AGO. Additionally, the Conservation documents reveal that treatment recommendations for *Venetian Blind* involved

[83] Snow, March 21, 2014.
[84] Sutnik, March 14, 2014.
[85] Ibid.

more than just reprints. The frames also required upgrading. But changing the frames would require addressing the paint on the surface of the glass, and the files document that, for Snow, the paint is an integral component of the work.[86] Furthermore, Snow asserts that his preference *is* to reprint when possible: "If necessary … if it's possible to replace with something that might be more durable and be the same, at least in my judgement, then I would try to do it."[87] In summation, then, the decision not to reprint was unrelated to honouring the lifespan of the material or to extending the artistic ideas of the work. Instead, it was practical. There simply was not enough time or money to make the necessary updates in 1999, and the work was exhibited in its faded condition with the artist's approval. But the colour photographs of *Venetian Blind* were eventually reprinted, on the occasion of another outgoing loan request.

In 2001, the work was reviewed for a potential loan to the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol, England. *Venetian Blind* is an edition of three. Edition 2/3 was purchased by the AGO in 1982. The other two prints from the edition are owned by the Canada Council Art Bank in Ottawa and the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal. A loan request from the Arnolfini Gallery was also made to the Art Bank, and it was the Art Bank's version that ultimately participated in the exhibition, but not before the work was reprinted. The colour photographs in the Art Bank's version of the work had also faded and were considered unsuitable for public exhibition. Staff at

[86] Michael Snow, *Venetian Blind*, Conservation file, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto ON.
[87] Snow, March 21, 2014. When asked if his decision whether or not to reprint photographs has to do with the physical characteristics of the medium or whether he considers it an opportunity to further the artistic message of the work, Snow is emphatic: "…it's completely objective or physical." And, he stresses that his authorization is important: "Otherwise, it really can't be done because you wouldn't even have a model, if you were trying to replace something that was faded. …I might have actual physical references from what remains of the work in progress. Like, for example, tests and things like that. So if there's something that I can rely on to make it as much like it originally was as possible, well, I'll do that. But, of course, it's going to be in whatever the current medium is, which will call for a slightly different aging from the one that is being replaced."

the Art Bank consulted with Snow and initiated the reprinting process.[88] According to the files at the AGO, the Art Bank's version of the work was used as a guide to make reprints for all three owners of the work at the same time.[89] But in contrast to the *Atlantic* example, a comprehensive summation of the reprinting process is absent from the *Venetian Blind* files.

As Swinney argues, "registers do not simply record collections, they construct them."[90] The details in an institution's files impact both the artist and the institution, becoming part of the history of both the art object and the larger collection. Decisions about what gets recorded and how are necessarily subjective, and records often represent multiple perspectives. Moreover, Swinney asserts that, "our understanding of the register and *the nature of the register* shapes our understanding of our collections which, in turn, shapes our material worlds."[91] It follows, then, that records impact objects. When decisions are made — for whatever reason — not to proceed with conservation treatment, preservation becomes the focus. As Katharine Whitman, photography conservator at the AGO, explains, "…the [artwork's] exposure is limited [in order] to preserve the piece for as long as possible."[92] But ultimately, significantly deteriorated photographic material can be "considered de-accessionable."[93] Whitman emphasizes the importance of an institutional practice of revisiting decisions that impact the preservation or conservation of collections material.[94] But what happens if decisions are not revisited? How does a change at the object level impact the artist's larger practice and the institutional narrative?

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[88] Smith, July 16, 2014. Smith explains that, "Brent Kitagawa did the printing and Ed Burtynsky mounted the prints. Photos were printed on Fuji Crystal archive paper. The mounting was done using an archival paper called Stonehenge." Smith, email to the author, July 28, 2014.
[89] Document dated June 20, 2001. Michael Snow, *Venetian Blind*, Conservation file, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto ON.
[90] Swinney, "What Do We Know about What We Know?" in Dudley et al., *The Thing about Museums,* 43.
[91] Ibid. Emphasis his.
[92] Whitman, email, June 9, 2014.
[93] Ibid. Though Whitman is cautious to point out that de-accessioning is a complicated process.
[94] Katharine Whitman, in conversation with the author, June 4, 2014, Toronto ON. She explains that the Conservation department at the AGO has a priority list that is used for these purposes.

Although the Ekatcolor prints of *Venetian Blind* were eventually reprinted, this case highlights not only the potential for subjective interpretation and the significance of the museum record, but also hints at the very real implications that these can have on the lifespan of art objects.

Figure 3. Michael Snow, *Atlantic*, 1967. Metal, gelatin silver prints, wood, arborite, 171.1 x 245.1 x 39.9 cm (67 3/8 x 96 1/2 x 15 11/16 in.). Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Purchase, 1980.

Figure 4. Brown discolouration visible in *Atlantic*. Michael Snow, *Atlantic* (detail), 1967. Metal, gelatin silver prints, wood, arborite, 171.1 x 245.1 x 39.9 cm (67 3/8 x 96 1/2 x 15 11/16 in.). Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Purchase, 1980.

Figure 5. Michael Snow, *Venetian Blind*, 1970. Ektacolor prints, 127 x 238 cm (50 x 93 11/16 in.). Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Purchase, 1982.

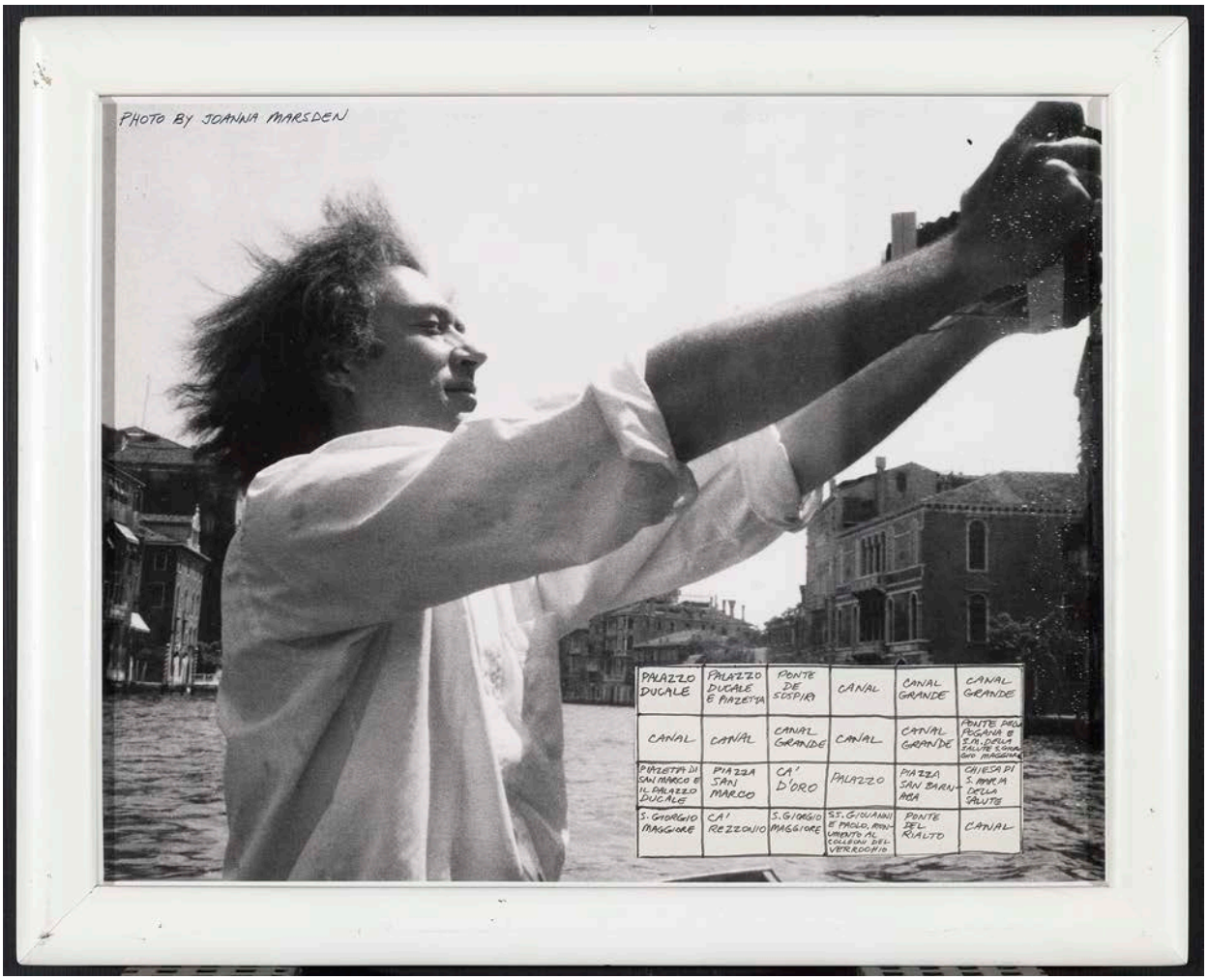

Figure 6. Michael Snow, *Venetian Blind* documentation, photographed by Joanna Marsden (recto), 1970. Gelatin silver print, 26.2 x 33.5 cm (10 5/16 x 13 3/16 in.). Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Purchase, 1982.

