

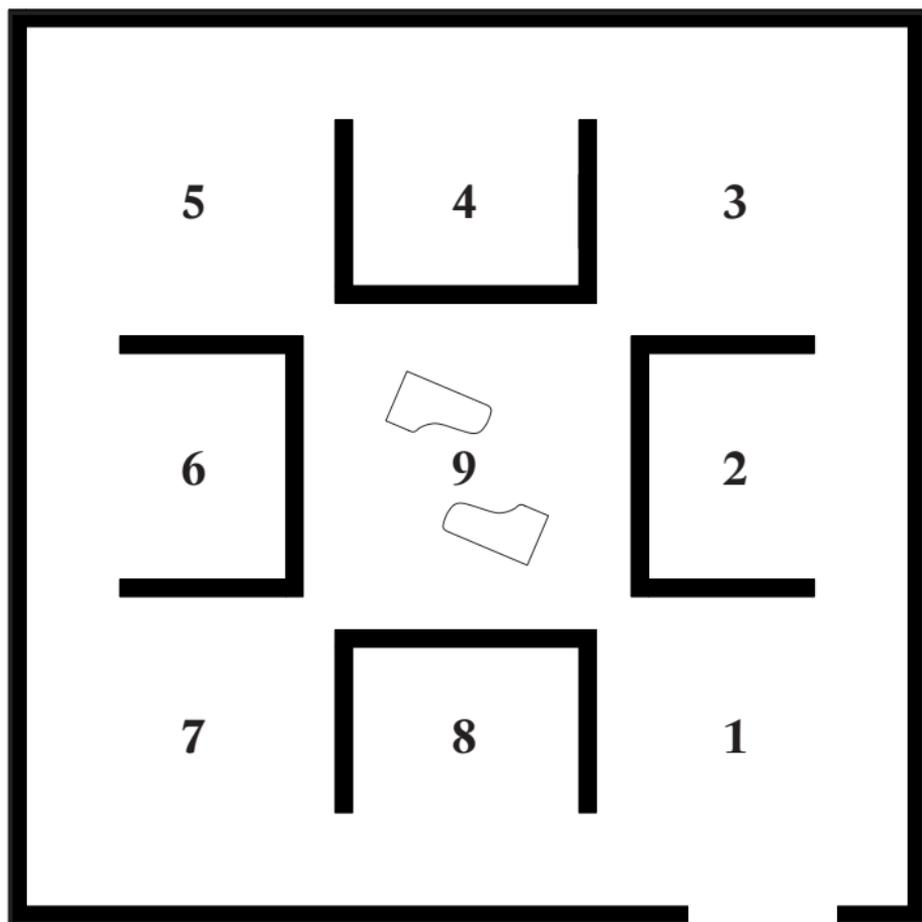
Exhibition Guide

**Sherrie Levine. After All
Works 1981-2016**

October 28, 2016 – February 12, 2017

**NEUES MUSEUM
State Museum for
Art and Design Nuremberg**

Exhibition Layout



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“When I was in art school, I was always frustrated because everything I did, even the things I liked, was somehow derivative. So when I started copying works, I saw this approach as a kind of resistance against such frustrations. And that became the content of my work. Because in reality, every work is somehow made of existing ideas. That’s an aspect most artists try to suppress because it’s disagreeable to them. I suddenly realized that if I stopped suppressing this fact I could free myself and finally do what I wanted. I could stop wanting to be original.”¹

Introduction

It is art based on art. To this day, photographs of works by different artists, found objects, and materials from everyday culture constitute the “originals” with which Sherrie Levine works – and plays. The interplay between closeness and distance, what is one’s own and what belongs to others, the identical and the non-identical, runs through the oeuvre of this American artist born in 1947. She also plays with the “views” of the viewer—in particular views seeking to define what is commonly accepted as a “real” artwork, what can never be considered as such, and what counts as a copy.

Initially, in the late 1970s, Levine cut out images of artworks, made them into collages, framed them, and declared them as works of her own. Around 1980, she made series of photographs of catalogue images showing photographs, drawings, and paintings by other artists. She also used images of works by other artists as the basis for “remakes” in the form of watercolors, paintings, and sculptures.

