

Space Walker

When Does Post - Modernism Begin?

A.: 1965 plus-or-minus four years.
One Hundred Starting Points of the Post-Modern: The Age of the Baby Boomer
(With a Postscript on the Beginning of the Post-Postmodern Generation in 1985 +/- 4 years)

"The truth is in the whole."—Hegel



100
Yuri Gagarin, manned space flight, 1961, orbit and weightlessness make time and space more relative than any person has experienced before.

99
Paolo Soleri's cave-house-studio, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1961, and his search for 'Arcologies' (architectural ecologies), the paradoxical blending of high tech and the eco-freak.



98
Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961, the attack on artificial, order-imposing city planning begins.



97
John Cage, *Silence; Lectures and Writings*, 1961, mainstreaming the avant-garde notion of chance in composition.



96
Berlin Wall, 1961, the admission of failure by Soviet Communism.



95
John Lilly, *Man and Dolphin*, 1961, the serious view that man is not superior to all of the animals.



94
"Last of the epics to date: *El Cid*," 1961 John Cary writing in 1974, the mindless spectacle, Hollywood's first major formula, wanes.

93
Robert Zimmerman reinvented as Bob Dylan releases *Bob Dylan* (Columbia/CBS), 1962, the commercial counterculture begins.



92
Death of the "Big Red Cars" and their 1,000 miles of track in Los Angeles, April 9, 1962: "the day the dismantling of the city's once great transit system was complete."



91
Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 1962, birth of the ecological movement.

89
Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962: objective science is a myth.

REPORT ON BUSINESS

88
Introduction of "Report on Business" in Toronto *Globe and Mail*, 1962, the national newspaper will aim only at the upmarket reader now.

87
1st International Biennial of Tapestry, Lausanne, 1962, launches international career of Magdalena Abakanowicz of Warsaw, the artist who subsequently does the most to make fabric a leading sculptural material.



86
Robert Venturi builds a house for his mother at Chesnut Hill, Pennsylvania, 1962. It has zappy colour, toy-block shapes, decorative mouldings and a steeply gabled roof: the fun begins.

85
Independent architectural practice: Frank Gehry 1962, Ricardo Bofill 1962, Charles Moore 1962.

84
Marylebone Cricket Club drops the distinction between the Gentlemen (amateurs) and the Players (professionals), 1962.



83
Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le totemisme aujourd'hui*, 1962 and *La Pensée sauvage*, 1962: western civilization stinks.

82
Vatican II, 1962, watershed for modernizing the Roman Catholic Church.

81
Max Kozloff, "Pop' Culture, Metaphysical Disgust, and the New Vulgarians," *Art International* (1962): American Pop Art instantly identified and named (borrowing term coined earlier for British Pop Art by Lawrence Alloway).



80
Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch*, 1962, beginning of the Soviet thaw.

79
Cuban Missile Crisis, October-November 1962: nuclear brinkmanship. The Cold War peaks.

78
BBC "Open University" initiates television-transmitted courses, 1962-63; the medium that brought "the news from nowhere" now brings "knowledge from nowhere."



77
Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," *Film Culture* (Winter 1962/63), Truffaut's theory—that the director is the "author" of a film—enters the English language press: the personalization of the medium.

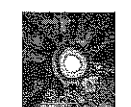
76
With the instant success of *The New York Review of Books*, 1963, "the reading of reviews had replaced the reading of books"—John Lukacs, *Outgrowing Democracy* (1984):312.



75
Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 1963, the women's movement begins anew.



74
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s nonviolent Birmingham campaign, 1963, met by force, arrests, hoses, galvanizing resistance and world opinion, in the industrial bastion of segregation.



73
"1963 when specialty units for intensive care of critically ill and injured patients first evolved"—prospectus of 18th annual Critical Care Symposium, San Francisco, Feb. 27-Mar. 2, 1983.