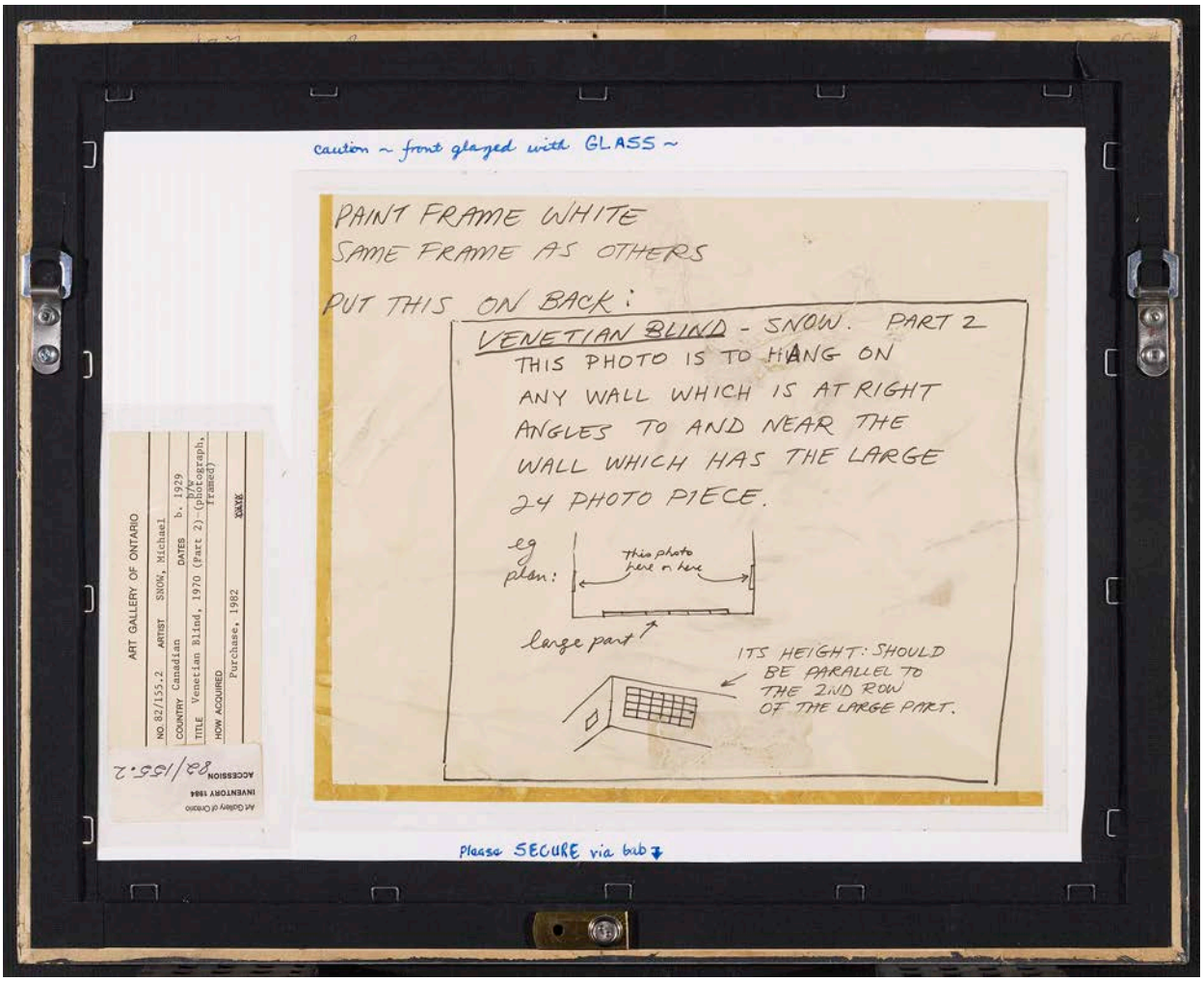

Figure 7. Michael Snow, *Venetian Blind* documentation, photographed by Joanna Marsden (verso), 1970. Gelatin silver print, 26.2 x 33.5 cm (10 5/16 x 13 3/16 in.). Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Purchase, 1982.

4. Case Study: Gabor Szilasi

Gabor Szilasi is known as a photographer who primarily shoots in black and white. In some cases though, including his *Portraits / Interiors* (1978-79) (fig. 8) series, he will use colour. As the literature survey attests, Szilasi's aesthetic and technical decisions are thoughtfully considered, and they contribute to the sympathetic reverence he demonstrates toward his subjects. Szilasi's decision to use colour is intentional. He finds it useful when depicting interior space, for instance, because otherwise "one has no idea what the colours might be."[95] But as this case demonstrates, Szilasi is also flexible and open to possibilities that arise as he is working. Indeed, the *Portraits / Interiors* series resulted to a certain degree from happenstance. Szilasi had been commissioned by the Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts (now the Segal Centre for Performing Arts) to photograph Ludwig Flancer's paintings in colour at his home. The session led to the conception of the series. Szilasi explains: "With [a] few unexposed frames in the camera, I made some interior views of the apartment. As I have always carried my Leica with me, I asked [the Flancers] if I could take a few portraits. When I laid out the images on the table, the interior view in colour and the black and white portrait happened to be next to each other and this [is] how the series started."[96] Subsequently, the diptych featuring Andor Pásztor and his home was the first pairing that Szilasi made with the intention of commencing a series.[97] For the series, Szilasi pairs a black and white portrait photographed using a Rolleiflex with a colour photograph of an interior, shot using the 4 x 5 format, and as Harris points out, this is the only

[95] Szilasi quoted in Halkes, "Gabor Szilasi," 80.
[96] Gabor Szilasi, in an email to the author, July 31, 2014.
[97] Ibid. As he explains: "Pásztor was the first with the intention to start work on a series. …I usually conceived my work as a series, sometimes as the result of a situation."

portrait series by Szilasi where two images are used to create the final artwork.[98] Further, Harris asserts that, "in the deliberate juxtaposition of these two types of photographs, Szilasi was able to create far more psychologically complex portraits, partaking of both real and imaginary elements, than he had previously done."[99] It is Szilasi's use of two images in a single work that is at the centre of this case study.

Portraits / Interiors is a series of 20 diptychs in which Szilasi explores the relationship between a sitter and his or her surroundings. The portraits — of Szilasi's family and friends — are always black and white gelatin silver prints, and the interior spaces are always represented with chromogenic colour. The interior images show the sitters' own spaces, and Szilasi's depictions of the things of everyday life are at once detached and intimate. The diptychs demonstrate the mutual impact images have when paired. But Szilasi extends their interaction further. In most of the works in the series, an element from the interior view is repeated in the portrait, functioning as a visual reference — a bridge — between the two photographs. For instance, in the portrait of John Max on the left side of *John Max at his house, Montreal* (1979) (fig. 9), Szilasi repeats the top curve of one of the chairs that can be seen in Max's living room on the right side of the composition. In some of the diptychs, the connection is either missing or is not immediately obvious, but the entire series exhibits careful pairing and framing choices. His carefully

[98] Harris, *The Eloquence of the Everyday,* 32.
[99] Harris, *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs*, 39. Harris's discussion of the relationship between the two types of photographs is thorough: "We search amid the accumulated objects and within their arrangement not merely for evidence of the sitter's taste but for clues to his or her personality; conversely, we interpret the portrait as being, in part, the outcome of the various experiences associated with these objects. Such a reading is encouraged by the different social occasions when black and white or colour film has been used in photography: the former is commonly associated with formality and, in the case of portraiture, a means of touching upon the permanent character of a sitter, while the latter has traditionally dealt with aspects of material culture — in which clothing and possessions become an index to a person's social position — and generally with the sensuous and fleeting aspects of experience."

considered decisions contribute to photographs that are characteristic of his documentary style, which is at once detached and sympathetic. They also intimate the photographer.

The repetition of a visual reference calls attention to the different vantage points represented in each image in the pairing, which themselves signal a temporal and spatial shift. This shift, as Katherine Tweedie asserts, "reflects the activity of the photographer and the moments of the portrait and the interior."[100] The repeated objects unite the images of the diptychs, providing a connection between two separate photographs, between colour and black and white, and further, they emphasize the bond between the human figure and his or her space. The interplay between the two images is fundamental to an understanding of the work. As Harris suggests, "In moving between the paired images, the viewer participates in the construction of a composite psychological and social profile of each sitter."[101] And, it is significant to note that the repeating element in each diptych usually crosses the margin between the two images. Discussing the repeating element, Szilasi explains: "in most of them, they're supposed to be side-by-side."[102] This tendency is disrupted in *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* (1978) [Mr. Pásztor left] (fig. 10).

In *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left], the black and white portrait is positioned on the left side of the composition and depicts an older man — a close friend of Szilasi's father — sitting on a chair in his bedroom. Mr. Pásztor's gaze is directed to the right, and in this configuration, it would seem he is looking at his own objects in the colour photograph on the right side of the diptych. The chromogenic print shows a series of framed pictures forming an elaborate composition on his bedroom wall above a dresser, which itself features a complicated arrangement of clocks, vases, and several additional framed pictures

[100] Tweedie, "The Human Lens of Gabor Szilasi," 86.
[101] Harris, *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs*, 39.
[102] Gabor Szilasi, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2014.

sitting atop it. Unlike the other diptychs in the series, the repeating element — in this case, part of the dresser and a section from the composition of framed pictures — does not cross the centre margin. It is *Andor Pásztor* in this configuration — Mr. Pásztor left — that has been exhibited and published since 1979. However, when Szilasi first took the photographs in 1978, the work was conceived with the colour print on the left and the black and white portrait on the right,[103] resulting in what I will refer to as *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor right].