Beginning in the 1980s, she referred directly and openly to “artist heroes” of classical modernism like Constantin Brâncuși, Paul Cézanne, Marcel Duchamp, Edgar Degas, Kazimir Malevich, Claude Monet, Joan Miró, and many others. She did this above all with an awareness that these artists had helped to shape her own personal understanding and perception of art. They had been there “before” her, she had entered the art world “after” them. Levine did not

hesitate to borrow directly from these fellow artists. Her repeated use of the word “after” in titles thus referred both to an original and to a historical sequence.

Appropriating artworks by others, thus also contributing to their dissemination, has a long tradition in art—ultimately, it is as old as art itself. In icon painting, for example, the process of copying has been in use since the 4th century. This happened and continues to happen both with and without the knowledge and involvement of the artists concerned.

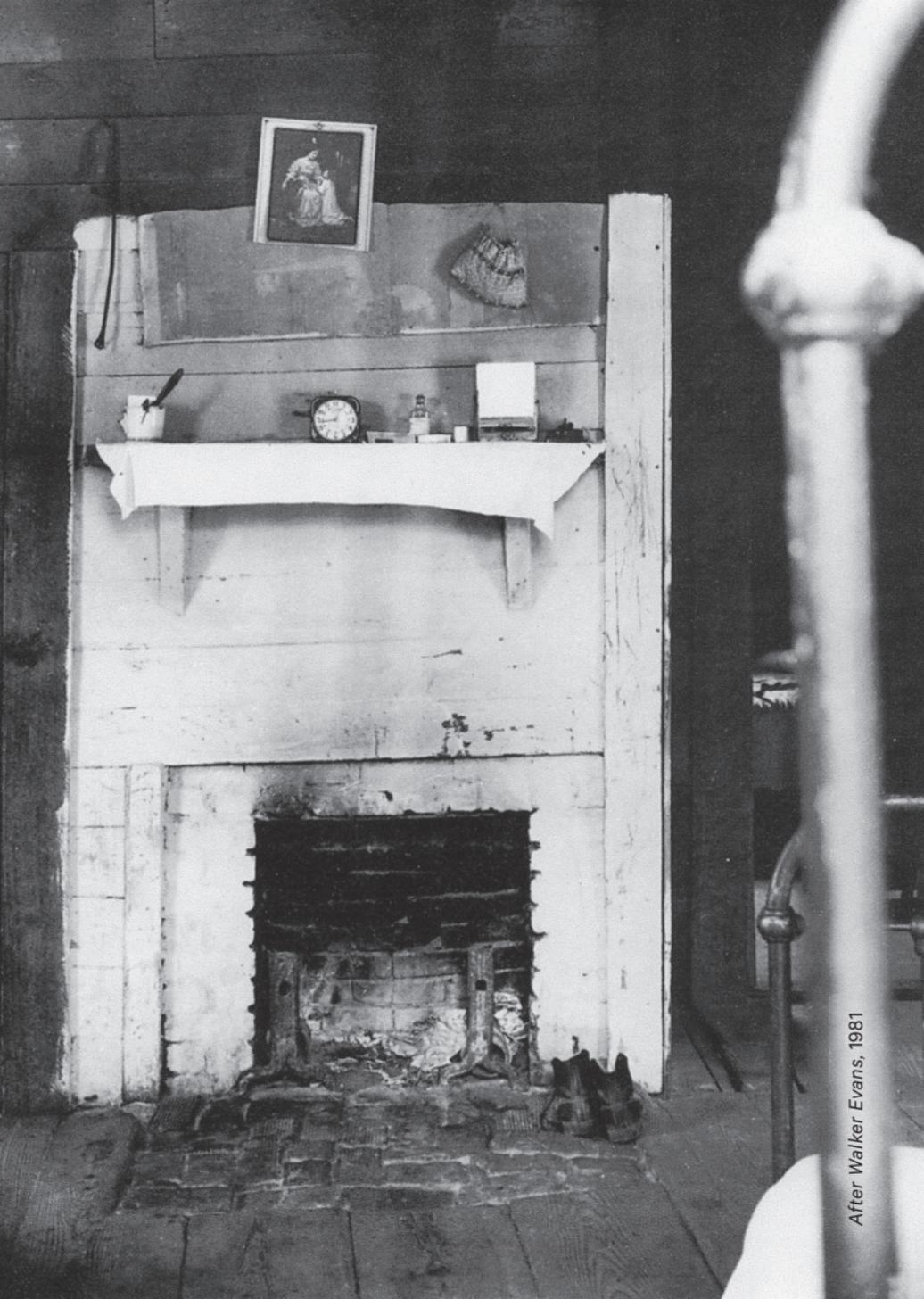
In recent art history, this practice (of copying, referencing, remaking, etc.) is part of the standard repertoire of artistic methods, giving rise in the 1970s to an art movement all of its own—Appropriation Art. Although Levine has distanced herself from Appropriation Art as a label, she has been counted since its inception among its key protagonists by critics and art historians. This was the case especially in the context of postmodern arguments that assumed (to put it in very simplified terms) that nothing new could be created without referring back to what already exists. This was decidedly at odds with the modernist view that avant-garde art brings forth something new.