72
1963: Cal Tech's Maarten Schmidt discovers quasars ("quasi-stellar radio sources"), older, faster, brighter than anything known before: remnants of the ancient universe.

71
Video sculpture pioneered, 1963, in the United States by Nam June Paik and in Germany by Wolf Vostell.

70
Picasso's late style begins, 1963 (according to Gert Schiff), 1964 (according to Christian Geisler). The conventional knock on Picasso being that he had no late style or, if he did, it was his style of the fifties, which was considered banal. (He continues to dominate the century despite all efforts to destroy him or replace him with Duchamp. Each time an Ariana Stassinopoulos Huffington "destroys" Picasso, a Mary Walker's C-60 effectively 'recreates' him.)



69
"Angst is dead," Josef Albers, 1963, writing to Harold Rosenberg.

68
"Expressionism is dead," Leo Steinberg, 1963.

67
French Ministry of Culture closes and seals Lascaux Cave, 1963: the end of the beginning; a new age of archaeological responsibility.



The Wall

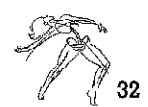
66
Direct "hot line" established between the White House and the Kremlin, 1963, proving that the Cold War has peaked with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

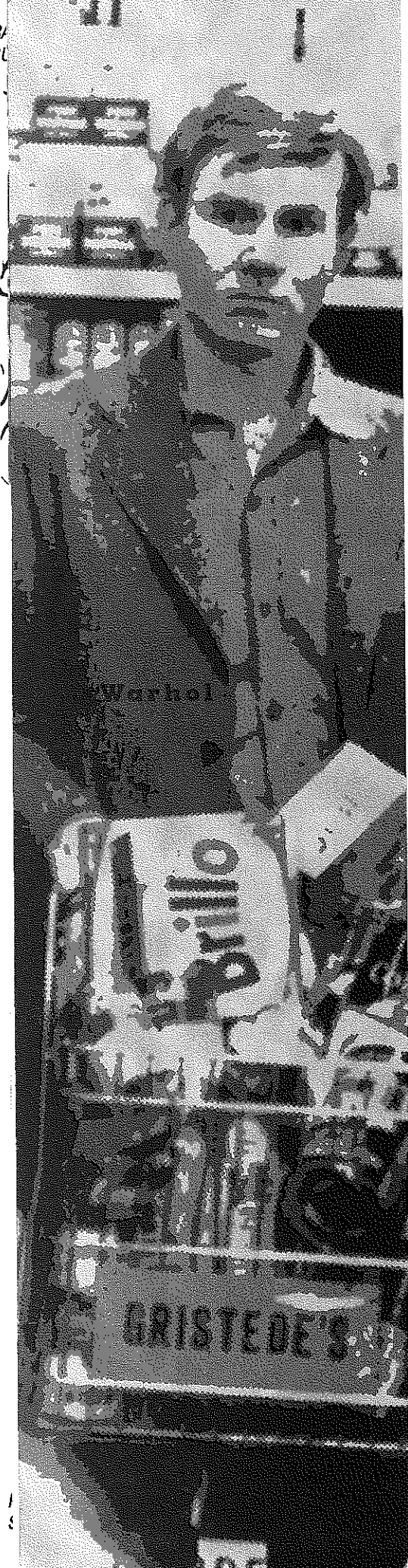
65
March on Washington, August 1963, the biggest demonstration in Washington history: a new generation demonstrates that racial civil rights must now be addressed in America.



64
Assassination of John F. Kennedy, November 22, 1963: "Watershed of this generation"—Marshall McLuhan.

63
Roger Sperry, "The Great Cerebral Commissure," *Scientific American*, January 1964, the "split brain" with its two conscious worlds signals the end of behaviourism and the reevaluation of non-linear thinking.





62

"The top five singles and two albums are all by the Beatles, April 1964, the nadir of culture by numbers is reached according to Sidney Zion."—Richard Schickel, *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity* (1985):245.