In *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor right] (fig. 11) there is continuity with the others in the series because once again, the repeating objects link the photographs across the centre margin. Mr. Pásztor's gaze is no longer focused on his own objects, but instead he looks off into the distance outside the window, which as the lighting and other visual cues suggest is located just past the frame of the photograph. In this iteration, Szilasi portrays Mr. Pásztor reflecting on his past behind him, which, represented by his collection of photographs and objects, indeed sits behind him in the space of the composition. Likewise, just as Mr. Pásztor's view is directed outside, this arrangement shifts the viewer's eye out of the frame. By contrast, in *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left], the eye focuses on the empty space above Mr. Pásztor's head in an almost circular way, remaining inside the space of the composition. The altered configuration changes the way the viewer experiences the space in the images, and has the potential to impact interpretation, even if subtly.

According to Harris, "there is a kind of discontinuity between the two spaces. You're sort of looking in one direction, but what he's looking at is in the other direction and that has a kind of illogic to it."[104] He also suggests that with Mr. Pásztor on the right, it has "a kind of beauty because you could see or you could understand that he was remembering the past, which was

[103] David Harris, in discussion with the author, April 1, 2014, Toronto ON.
[104] Ibid.

much more vivid than the present and so on."[105] But Szilasi asserts that both arrangements work: "in the correct version, Mr. Pásztor is looking out the window. He's supposed to be reflecting, nearing the end of his life. In the other, he is looking at his memories, at his objects, and still reflecting [on his past.] They both work."[106] Although, as Szilasi suggests, both iterations still function to evoke a similar sense of remembering and reflection, the viewer arrives at the interpretation slightly differently. It is noteworthy though that Szilasi does refer to *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor right] as the "correct" version. Indeed, he has expressed that if he were to reprint or republish the work, he would do so with Mr. Pásztor on the right.[107]

Szilasi relates the "incorrect" version to a publication error. *Gabor Szilasi: Photographs, 1954-1996* (1997) reproduces the work in the configuration that puts Mr. Pásztor on the left side of the composition. Szilasi notes that the artwork would have been supplied as two separate files, one for each side of the diptych, and the way they were put together was inaccurate.[108] He explains: "It was really a mistake. And it was noticed only after it was bound and distributed and in bookstores."[109] However, the history of *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* is decidedly more complicated.

There is a publication record for *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left] prior to 1997. For instance, in 1980, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MAC) exhibited his work in *Gabor Szilasi: Photographies récentes* (February 28-April 13, 1980), and Tweedie's review of the show was published in *Vie des Arts* the same year.[110] One of the accompanying

[105] Harris, April 1, 2014.
[106] Szilasi, June 24, 2014.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid. Harris makes a similar point. Harris, April 1, 2014.
[109] Szilasi, June 24, 2014.
[110] Tweedie, "The Human Lens of Gabor Szilasi," 86-7. A French translation of the article ran on pages 29-31, with the image in question reproduced on page 31.

illustrations was *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left]. Not only was the "incorrect" configuration published, but also the image depicts the framed object, highlighting that the physical art object itself has its own history in the incorrect configuration.

Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal was first shown in 1979, the same year it was created. It was exhibited as part of *Canadian Perspectives: Eight Contemporary Canadian Photographers* (February 19-March 4, 1979), which was mounted in conjunction with a conference on photography at Ryerson University (then Ryerson Polytechnical Institute).[111] Following the exhibition, Szilasi donated the print to what is now the Ryerson Image Centre (RIC), and the object depicts Mr. Pásztor on the left.[112] The RIC holds two prints of this iteration, and a third awaits accession. One can surmise based on the reproduction in *Vie des Arts* that the version exhibited at the MAC was also *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left]. The endnote in Harris's text — addressed earlier in the literature survey — relates the error to incorrect mounting.[113] Although Szilasi does not remember the specific details around how *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left] first came to be, he does acknowledge that an error in mounting is possible: "It's possible I also made a mistake when I dry-mounted it. I really don't remember."[114] But, he also notes, "it didn't matter much to me because both work. Aesthetically, and in terms of content, both work."[115] Szilasi does have "A" and "B" versions of some others in the series — his diptychs of Raymond Pharand and René Rozon, for instance — which underscores his flexibility with what can work within the larger parameters of the project (fig. 12). However, the variations between versions in the other

[111] Peter Higdon, in discussion with the author, March 11, 2014, Toronto ON, and Harris, April 1, 2014. While it is difficult to determine in which configuration *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* was shown, the series (or parts of it) toured nationally to 15 different venues between 1981 and 1988.
[112] Higdon, March 11, 2014.
[113] Harris, *The Eloquence of the Everyday,* 41 n. 37.
[114] Szilasi, June 24, 2014.
[115] Ibid.

instances are the result of his use of different photographs, and not due to the placement of the images within the diptych. Further, in the case of *Raymond Pharand in his loft, Montreal* (1979), for example, the work has only been published in his preferred configuration.[116] Regardless of what led to the incongruent placement of the figure in the Pásztor diptych, *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left] has a 30-plus-year publication and exhibition record in that configuration. Moreover, it is owned, in that format, by four Canadian public institutions: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, MAC, National Gallery of Canada (NGC), and the RIC.[117]

In 2009, Szilasi updated the configuration of *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, returning Mr. Pásztor to the right side of the composition and restoring his reflective gaze out of the frame. The RIC holds this revised version as well. The curator's role was significant in this case. Harris, who curated Szilasi's retrospective exhibition, *The Eloquence of the Everyday*, and authored the accompanying publication, prompted the change. While conducting research for the project, Harris noticed a gap in the dates of the works in the *Portraits / Interiors* series — *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* is the only work from 1978 — which, through discussions with Szilasi, ultimately led to the knowledge that the work had originally been conceived with the opposite configuration.[118] In Harris's view, the original configuration is more successful

[116] Regarding the two versions of the Pharand diptych, Szilasi explains, "I prefer the one with the sculpture on the right. It's a more interesting object than the plant." Szilasi, July 31, 2014. The extent to which and the reasons that variant diptychs exist outside of the works pictured warrant further investigation. Such an investigation could potentially extend beyond the *Portraits / Interiors* series.
[117] Harris, April 1, 2014.
[118] Ibid. Harris further explains that Szilasi suggested the initial change from the original configuration was exhibition-related. He notes that in order to match the others from the series, the work was altered for exhibition. It is quite possible. Though it would depend on whether the entire series was shown, because although all published examples from the series have the portrait on the left, there is actually diversity across the series with respect to ordering. And, Szilasi maintains the ordering relates to the common visual reference in each individual work within the series, and not to how they relate across the series as a whole: "With all of them in the series…the interior and

when compared to the other. He asserts: "When I reversed the two images and looked at them, it made more sense…it made spatial sense and it made conceptual sense that it would be that way."[119] This, along with an interest in preserving the original idea behind the work, compelled Harris to see if Szilasi would reprint the work with Mr. Pásztor on the right for both the exhibition and publication.[120]

Revealing another layer of complexity in the narrative of this particular artwork, it is significant to note that Szilasi's decision to reprint according to the original configuration was not immediate.[121] This is noteworthy given that he considers it to be the correct version, and has indicated that it is now his preference for it to be printed in that arrangement. But it reinforces again his contemplative nature, and signals his careful and respectful approach to his practice. This case, like the others, raises questions about the role of the curator and highlights the various subjectivities involved. Harris acknowledges the subjective potential:

> … It may also be a situation in the case of Gabor of my involvement, of my following the research through in this way and then raising this and pushing it, another curator might have just said, "Well that's an interesting anecdote, but this is the way the object was first shown, how it exists in different collections, how it's been published. We'll just leave it like that."[122]

However, as noted, the work was indeed reconfigured, and along with it, the exhibition and publication records were affected with the introduction of an updated configuration to the work's public life.[123] As demonstrated by the complicated history of the art object, including its

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the section of the interior are touching each other. Doesn't matter whether it's left or right, they always touch each other." Szilasi, June 24, 2014. These details highlight the often-slippery nature of tacit knowledge.

[119] Harris, April 1, 2014.

[120] Ibid.

[121] As Harris explains, "he didn't immediately agree. He mulled it over and thought about it." Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

[123] As discussed in the literature survey, Penny Cousineau-Levine's 2003 publication, *Faking Death: Canadian Art Photography and the Canadian Imagination*, reproduces the work according to its original conception with Mr. Pásztor on the right side of the image, but entirely in black and white. There was a related exhibition of selected works from her text at Jack Shainman Gallery in New York (*Faking Death: Canadian Art Photography and the*

publication and exhibition records, this case calls to attention the potential collections management and curatorial implications when a work changes so far into its history.

The RIC holds a total of four *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* prints, two of *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left] with a third awaiting accession, and one print in the revised configuration —*Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor right] (fig. 13). The photographs in each of the four diptychs are dry-mounted to board, insisting on their configurations in perpetuity. Within a single collection, there exists evidence of the changed configuration. Further, all of the prints that have already been accessioned have their own exhibition histories at the RIC. What does it mean to have both versions represented in the collection? How does the recent acquisition of the revised print impact the existing collections material?

With a commitment to three areas of activity — exhibitions, research, and collecting — and a strong affiliation to an educational institution, the RIC is ideally suited to hold multiple iterations of the same work. Collections curator, Peter Higdon asserts that to have both configurations in the collection "fits our mandate beautifully."[124] It does so in three significant ways. First, the RIC holds a representative selection of works from Szilasi's career output, which they acquired through a donation from the artist in 2002. The RIC selected a "range of [Szilasi's] works, starting with…work he was still doing in Hungary right through to the most

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Canadian Imagination, January 6-February 4, 2006). Szilasi said that it should have been the "correct" version that was exhibited. But neither he nor Cousineau-Levine could confirm the details. And Harris explained that when he inquired about the print, Szilasi could not locate it. Could this be an instance where the image was "incorrectly" composed during the production of the publication? Szilasi, for his part, was upset that the work was printed entirely in black and white, losing both the impact of the colour as a point of juxtaposition and informative detail. Szilasi, June 24, 2014; Penny Cousineau-Levine, in an email to the author, June 10, 2014; Harris, April 1, 2014.