Levine’s subtle and clearly calculated play with the works of other artists—in most cases icons of (western) art history—raises questions not only about authenticity and appropriation, originality and authorship, but also, via the serial nature of her work, about the commercialization of art. Her works reflect the mechanisms and paradoxes of the art system, as well as touching on aesthetic and philosophical issues. In general, they are critical comments on the

legacy of art and culture. With their precise selection of pre-existing works, they highlight the diversity of twentieth-century art and the inadequacy of monolithic, oversimplifying and homogenizing versions of art history.

Levine has developed a remarkable artistic strategy which leaves it up to the viewer to see her works “simply” as pictures or to perceive them “doubly”, with a “twofold gaze”: via both identification (with the “originals”) and, at the same time, differentiation (via Levine’s “pictures after”).

Sherrie Levine. After All: with this richly allusive title and the most extensive European show to date, with around 50 works spanning 35 years, Neues Museum offers visitors an opportunity to familiarize themselves with Sherrie Levine’s work. For the most part, the exhibition is structured chronologically, as well as focusing on dialogue between pictures and sculptures. Rather than describing any fixed tour of the show, this guide highlights several of Levine’s central ideas and references. The short texts that follow are assigned to specific areas of the exhibition by the numbers on the layout plan.



After Walker Evans, 1981

After Walker Evans

The series of photographs *After Walker Evans*, made in 1981, is one of the groups of works with which Sherrie Levine became widely known. As well as French photographer Eugène Atget (1857-1927), she was especially interested in the work of the influential American photographer Walker Evans (1903-1975), who is known as a chronicler of America. His photographs have become iconic works in the history of photography.

They are pictures that capture social and political conditions, often in a ruthlessly down-to-earth way. But they differ from purely documentary photography, also reflecting Evans's keen interest in literature, art, and philosophy. As well as large-scale photo reportages for various newspapers and magazines, he also received commissions from state institutions primarily concerned with sociological documentation (e.g. on the situation of America's rural population).

With her series *After Walker Evans*, based on his famous photographs taken during the Depression, Levine focusses on the more unspectacular urban scenes, landscapes, and private interiors, of which *After Walker Evans: 12* (1981) and *After Walker Evans: 9* (1981) are included here. In *Untitled (After Walker Evans: Positive): 5* (1990) the way the picture is framed is particularly striking. The wooden frame is part of the work, thus stressing the difference between it and the "original".

Of course there's a big difference between the photographs of Walker Evans and my photographs. They look the same, but you can't say they are the same. The irony, as I see it, is that although they look the same, in fact they could hardly be less alike. Because the intention is entirely different.²

I wanted to make pictures that contradict themselves. To lay one picture over another so that sometimes both are visible and other times they merge. That vibration is what most interested me—the gap where no picture is discernable, more a void, a forgetting.³

The series African Masks after Walker Evans, made in 2014, highlights Evans's distanced, observing, and strongly aestheticizing approach. Isolated, against a neutral background and with no context, the masks are viewed objectively, front on. In contrast to purely documentary photography, they are portrayed as sculptures. Might Levine be drawing attention here to the western view of a "foreign" world?