61

Performance art begins: Carolee Schneemann, "Meat Joy," 1964.

60

Leslie Fiedler, "The Death of Avant-Garde Literature," *New York Herald Tribune Magazine*, May 17, 1964: "But the literature major and his wife, along with the second generation literature majors who are their children, constitute the new middle-brow audience, whose appearance testifies to the technical exhaustion of the avant-garde."

59

The Blockbuster begins with André Malraux's loan of the *Mona Lisa* to the United States in 1963 and of Michelangelo's *Vatican Pietà* to the New York World's Fair of 1964—Robert Hughes, *Nothing If Not Critical* (1990):22. The *Venus de Milo* travels to Tokyo during the 1964 Olympics.

58

Bob Dylan brings Paul Butterfield out to back him on electric guitar at the Newport Folk Festival, 1964, to boos, hisses, tears in Pete Seegar's eyes, signalling a generational change.

57

"Widespread purchase of colour receivers began in the United States in 1964." The second generation of commercial television begins.

56

Andy Warhol, Brillo Box exhibition, Stable Gallery, New York, 1964: The real Andy Warhol stands up and Arthur C. Danto calls it art entering the post-historical phase.

55

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 1964, leads to the discovery of McLuhan, publishing since the forties, by American readers.

54

The losers begin to win in the "dirty Western," pioneered by the Spaghetti Westerns, themselves led by Sergio Leone's dubbed *Per un pugno di dollari* (*A Fistful of Dollars*), 1964, starring "The Man with No Name" (Clint Eastwood).

53

"The exact date of the collapse of the rule of modernism is difficult to determine... Or 1964 and the construction of a condominium called Sea Ranch, whose architect, Charles Moore, avoided flat roofs and plate-glass windows and instead based his design on local northern California barns"—Witold Rybczynski, writing in 1992.

52

The shift of American politics and dynamism to west of centre, 1964, with the nomination of two southwestern presidential candidates—John Lukacs, *Outgrowing Democracy* (1984):312.

51

Estimated date at which California passes New York as the most populous state, circa 1964 (confirmed by 1970 census; doubles New York state by 1990 census). The American imagination increasingly defined by Los Angeles rather than New York.

50

Free Speech Movement, Berkeley, Sept.-Oct. 1964, birth of the student movement: this touchstone of the Baby Boomer generation declares a Utopian ethos for an affluent generation.

49

Chinese nuclear bomb test, October 16, 1964, nuclear proliferation to the Third World takes First and Second Worlds by surprise.

48

Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp'," *Partisan Review*, Fall 1964, a lateral, non-linear, fragmentary, and intentionally incomplete article. This article is Hilton Kramer's nominee for the birth of Po-Mo: "The whole point of camp, Miss Sontag wrote, 'is to dethrone the serious,' thereby defining the special temper of postmodernist culture."

47

Fight to stop Disney's Mineral King ski resort with its access road through Sequoia National Park begins to radicalize the Sierra Club and inaugurates ecological activism, 1964.



46

"Between 1962 and 1966...the nation's values [changed]."
—Marjorie Rosen, *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies & the American Dream* (1973):328.

45

March 18, 1965: first space walk: Aleksei A. Leonov of the Voskhod 2, simulcast to earth: first steps beyond native Earth.

44



Tom Wolfe, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flaked Streamline Baby*, 1965, the New Journalism begins: the reader as hip initiate of the author.

43

Ralph Nader, *Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-in Dangers of the American Automobile*, 1965, taking on General Motors bare-handed, the consumer movement begins.

42



Sudden death of David Smith, the last great pure capital-M Modernist sculptor, 1965, when he rolled his steel truck off a curve near Bennington, Vermont. After Smith, large-scale metal sculpture would increasingly be fabricated by technicians for the artists.