[124] Higdon, March 11, 2014.

contemporary [works] he had."[125] Four works from the *Portraits / Interiors* series were acquired at that time, including *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left]. As Higdon explains, "that sort of selection really fits our collecting mandates around showing the arc of photographer's growth as an artist, and moving through different media and different periods of time, and different projects, to give a sort of rounded view to a researcher or to a student particularly."[126] Secondly, the collection of *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* prints represents the only example in the collection of a reconfigured work, which also supports the research and study mandates of the institution.[127] And third, the work highlights, both artistically and practically, aspects that are characteristic of the photographic medium, which further supports the RIC's mandate.

Szilasi's decision to pair two images in his diptych illuminates "one of those wonderful aspects of photography [wherein] sequence and arrangement of more than one image frequently yields kind of unexpected meaning."[128] Furthermore, recalling the potential for variant prints discussed in the Notes & Methodology section of this thesis, each of the four diptychs in the collection demonstrates slight differences between them. This is especially noticeable in the cropping of the various prints. Figure 13 reveals the slight variations in how much of the dresser is visible in each print, for example. The dimensions of the prints in each diptych also differ, as does the size of the margin between them. Higdon reveals the value in these variations to an institution with an emphasis on research and education: "We're in the luxurious position of having all these different versions of these objects, which as you point out, even where the first three that are mounted the same way are slightly different. Every one is slightly different. And

[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

that's an aspect of photography, [it's] what the media is." The material objects and their narratives, then, are acknowledged as significant to their individual histories, that of the artist, and that of the collection.

As scholar Debora J. Meijers contends, "The museum is an institution which plays a decisive part in determining the significance of works of art."[129] But the study significance of a work of art can differ from that of its exhibition or curatorial significance. Does the revised configuration jeopardize the value and/or the public life of the *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* [Mr. Pásztor left]? Szilasi sees the two configurations as the same work. In his view, an updated title is unnecessary, and both can be exhibited.[130] Both Higdon and Harris agree that the work in either configuration is suitable for exhibition. As Harris asserts, "it exists in a number of versions in different collections. It has been published in that way. It has a historical resonance that can't be discounted."[131] Indeed, how does this shift impact the other collections that hold this work? Further, are there additional examples within the series of works where the image placement has been modified?[132] How might that impact an understanding of the series and the artist's larger practice? As this case demonstrates, alterations to works of art after accession can have art historical, curatorial, and collections management implications, and their reach can extend beyond a single institution.

[129] Debora J. Meijers, "The Museum and the 'Ahistorical' Exhibition: The latest gimmick by the arbiters of taste, or an important cultural phenomenon?" in Greenberg, Ferguson, and Nairne, *Thinking about Exhibitions*, 8.
[130] Szilasi, June 24, 2014.
[131] Harris, April 1, 2014. Rather than pointing to the difference in configuration as the significant factor, both Harris and Higdon point to colour shifting visible in the earlier prints as a reason not to exhibit them. However, stable versions of each configuration exist, and the two curators both agree that either can be shown. They do acknowledge that the decision would depend on the specific circumstances of the exhibition and suggest it would be more likely for the updated configuration to be selected for display.
[132] The NGC's website, for example, shows *Scott Wright, Brampton, Ontario* (1979) (fig. 8, bottom right) with Mr. Wright on the left, disrupting the side-by-side continuity of the "Hamilton" poster on his wall. Is this online image reflective of the art object in their collection?

Figure 8. Gabor Szilasi, *Portraits / Interiors*, 1978-79. The photographs that comprise *Clara and Ludwig Flancer, Côte Saint-Luc, 1978* (1978) (*top left*) were Szilasi's first pairing of a portrait and interior and the work marks the formation of the initial idea that would become *Portraits / Interiors*. *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal* (*second row, left*) was the first diptych that Szilasi created with the intention of starting the series.

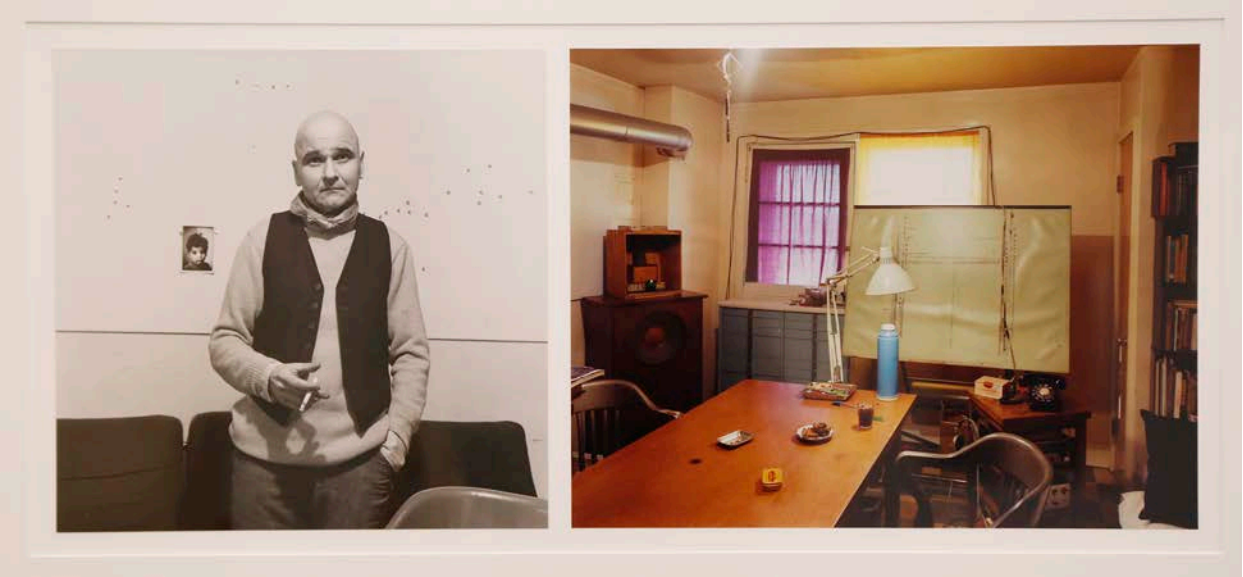

Figure 9. Gabor Szilasi, *John Max at his house, Montreal*, January 1979, left image printed 1997, right image printed 2002, gelatin silver print (*left*) and chromogenic colour print (*right*). Collection of the Ryerson Image Centre, Ryerson University. IA.2002.0022

Image courtesy of the Ryerson Image Centre. Reproduced by permission of the artist. © Gabor Szilasi.

Figure 10. Gabor Szilasi, *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, September 1978, gelatin silver print (*left*) and chromogenic colour print (*right*). Collection of the Ryerson Image Centre, Ryerson University. FP.1980.0047

Image courtesy of the Ryerson Image Centre. Reproduced by permission of the artist. © Gabor Szilasi.

Figure 11. Gabor Szilasi, *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, September 1978, left image printed 2002, right image printed 1996, chromogenic colour print (*left*) and gelatin silver print, selenium toned (*right*). Collection of the Ryerson Image Centre, Ryerson University. RIC.2014.0001

Figure 12. Gabor Szilasi, multiple versions of portraits of Raymond Pharand (*top*) and René Rozon (*bottom*) from *Portraits / Interiors*, 1978-79.

Figure 13. Gabor Szilasi, *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, 1978. Collection of the Ryerson Image Centre, Ryerson University.

From top left: *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, September 1978, gelatin silver print (*left*) and chromogenic colour print (*right*). FP.1980.0047; *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, September 1978, left image printed 1996, right image printed 2002, gelatin silver print, selenium toned (*left*) and chromogenic colour print (*right*). IA.2002.0024; *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, September 1978, left image printed 2002, right image printed 1996, chromogenic colour print (*left*) and gelatin silver print, selenium toned (*right*). RIC.2014.0001; *Andor Pásztor in his apartment, Montreal*, September 1978, gelatin silver print (*left*) and chromogenic colour print (*right*). RIC.2013.0118.

5. Case Study: Arnaud Maggs

In 1979 Arnaud Maggs attended a Joseph Beuys retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. He was deeply affected by the work, so much so that he felt compelled to travel to Düsseldorf to photograph the artist: "I saw the exhibition at the Guggenheim in 1979 and was blown away by it… [It] was a full-scale show, with chunks of lard as big as cars and train tracks with switches. It was amazing and I had never thought that big. There was also a video about him, which is when I decided I had to photograph him."[133] While in Düsseldorf, Maggs saw an exhibition of the Panza Collection's minimal and conceptual art (*Minimal + Conceptual Art aus der Sammlung Panza*, 1980) mounted at the Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf. It was there that he saw the Carl Andre floor sculpture — *5 x 20 Altstadt Rectangle* (1967) — that would inspire the grid format he used in his two-part portrait of Joseph Beuys: "I had seen this work by Carl Andre in the Panza exhibition, a big floor piece consisting of 100 copper squares in five rows of 20, and I decided to use that format. I would do 100 pictures of Beuys, in five rows of 20."[134]

As the literature survey demonstrates, the grid is a device that was central to Maggs's art practice. Addressing his first artwork, *64 Portrait Studies* (1976-78) (fig. 14), Maggs asserts, "I thought if I made a grid the piece would be even more analytical…The piece was called *64*

[133] Maggs quoted in Enright, "Designs on Life," 50. In the interview with Enright, Maggs continues: "So when I was in Paris doing the chefs I took the train up to Düsseldorf and checked into a hotel. My first thought was to write him, but I realized that made no sense because he would just say no. So I took the streetcar to his house and rang his doorbell… I said, 'Here is some of the work I've done and I'd like to do a piece with you.' He looked at it and said, 'Very nice but I'm too busy.' I didn't want to get turned down after coming all that way, so I looked him dead in the eye and said, 'Well, I have all the time in the world.' It stopped him. 'In that case,' he said, 'come by next Wednesday at 10:00.'" See also: Sutnik, "Portraits by Arnaud Maggs," in Monk, Maggs, and Sutnik, *Arnaud Maggs: Works,* 15; and Sutnik, "The More One Looks," in Maggs et al., *Arnaud Maggs*, 110. As Maia-Mari Sutnik notes, the details of this story are "now the stuff of legends."