In both series of works, a shift in reception takes place that is characteristic of Levine's oeuvre. On the one hand, the viewer is faced with the "original" photograph and the way Evans looked at his motifs. On the other hand, there is also Levine's view of these photographs that she admires. Two "superimposed" pictures that are identical and non-identical, troubling the viewer's perception. Repeating the pictures prompts a comparison that cannot take place because the "original" is not available. This "lack" (the impossibility of viewing) is filled by memories. In this context, Levine's works have often been discussed as "objects of desire". According to French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, our desire is a desire for the Other—a theory that is reflected in the work of Sherrie Levine.

“I like to think that all my work has some kind of aura of originality. Are these more original? I don’t know. What I was interested in in the earlier work and what I continue to be interested in is what it means to be original. It’s not only that I don’t think there is such a thing as originality. I’m interested in sameness—what does it mean for two things to be identical, or not.”⁴

“A lot of what’s important to me in art-making is the way the subconscious functions. It’s often the most interesting part of the work.”⁵

Bronze

The sculpture *Body Mask* (2007) corresponds in a peculiar way with the series of photographs *African Masks After Walker Evans* (2014) in the adjacent room. In both cases, the artefacts taken out of their original context have become mere objects of contemplation. Although *Body Mask* hints at themes such as fertility rituals, it remains unclear whether this is a cast of an actual body mask that was once worn, or whether it is a free reconstruction.

Levine's liking for such unusual objects, purchased on flea markets or in junk shops, is also reflected in other objects cast in bronze included in the show. "Stylized" into artworks, they no longer tell us anything about their possible ritual usage or mythological meaning. Taken out of their former context, however, they open up entirely new levels of meaning.

Apart from *Body Mask* and *Khmer Torso (2010)*⁶ the bronze sculptures presented in this section of the exhibition—*False God* (2008), *Unhorned Steer Skull* (2002) and *Giraffe Skull* (2012)—all deal with themes of transience and death. The animals skulls probably also refer to a motif often used by the American artist Georgia O'Keefe who, like Levine later on, lived near Santa Fe. But O'Keefe spent most of her life on a remote farm in the desert of New Mexico. Levine made *Unhorned Steer Skull* after a visit to the farm, allowing it to be understood as a homage to her fellow artist.



The sculpture *Giraffe Skull* is presented in duplicate. *“I like the repeatability of sculpture. There’s the obvious reference to the industrially produced commodity. But you can also think of it in terms of psychoanalysis and the compulsion to repeat.”*⁷

The two-headed calf with two spines, *False God*, evokes something entirely different. Animals with two heads are rare, usually don’t live long, and are believed by some to be bringers of ill omen. By having it cast in bronze, Levine helps the skeleton attain everlasting value. The title *False God* has added associations with the Golden Calf in the Old Testament (Exodus).⁸ In common parlance, “worshipping the golden calf” usually refers to the veneration of wealth and power and could also be a critical comment on the veneration and marketing of certain artworks.

In art there's a long tradition of copying in which an artist's abilities were gauged in terms of how well he mastered the rules of his predecessors.

In a sense, it's the most traditional way of making art in both the western and the eastern tradition. It always amuses me today when this gesture of copying makes such a shocking impact. After all, it's among the oldest artistic activities.

My aim is not to copy an artwork but to experience it.⁹

Paris, Paris

In this part of the exhibition, the focus is on correspondences between individual works, the formation of pairs of objects, and bringing together originals and copies. A direct link exists, for example, between the sculpture *Human Skull* (2001) and the photographs in the series *Pyramid of Skulls* (2002). The source for these photographs is the famous small-format painting *Pyramid of Skulls* (1901) by Paul Cézanne who produced several still lifes on the vanitas motif of the skull. Levine takes this motif and produces variations of her own: she reproduces it in a series of photographs of reproductions of the original, and she translates one of the skulls into three dimensions while fundamentally altering its impact by adding a shiny surface. Is the artist playing here with the dialectic of the “beautiful illusion” and the motif of transience?