41

University of British Columbia "Media is the Message" multi-media performance, 1965, illustrates McLuhan's dictum and leads to a generation of experiments elsewhere (via *Time* magazine's report of the event and in Vancouver art: InterMedia Theatre, Pacific Cinematheque, Co-op Radio).

40

Leslie Fiedler, "The New Mutants," *Partisan Review*, 1965: "the post-humanist, post-male, post-white, post-heroic world is a post-Jewish world by the same token..."

39

Rising middle class expectations, circa 1965: the Baby Boom generation begins to come of age and demand spiritual satisfaction, physical gratification, and artistic expression instead of more "console model Magnavox's" (in Richard Schickel's phrase).

38



"The ideal of a broad education for students went down the drain with the explosion of academic activity and disciplines in the 1960s..."
—David Suzuki writing in the *Globe and Mail*, November 14, 1967.

37

Breakdown of the previous distinctions between painting and sculpture, e.g. Iain Baxter, *No. 11, Landscape with Cumulus Clouds*, 1965; made of vacuum-formed butyrate plastic painted with acrylic but looking like a landscape-seen-through-a-window and hanging on a wall: it could be either.

36

Replica of Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass* (1917-23) by Richard Hamilton, built and exhibited at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1965 (Tate Gallery declines to drop it on the floor and shatter it to complete the effect of the original, dropped accidentally in 1936.)
The conscious simulation of modernist high art begins.

35

The waning of New York, circa 1965: the diaspora of intellectuals, writers and artists to the campuses of America; the cost of living in Manhattan leads to less experimentation and the showcasing instead of work developed elsewhere; the decentralizing policies of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Humanities (NEH)—Leonard Wallock, *New York, Culture Capital of the World, 1940-1965* (1988):14.

34

"In 1965 the famous 'cosmic microwave background radiation' was discovered by Arno Penzias and Robert W. Wilson at Bell Labs and explained by Robert Dicke's group at Princeton." Predicted by the Big Bang theory, this was striking evidence for an expanding, cooling, slowing, decaying universe.