[134] Maggs quoted in Enright, "Designs on Life," 50.

Portrait Studies but I didn't want them to read as portraits. I wanted them read analytically."[135] This artwork comprises 64 black and white gelatin silver portraits of 32 anonymous sitters. Maggs photographed the sitters both frontally and in profile, and in the final work they are arranged horizontally in four rows of 16, with the rows alternating between profiles and frontals. Curator Josée Drouin-Brisebois notes that the work is among those from the early part of his career in which "…he combined an interest in systems of classification and ordering with investigations of human physiognomy."[136] The artist himself cites the nineteenth-century mug shots by Alphonse Bertillon as inspiration for the grid system he used in *64 Portrait Studies*.[137] And, the work marks the beginning of both Maggs's artistic career and his ongoing use of the grid as both a conceptual and formal device in several of his photographic artworks throughout his body of work. Even prior to *64 Portrait Studies* though, the grid factored into Maggs's way of thinking. Before Maggs identified as an artist, he had successful careers as a graphic designer and a commercial fashion photographer. Photographer and writer, Michael Mitchell asserts:

> Being a photographer, Maggs has always been introduced to his latest imagery via the grid of the medium-format contact sheet. He came to accept the form, as generated by his medium, as a part of his message. It was tidy, systematic and controllable. Like all designers, he is very interested in order. Grids are fundamental to graphic-design layout and to the setting of type. [For Maggs] they were everywhere as underpinnings.[138]

While the grid was not new to Maggs in 1980, Andre's sculpture provided the inspiration for the specific shape the grid would take in his portraits of Beuys. A sketch by Maggs, which is

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[135] Enright, "Designs on Life," 46.
[136] Josée Drouin-Brisebois, *Arnaud Maggs: Identification* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2012), 27. Maia-Mari Sutnik also provides a thorough and insightful discussion of his interest in human physiognomy, linking "Maggs's conception of modular frameworks for the human" to Albrecht Dürer's sixteenth-century drawing studies in physiognomy. Sutnik, "Portraits by Arnaud Maggs," Monk, Maggs, Sutnik, *Arnaud Maggs: Works*, 9-10.
[137] "At this point I was asking myself: 'How am I going to present these pictures?' And my mind went back to Alphonse Bertillon, the Paris police official who set up a system of identifying people. And I figured that's as good a way as any, and probably the best. …More than anything I wanted people to compare all the wonderful and varied head shapes. So I made a grid." Maggs quoted in Charles A. Stainback, "Q and A with Arnaud Maggs," in Drouin-Brisebois, *Identification*, 112.
[138] Mitchell, "Abracadabra," 144.

reproduced in *Arnaud Maggs: Identification,* the catalogue for the retrospective of his work at the NGC (2012) (fig. 15), illustrates his plans for the original hanging scheme (fig. 16).

Maggs photographed both frontal and profile views of Beuys. But unlike in *64 Portrait Studies*, the two views are not alternated within the same work. Instead, Maggs created two works from his session with Beuys: *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views* and *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views* (both 1980) (figs. 17 and 18). Each work comprises 100 unmounted square black and white gelatin silver photographs. In their original configuration, each artwork is arranged in a grid of five rows of 20 images. In the *Frontal Views*, Maggs captures Beuys from the shoulders up, his emblematic hat atop his head, looking directly at the viewer. The *Profile Views*, of course, offer a side view of Beuys, his gaze directed to the right. Maggs was interested in recording the passage of time and its effect on the sitter.[139] While shifts from one portrait to the next are very minimal in the profiles, for instance, over the course of the 100 photographs, Beuys's posture gradually stoops. The subtle variations in his posture call to attention to the physical experience of standing still at a specific moment in time for 100 photographs. At the same time, the sequential series of frames recalls Muybridge's photographic series of human and animal motion. Sutnik has suggested that Maggs's "accumulative portraits are time-based sequences…"[140] and curator, Philip Monk argues that Maggs "has used his photographic grids as taxonomic tables, so to speak, to reveal something of the human subject that one portrait alone could not accomplish. In these works, the grid, as much as a the camera, becomes a tool for seeing."[141] Indeed, the choice Maggs made to reorder the grid-based hanging scheme of the

[139] Drouin-Brisebois, *Identification,* 28.
[140] Sutnik, "The More One Looks," in Maggs et al., *Arnaud Maggs,* 110.
[141] Monk, "Life Traces," in Monk, Maggs, and Sutnik, *Arnaud Maggs: Works,* 22. See also: Sutnik, "The More One Looks," in Maggs et al., *Arnaud Maggs,* 109.

Beuys portraits — both the *Frontal Views* and the *Profile Views* — amplifies the emphasis on time and the possibilities for revelation.

Although Sutnik asserts that "each serial grid of one hundred foregrounds the other, and they are mutually contingent for the totality of Beuys," in practical terms they are two separate entities each with its own exhibition and publication records, and each held by different institutions.[142] While many of the details in this third case study can apply to both the *Frontal Views* and the *Profile Views*, the primary focus of my investigation was *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views* held by the Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH). The work was purchased by the AGH through a government matching funds program in 1986.[143] It is important to note that all 100 of the photographs in this artwork are loose, meaning they are not attached to a support for the purpose of display. This is unlike, for example, Szilasi's mounted diptychs from the previous case study. As such, the hanging scheme is an important component of the final work. It protects the artist's intentions and serves as a practical guide for the owner. When exhibited, the photographs are pressed against the wall of the gallery behind slightly larger squares of Plexiglas that are secured to the wall with tenterhooks. The photographs are numbered sequentially one through 100 by the artist's hand on the verso, and this with the diagram of the hanging scheme is used as a map.

In 1989, on the occasion of an exhibition at Stux Gallery in New York City, Maggs revisited how the grid would function in *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views*. The installation plan deviated from the scheme modeled after Andre's sculpture, shifting from five rows of 20 images to six rows of 17 where the final row has two fewer than the others (fig. 19). Maggs's widow,

[142] Sutnik, "Portraits by Arnaud Maggs," in Monk, Maggs, and Sutnik, *Arnaud Maggs: Works*, 15. *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views* is held by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views* is part of the collections of the Art Gallery of Hamilton and the National Gallery of Canada.
[143] Arnaud Maggs artist file, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton ON.

artist Spring Hurlbut, suggests that the changes may have been the result of spatial restrictions in the gallery.[144] Following the exhibition at Stux, the *Frontal Views* were installed again using the same revised scheme, this time at the Neuberger Museum in Purchase, New York. After this, Maggs committed to the change and applied it to the *Profile Views* (fig. 20). The change to the hanging scheme results in a composition that is no longer closed, and insists that each portrait in the final work be considered both individually and as a whole. As Maggs explains, "It sort of says: 'This can continue.' It's open-ended a bit."[145] Still emphasizing time, Maggs shifts the focus from the finite to the infinite. The revised scheme changes the work's meaning, even if subtly, and raises questions about when an artwork is complete. Furthermore, Maggs's alteration to the profiles draws attention to where an institution's role and responsibility lies in such cases.

On March 17, 1991, Maggs addressed a letter to Ihor Holubizky, then-curator at the AGH, outlining the new hanging scheme for *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*. His instructions detail the shift from five rows of 20 to five rows of 17 and a sixth of 15, and include a diagram on archival paper (fig. 21):

> I am enclosing the revised and final hanging scheme for the work Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views 1980, which is currently in your collection.
>
> Going from five rows to six makes the piece far more dynamic and successful. I have already shown the 100 Frontals at both Stux Gallery and at the Neuberger Museum in Purchase, New York in this revised format, and find the installation to be vastly superior.[146]

The revision to the hanging scheme for *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views* came 11 years after the work was originally completed, and six years after it was purchased by the AGH. In 1991, the National Gallery of Canada acquired *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*. Perhaps this

[144] Spring Hurlbut, in conversation with the author, March 21, 2013. Susan Hobbs, Maggs's gallerist shares this view: "I think that change probably came about because it was in the space where that fit. …I think that was a space that probably had a wider wall that meant he should extend it a bit." Susan Hobbs, in discussion with the author, March 26, 2014, Toronto ON.
[145] Maggs quoted in Milroy, "Maggs dusts off some old mugs," R4.
[146] Arnaud Maggs artist file, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton ON. Also on record in The Estate of Arnaud Maggs archive.

transaction is what precipitated the formalization of the new scheme and prompted Maggs to provide updated details to the AGH. If, as Helena Robinson argues, curators are "arbiters of what should be considered historically significant,"[147] what is the task of the curator in these kinds of situations? Holubizky quickly replied in a letter dated March 26, 1991 to confirm receipt of Maggs's correspondence and to note that the new scheme was recorded in the gallery's files. He accepted the request "for reasons of Maggs's intellectual property and because [he] knew him well enough to understand his thoroughness."[148] As Lesley Ellen Harris explains, "the physical and intellectual components of any creation are separate."[149] Although the AGH owns *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*, Maggs retains intellectual property and Canadian copyright law protects his "moral rights." Further, Holubizky's knowledge of and relationship with the artist meant that he understood Maggs's alteration to be one that was carefully considered. According to Holubizky, because the physical work was not altered, consultation with other gallery staff was not required.[150] How would the institutional reaction shift if the situation differed? If, for instance, the curator felt the artist's change had not been thoroughly considered?

If, as Robinson contends, curators are "charged with the responsibility of interpreting which aspects of material evidence from the past are not only retained but also represented in meaningful ways for contemporary and future generations,"[151] how should institutions that own work that has been altered after purchase record these changes? The artist file at the AGH maintains a record of the correspondence outlining the shift, but a diagram of the original scheme is not part of the file.[152] *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views* does have an exhibition history at the

[147] Robinson, "Remembering Things Differently," 421.
[148] Ihor Holubizky, in email to the author, January 29, 2014.
[149] Lesley Ellen Harris, *Canadian Copyright Law*, 4th ed. (Hoboken NJ: Wiley, 2014), 2.
[150] Holubizky, January 29, 2014.
[151] Robinson, "Remembering Things Differently," 421.
[152] It is impossible to say whether the diagram ever existed in their files. The Estate of Arnaud Maggs archive does have diagrams on file for both the original and the updated schemes, and Katya Doleatto has confirmed that

institution prior to the shift. A note accompanies historical installation images of the work that the AGH has on file: "Do not use these photos for reproduction. The configuration is no longer correct as of November 1996. Use for historical reference only."[153] An examination of the files at the AGH — considering both what is maintained and what might be missing — reveals that the institution seeks to find a balance between documenting the change and preventing confusion when it comes to both the installation and reproduction of the artwork. But how is the change reflected publicly? Should a dual date, as in the Magor example, be used as a formal acknowledgement and record of the change to *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*? With Maggs's work, the date of creation remains 1980. Who decides? And how might the narrative and interpretation of the work be impacted?

Certainly, just as the others have, this case demonstrates that the historical memory surrounding a work of art can be affected by the slightest change, whether instigated by an artist, a curator, or the work's inherent chemistry itself. The original hanging format of Maggs's Beuys portraits has been almost entirely erased from the work's history. Outside of the newspaper article addressed in the literature survey, all other records of the shift exist only in institutional files and the artist's archive. Indeed, the manner in which Drouin-Brisebois writes about his Beuys portraits in the NGC catalogue for his retrospective, suggests an understanding of the revised scheme as part of the original conception of the work:

> In this project Maggs deviated from the rigidity of the presentation he used in *64 Portrait Studies* (4 rows of 16 portraits) and *Kunstakademie Details* (4 rows of 37 portraits), in which the rows in the grids alternate between profiles and frontals. He chose instead to

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instructions usually accompany the works. A written memo from the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto is preserved in the file, however, and it provides a cursory written guide for the original hanging scheme. It is possible, then, that the memo serves as a stand-in for Maggs's diagram.

[153] Arnaud Maggs artist file.

> separate the two views of Beuys and treat them as their own entities, leaving two vacant spaces in the last row of each grid of one hundred portraits (5 rows of 17, the last row of 15). This absence in the last row suggests that the series is either unfinished or continues.[154]

While Drouin-Brisebois acknowledges the spaces in the last row of Maggs's grid, she does not explain the discrepancy between this final formation and the original sketch, both of which are reproduced in the catalogue. Drouin-Brisebois's interpretation has subsequently been addressed by Sutnik who also describes the current scheme as if it were how the work were originally conceived:

> Maggs arranged a grid of five vertical rows of seventeen views, ending the sixth row with fifteen views, with both views sequenced systematically. Curator Josée Drouin-Brisebois has proposed that the absence of the last rows suggests that the series is either unfinished or continues. One could agree on this notion, purely based on the mesmerizing and compelling impact this work makes by its grand scale and in the mind of the viewer. The Beuys persona is never ending.[155]

These examples highlight that it is often the published narrative that persists. In addition to the historical record and the narrative of the work itself, what else is at stake? How is the larger narrative of the artist's practice affected?

Although Maggs's work is often systemically organized in grids, he was flexible with his arrangements for exhibition. Hurlbut asserts that he was very involved in the layout of his exhibitions, stressing that he was, "acutely aware of what a wall could tolerate."[156] The scale of his works is formidable. As such, he would often edit works as necessary to land at an arrangement that worked well for a given exhibition space. For instance, his gallerist, Susan Hobbs explains how an artwork was modified for exhibition at the Power Plant:

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[154] Drouin-Brisebois, *Identification*, 28.
[155] Sutnik, "The More One Looks," in Maggs et al., *Arnaud Maggs*, 112.
[156] Hurlbut, March 21, 2013. Corroborated time and time again by others, such as Doina Popescu (November 13, 2013), Katya Doleatto (May 6, 2014), Maia-Mari Sutnik (March 14, 2014), and Susan Hobbs (March 26, 2014), all in conversation with the author.

> For example, *Travail des enfants dans l'industrie* (1994) [(fig. 22)]was the first piece that he showed here that filled the 48-foot wall downstairs, with about three feet left. That was in '94. In '99 it was shown at the Power Plant, and the Power Plant didn't have a 48-foot long wall. So he took stuff out temporarily. And he's done that a number of times.[157]

The same work was also edited for installation at the NGC (fig. 23). *Travail des enfants dans l'industrie: Les étiquettes* is sequential; each of the tags — used to represent child workers in early twentieth-century French textile factories — had a number on them, and Maggs photographed them beginning with the lowest number. However, as Hobbs explains, the total number of photographs (198) is not part of the title, and so Maggs would selectively edit the work, while maintaining the overall sequence.[158] His editing decisions were always carefully considered, and his willingness to alter his work for the purposes of exhibition did have its limits.

Maggs's decisions were not solely motivated by spatial restrictions; he remained focused on ensuring that the integrity of the artwork remained in tact. For instance, in many of his portrait works, the actual number of photographs that comprise the final composition is an integral component of that work. Artworks such as *48 Views Series* (1981-83) and *64 Portrait Studies*, for example, are based on his contact sheets and reflect the order in which he photographed his sitters, and so they are not as flexible for editing: "*64 Portrait Studies* has to be the way it is because it's 32 different people, 16 men and 16 women. So you can't really change that around."[159] Interestingly, there is an early installation photograph in the artist's archive showing *64 Portrait Studies* installed in two rows instead of four, and using only 50 of the 64 portraits (fig. 24). While further documentation explaining this instance could not be located, it does suggest that Maggs may have experimented with altering the scheme for that work too. But

[157] Hobbs, March 26, 2014. Hobbs confirmed that the 2012 retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada featured works that had been edited down due to spatial restrictions. Similarly, Sutnik also recounts having seen his work installed in modified schemes to accommodate exhibition space. Sutnik, March 14, 2014.
[158] Hobbs, March 26, 2014.
[159] Ibid.

all subsequent photographic documentation and the hanging instructions adhere to the four rows of 16 (fig. 25) as indicated in his maquette (fig. 26), implying that he felt modifications to the order of that particular work were ineffective.

Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views too, of course, has the total number of images indicated in the title of the work. But the single sitter and the single view allows for more flexibility in its arrangement. While the total number of photographs cannot change, for Maggs a shift in the hanging scheme did not challenge the integrity of the work. While the circumstances that led to the revised hanging scheme for his Beuys works were, again, likely as a result of exhibition-related spatial restrictions, the modified configuration of the Beuys portraits is the only one committed to paper as a formal change. What does this reveal about his practice? When discussing the alteration, Hurlbut asserts that, "these kinds of details mattered to Arnaud."[160] It is a sentiment echoed by his long-time assistant, Katya Doleatto, who argues that the modified scheme would have been a "Eureka moment for him, one that he would have been excited to share."[161] What is lost if the details of this story are forgotten? How is the narrative of his larger practice affected? What other secrets does the museum register hold?

[160] Hurlbut, in conversation with the author, May 6, 2014.
[161] Katya Doleatto, in conversation with the author, May 6, 2014. Doleatto describes an artist who would be excited about the new way of seeing the work.

Figure 14. Arnaud Maggs, *64 Portrait Studies*, 1976-78. Installed at the Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris, 1980.

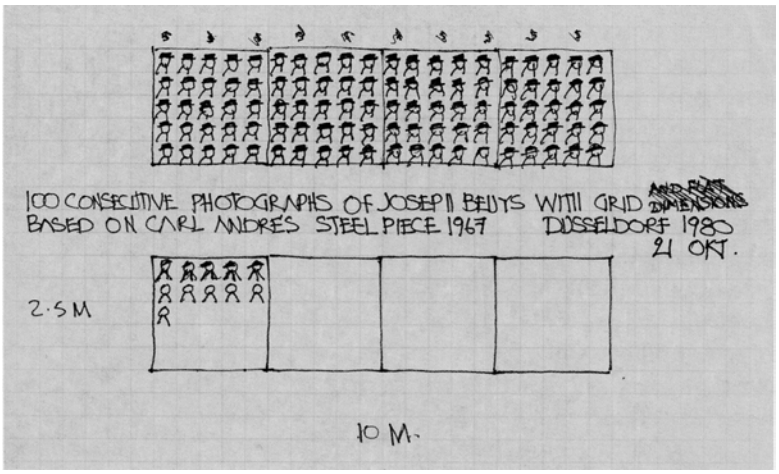


Figure 15. Arnaud Maggs, sketch for *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*, 1980, from *Notebook*, c. 1980.