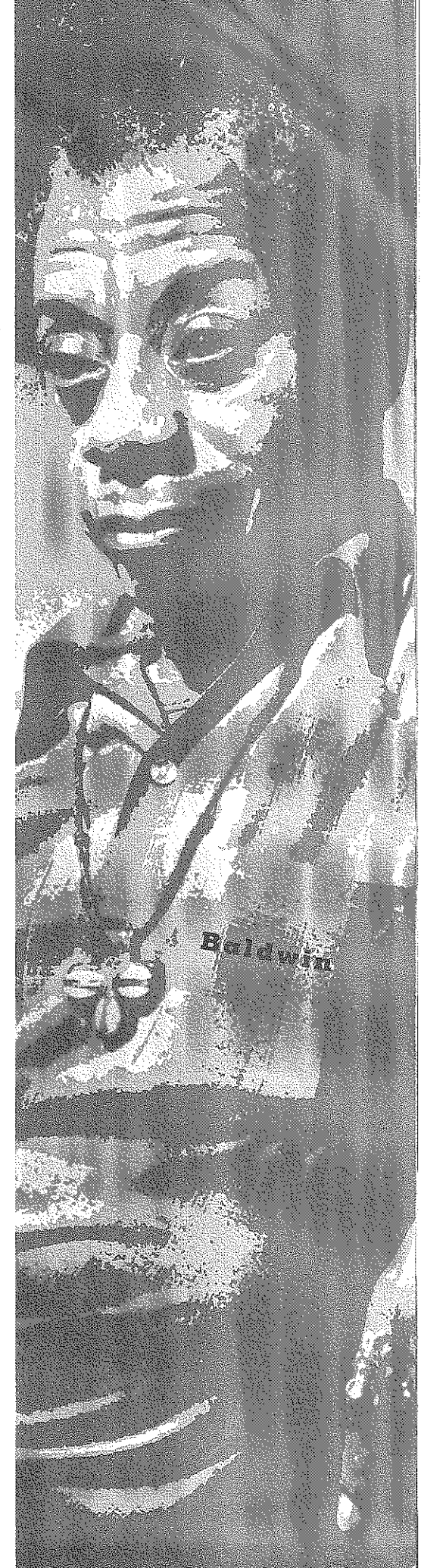
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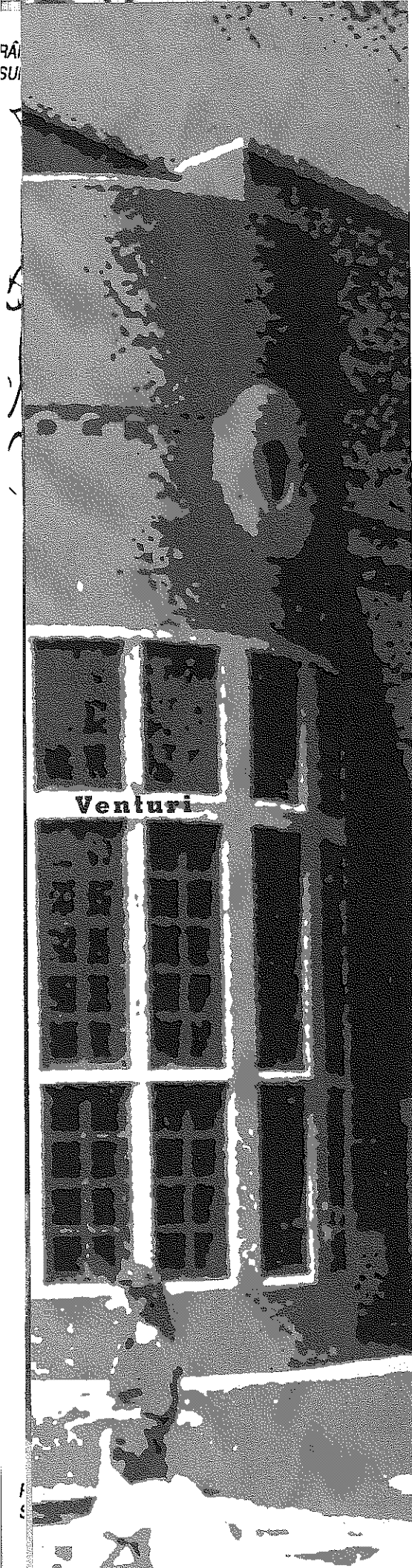


James Baldwin gives up on America, leaves, 1965 (to return from France in 1977 after which he comments on the Arab Oil Crisis of 1973-4: "It is the end of the western world. But the end of the western world is not the end of the world.")

32


Joseph Beuys performs his first "Aktion": *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* at Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, November 26, 1965. With his first shamanistic performance, Beuys initiates the reenchantment of art and its relationship with a resanctified nature.






31 Belated publication of **Jean Rhys's** *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 1966 whose West Indian heroine turns the tables on the England which imprisons her. An important early example of art reflecting the emergence of dual cultures.

30 The 1966 report of Cambridge physiologist Robert Edwards, to have cultured "immature egg cells from the human ovary up to the point of ripeness for fertilization [and] tentative claims to have actually achieved fertilization in test tubes" leads to a furor in newspapers over "test tube babies." The age of genetic engineering is launched in the broad public.

29 **Robert Venturi**, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, 1966, the American New Testament of postmodernist architectural thinking. 

28 **Aldo Rossi**, *L'Architettura della città* Padua, 1966, the Italian New Testament of postmodernist architectural thinking. 


27 1966: Walt Disney dies and work begins on **Disney World, Orlando**: Disney dies and is reborn for another generation.

26 Jordan's **West Bank**, Syria's **Golan Heights**, and parts of Egypt's **Sinai Peninsula** occupied by Israel since 1967 war: an aggressive Jewish state, something new under the sun.