Reproduced by permission of The Estate of Arnaud Maggs. © Arnaud Maggs.

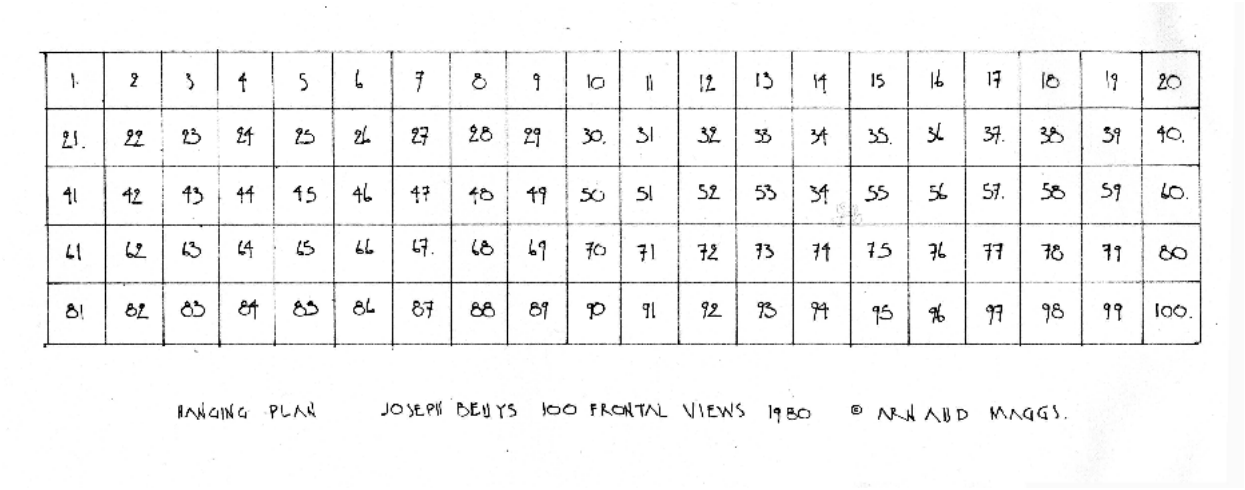


Figure 16. Arnaud Maggs, original hanging plan for *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views*, 1980.

Image courtesy of The Estate of Arnaud Maggs. Reproduced by permission of The Estate of Arnaud Maggs. © Arnaud Maggs.

Figure 17. Arnaud Maggs, *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views*, 1980. Installed in its original configuration at the Canadian Centre of Photography, Toronto, 1982.

Figure 18. Arnaud Maggs, *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*, 1980. Installed in its original configuration at Optica, Montreal, 1983.

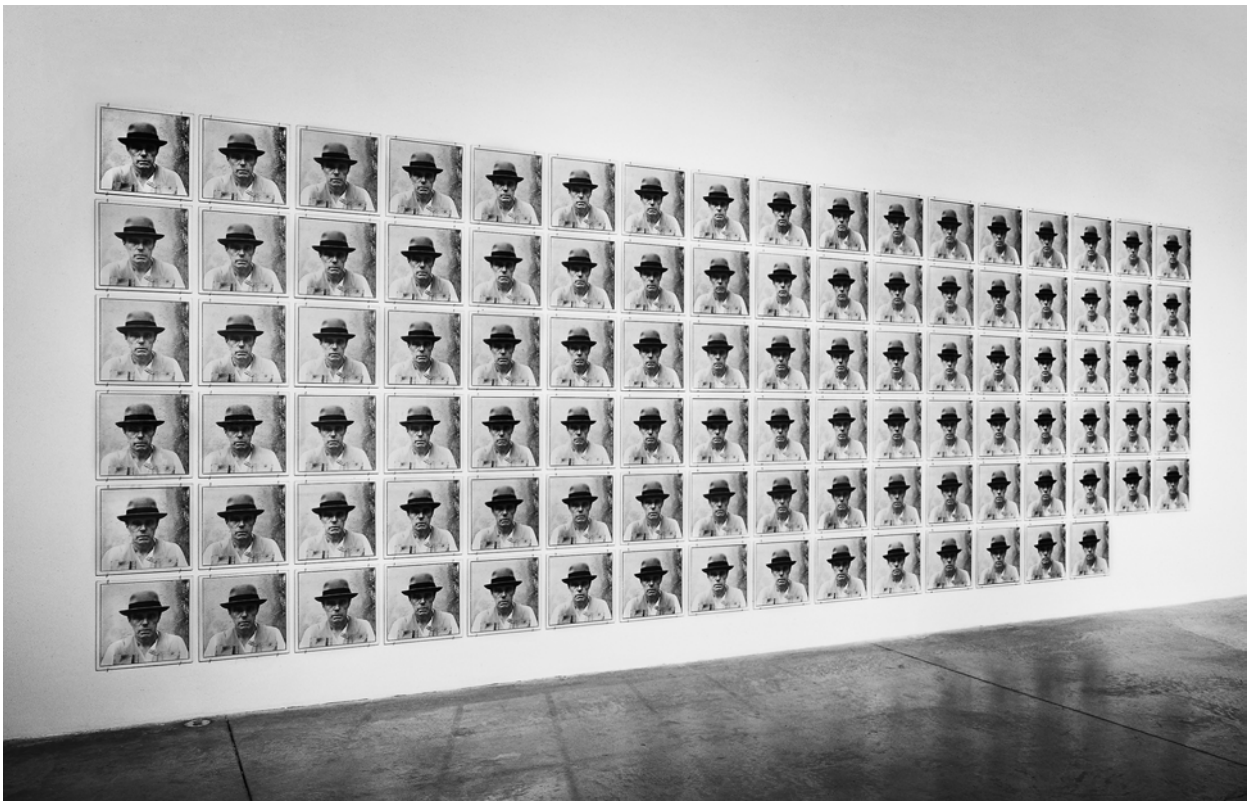


Figure 19. Arnaud Maggs, *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views*, 1980. Installed in its updated and current configuration at The Power Plant, Toronto, 1999.

Figure 20. Arnaud Maggs, *Joseph Beuys, 100 Profile Views*, 1980. Installed in its updated and current configuration at The Power Plant, Toronto, 1999.

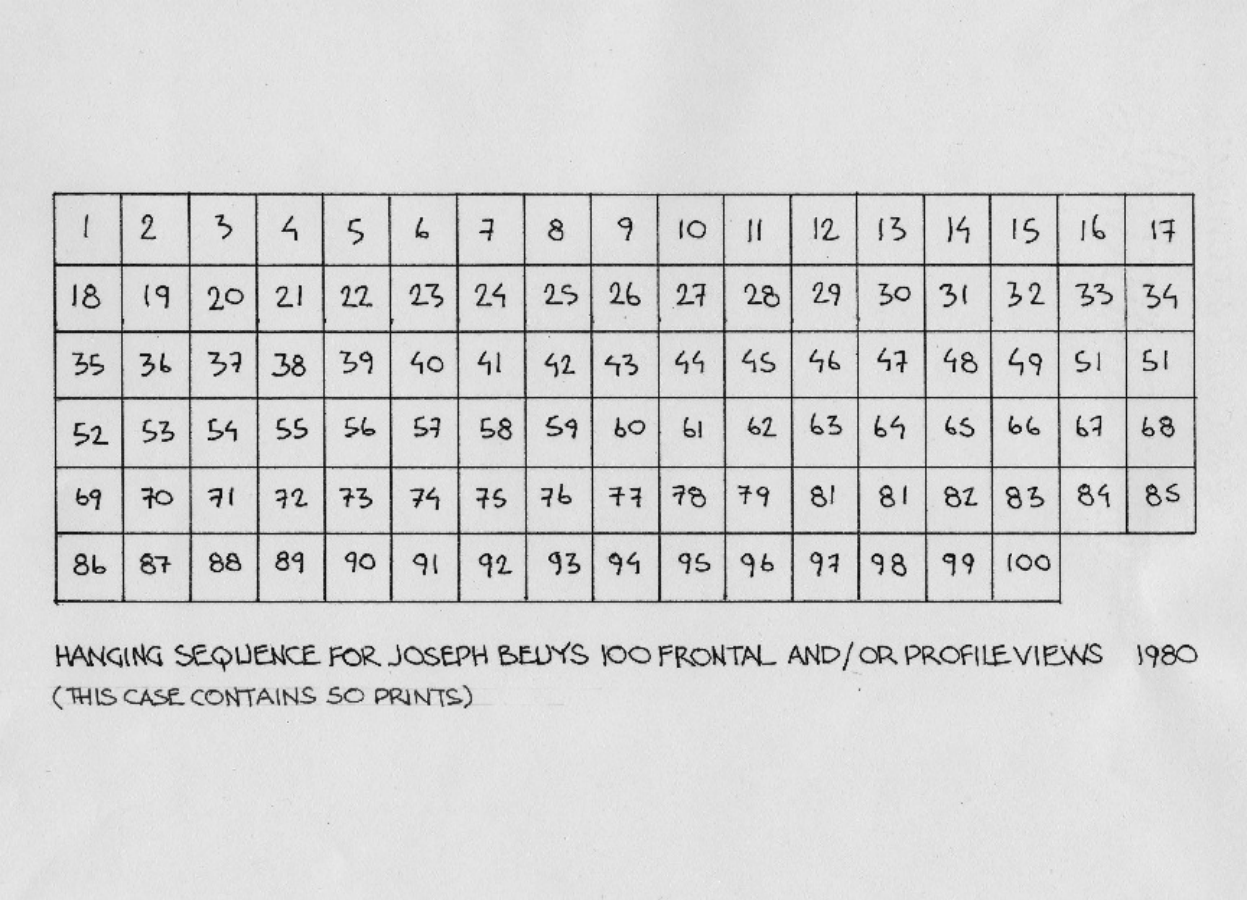


Figure 21. Arnaud Maggs, updated hanging sequence for *Joseph Beuys, 100 Frontal Views*, 1980. The diagram provided to the AGH is similar to the one pictured, but labelled "Installation Plan for Joseph Beuys 100 Profile Views 1980," signed by the artist, and dated "15 3 91."