25 "It turned in 1967. Various things peaked: postwar North American prosperity, Vietnam war, popular art became high art: *Sergeant Pepper's*, *Jimi Hendrix*, *Janis Ian*."—Jill Wade.

24 **Sha Na Na** was born when Columbia Choristers were a hit singing fifties numbers at the 1967 Ivy League Trivia Championship: the triumph of nostalgia begins.

23 *Rolling Stone* founded in 1967, a two-headed hydra: pop capitalism (reporting on music posing as anti-establishment expression).

22 Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*, 1967: "that was...a watershed movie," said Pauline Kael, "it delighted but confused." American film history splits here: according to Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (1975), it was the end of self-censorship. 

21 "Nineteen sixty-seven was a turning point in art, as the minimal styles fell apart into distributional, anti-formal, anti-illusionist, conceptual, process, or body art. All these sub-categories I believe were inspired by the larger than life blow-ups of Namuth's Pollock photographs that accompanied the 1967 **MOMA** retrospective,"—Barbara Rose, *Pollock Painting* (1988):n.p.


20 **Jacques Derrida**, *De la Grammatologie*, 1967, *La Voix et la phénomène*, 1967, *L'écriture et la différence*, 1967, the shift from diachronic to synchronic studies. 

19 Expo 67 Montréal and Canadian Centennial, 1967, birth of a new phenomenon: fashionable Canadian nationalism.

18 Off-road racing invented, semi-spontaneously, with make-shift officiating, the **Baja 1000** in 1967: searching for a new frontier; a race from nowhere to nowhere.

17 **Gilbert & George** form their artistic partnership, 1967, two brains to work as one.

16 The Los Angeles Police Department creates in secret the first paramilitary **SWAT** (Special Weapons and Tactics) Units, 1967, under chief Ed Davis, to contend with anticipated urban guerrilla warfare.

15 First human heart transplant, December 3, 1967, by flamboyant South African surgeon **Christian Barnard** and a team of 20 surgeons for incurably ill grocer **Louis Washkansky**, starts a medical revolution. The further erosion of anatomy as destiny. 

 **14** **Tet Offensive**, January-February, 1968: simultaneous attacks on 41 cities demonstrate that the United States is losing its neocolonial "Boer War"—the unexpected news that the American empire is on the wane.

13 "In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes...."—**Andy Warhol**, 1968. Prophecy/wish/curse from the living litmus paper of fame.

12 "Research universities were riding the great rising wave of federal funds for research (which lasted until 1968)...."—Clark Kerr, president of University of California, Berkeley.

11 The third modern age begins, "the **Media Cycle**," 1968, following the University Cycle from 1880, and the Publishing Cycle from 1920, according to Régis Debray, writing in 1981.

10 May 1968: a would-be **French Revolution**: a new generation demands a new egalitarian France.

9 **Jean Baudrillard**, *Le Système des objets*, 1968, Saussure's half-century-old sign systems achieve the high ground of intellectual discourse.

8 Replica of **Vladimir Tatlin's** destroyed model for a proposed *Monument to the Third International* (1920) built and exhibited at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1968: the historicizing recreation from whole cloth of holy icons of modernism (Tatlin's *Letatlin* glider recreated at Newcastle by Martin Chalk, 1968).

7 *Art - Language* magazine begins publishing in May 1969; subsequent exhibitions in 1969 by the Art & Language group launch conceptual art: the abnegation of the visual/visceral/emotive/intuitive in art.

6 New York police close down the **Stonewall Inn**, a gay bar in Greenwich Village, June 1969, precipitating the riots that launch militant gay activism: the "gay liberation movement."

5 **Black Sabbath** album, 1969, the genre of teen-aimed heavy metal music begins: the successful marketing of a corporate product designed to annoy parents.