Figure 22. Arnaud Maggs, *Travail des enfants de l'industrie: Les étiquettes*, 1994. Complete installation, Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto, 1994.

Figure 23. Arnaud Maggs, *Travail des enfants de l'industrie: Les étiquettes*, 1994. Edited installation, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1999-2000.

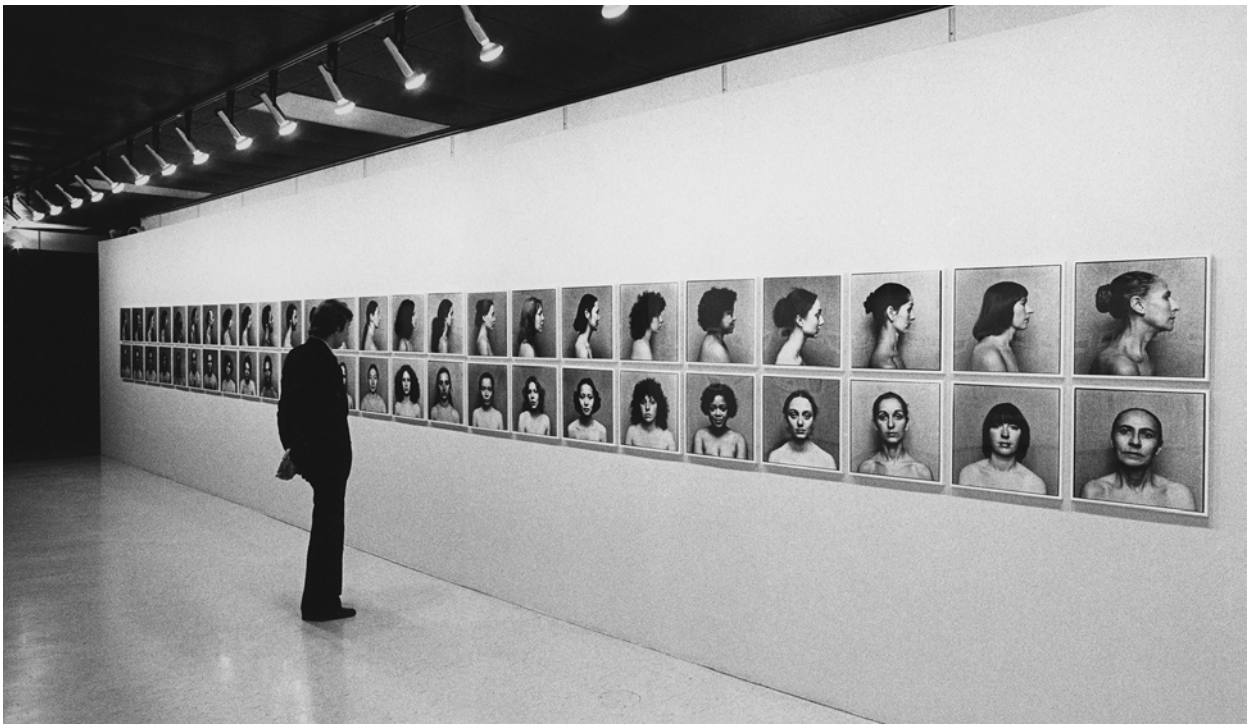
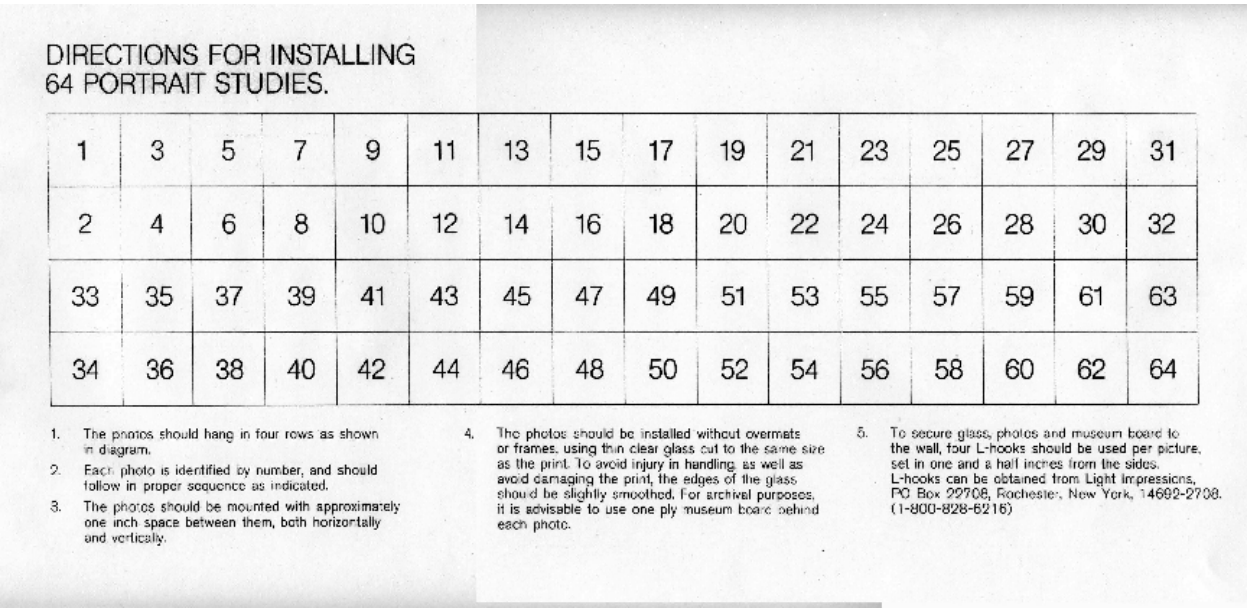


Figure 24. Arnaud Maggs, *64 Portrait Studies*, 1976-78. Edited installation, location unknown.

Image courtesy of The Estate of Arnaud Maggs. Reproduced by permission of The Estate of Arnaud Maggs.



DIRECTIONS FOR INSTALLING
64 PORTRAIT STUDIES.

1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31
2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	59	61	63
34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64

1. The photos should hang in four rows as shown in diagram.
2. Each photo is identified by number, and should follow in proper sequence as indicated.
3. The photos should be mounted with approximately one inch space between them, both horizontally and vertically.
4. The photos should be installed without overmats or frames, using thin clear glass cut to the same size as the print. To avoid injury in handling, as well as avoid damaging the print, the edges of the glass should be slightly smoothed. For archival purposes, it is advisable to use one ply museum board behind each photo.
5. To secure glass, photos and museum board to the wall, four L-hooks should be used per picture, set in one and a half inches from the sides. L-hooks can be obtained from Light Impressions, PO Box 22708, Rochester, New York, 14692-2708. (1-800-828-6216)

Figure 25. Arnaud Maggs, installation instructions for *64 Portrait Studies*, 1976-78.

Image courtesy of The Estate of Arnaud Maggs. Reproduced by permission of The Estate of Arnaud Maggs. © Arnaud Maggs.

Figure 26. Arnaud Maggs, *64 Portrait Studies Maquette,* 1976-78.

Library and Archives Canada, archival reference number R7959-71, e010765658. Reproduced by permission of The Estate of Arnaud Maggs. © Arnaud Maggs.

Conclusion

The case studies explored in this thesis have demonstrated that a change made to an artwork — no matter how small — after it was initially considered complete has the potential to have a big and lasting impact. This is particularly so after an artwork has been accessioned, published, and exhibited. And, this thesis commits to record details in the narratives of artworks by Michael Snow, Gabor Szilasi, and Arnaud Maggs, that have otherwise been unacknowledged or unexamined in detail. There is a "back to the future" element common to the examples discussed, wherein artists went back to make changes to a work completed at a different time, and at a different stage in their careers. Doing so alters the history of the object and, by extension, can change the history and the *present* of the artist's practice. Each of the case studies have illuminated ways in which alterations might extend into the future, and, each in its own way, has underscored the subjectivity involved in both the intellectual and practical considerations related to post-accession changes. Further, each case has highlighted that narrative is constructed. As such, the case studies emphasize and insist, as Swinney does, that the museum record is itself a construction.

An important aspect of my approach to this project was a concerted emphasis placed on the value of asking questions, many of which cannot easily be answered, if they can be at all. While my focus is largely on photographic material, the questions and issues addressed are relevant to a broader understanding of contemporary art practices and collections. My project endeavours to facilitate dialogue and expand both an awareness of post-accession changes and a deeper recognition of their narrative value. It warrants repeating here that it is my hope that such a dialogue will foster new ways of dealing with post-accession changes to works of art. Swinney argues that the museum's register is a "'a cascade of inscriptions' made at different times, and in

different material and epistemic spaces."[162] How might this cascade of inscriptions be accessed and explored in different ways? If, as MacLeod, Hanks, and Hale assert, the value of narrative lies in its capacity for provocation and its creative potential, how might new models invite contestation, provocation, and creative responses as a way to foster engagement with aspects of narrative that go largely unnoticed? And, how too might this afford even richer understandings of works of art and art practices?

[162] Swinney, "What Do We Know about What We Know?," in Dudley et. al., *The Thing about Museums*, 42.

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