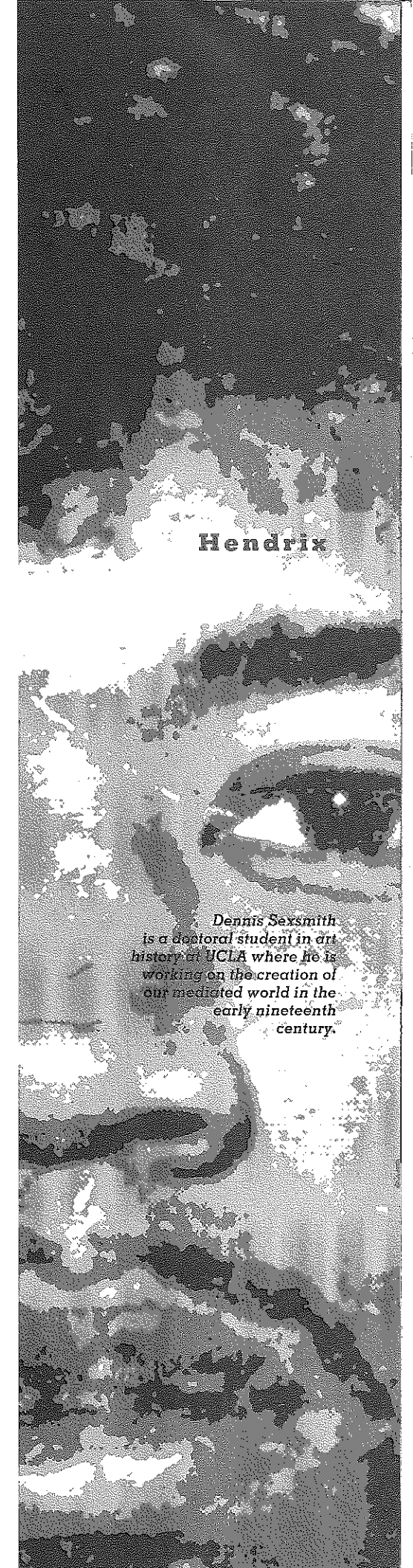
4 **Alain Touraine**, *La Société post-industrielle*, 1969, inspired by "French Revolution" of the previous year, popularizes the term "post-industrial" for this new period.

3 **Kenneth Clark**, BBC television series, "Civilization: A Personal View," 1969: the conscious attempt to demystify and popularize high art earns Clark the enduring enmity of art snobs and leads to the false trope, "Kenneth Clark does bad art history."

 **2** Independent scientist **J.E. Lovelock's** "Gaia Hypothesis," that the entire Earth is a living, self-regulating organism, first presented at a conference at Princeton in 1969: the reenchantment of science begins, reversing a four hundred year trend.

 **1** **Man on the Moon**, 1969: Earth is no longer destiny.

P.S. When does the Post-Modern generation end? When the generation after the Baby Boom generation comes of age: twin photographers **Doug and Mike Starn** turned twenty in 1982, as did painter **Attila Richard Lucacs**. Ojibway performance artist **Rebecca Belmore** turned 20 in 1980, Scottish painter **Stephen Conroy** in 1984, Los Angeles painter **Lawrence Gip** in 1982, and London Montagemaker **Sonia Boyce** in 1982, just to name a few of the artists. These are the "television babies," raised on Madonna, very cheeky, very hip. A few years from now, when their mature work is traced back, their era will be seen to begin to supplant the Po-Mo generation's after 1985 plus-or-minus four years.



Dennis Sexsmith is a doctoral student in art history at UCLA where he is working on the creation of our mediated world in the early nineteenth century.



RAN
SUP

PARTIAL TO WHA

THE STORY THE STORY

HE HAD NO
PRE-WAR MEMORY

WHAT, YOU SAY?

HE HAD NO
PRE-WAR MEMORY

TO WHAT, YOU SAY?

YOU SAY?

The story is

always

partial -

Vera Frenkel, *Journey* from the installation at the Art Gallery of York University, 1993