The bronze sculpture *Loulou* (2004) is directly related to a book object (not in this exhibition): *Gustave Flaubert, Un Cœur simple* (1990).¹⁰ Loulou is the name of the parrot that plays a central role in Flaubert’s short story *A Simple Heart* (1877) and which has already been used as a central figure by other artists, including David Hockney. In the course of the story, the parrot becomes a focus of quasi-religious devotion for the main character Félicité, a development that is reinforced both when the bird is stuffed after its death and by its owner’s growing mental derangement. Levine



Black and White Bottles, 1992

based her sculpture on a parrot figure probably purchased on a flea market, making a total of twelve copies. Here, too, she applies her usual artistic strategy of selecting objects before transferring into different materials and media. Levine offers various versions of Loulou: the parrot described in Flaubert's story, the book project, and the replica in the form of a bronze sculpture.

When assembling pairs of objects, Levine refers both to art-historical sources and to objects from the everyday world. The standard, commercially available bottles that were a much-used motif in classical modernism provided the model for *Black and White Bottles* (1992). Like the two *Newborns* (see p. 41), they are cast in luxurious-looking matte glass. Exactly the same shape, only their coloration differs. An odd couple.

Besides Levine's general strategy of presenting apparent sameness as contradictory, as well as focusing attention on the difference between "originals" and their "copies", the pair of bottles presented in a vitrine might also recall still lifes by the Italian painter and graphic artist Giorgio Morandi or installations by Marcel Broodthaers. But it may also be a gesture to Marcel Duchamp's readymade *Bottle Rack* (1914).

With *Cadeau* (2005), Levine refers to one of the most famous works of Surrealist art: in 1921, the artist Man Ray exhibited an object of the same name, for which he added nails to the iron as a humorous gift for the composer Erik Satie. Levine, on the other hand, pairs her highly polished bronze iron with a small dog presenting its quarry, leaving it to the viewer to interpret the "interaction between the objects".¹¹



L'Absinthe, 1859

With the series *L’Absinthe* (1995), *Cathedral* (1995) and *After van Gogh* (1994), Levine again “quotes” key figures of modern art: Edgar Degas, Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh. Especially in Monet’s work, the principle of repetition plays a significant role. In the multiple views of *Rouen Cathedral* (1892-94), seriality operates in various ways: Monet painted the cathedral at different times of day and in different weather conditions, with only very slight changes in perspective, creating a series with a total of 33 works.

Levine selected several paintings by each of these artists and reproduced them in series of photographs. Crucially, she photographed not the originals but reproductions of these paintings. Consequently the picture formats correspond not to those of the originals, but to Levine’s sources. In the process of reproduction, she also strips the paintings of their colors, which nonetheless flash into that mind of any viewer familiar with the originals. This in-between state, flickering between the visible picture and invisible images stored in memory, is something Levine is interested in.

“I do see my work as a head-on confrontation with the anxiety of influence.”¹²

“What I’m interested in is the historical transmogrification of the work—often the work of art becomes so reified through repetition and reverence that its meaning becomes quite turgid. This phenomenon is particularly ironic in reference to art that was originally about lightness and transgression.”¹³

Salubra

For *The Three Furies* (2007), Levine took an entirely different approach, transforming gnarled pieces of root into wildly dancing bronze beings. With these found objects from souvenir and kitsch shops, Levine transports “bric-a-brac” into the sphere of art. Cast in bronze, polished, and presented in plain vitrines, the grotesque-looking root creatures, retaining their original form, attain a completely new status (as art). The title of this group of sculptures refers to three figures from Greek mythology associated with the cult of the dead and fertility, generally viewed as goddesses of vengeance and protection. Levine may also have been thinking of mandrakes,¹⁴ reinterpreting these otherwise folkloric root figures in a humorous way, elevating them to mythical status as in many Surrealist works.

The installation *Salubra 5* (2007) consist of 14 monochrome panels mounted on a horizontal strip of color. Levine refers here to the architect and painter Le Corbusier. In 1931, he cooperated with the Swiss wallpaper company Salubra on collections of single colors intended as tools for architects and their clients. The colors were arranged as “keyboards”, twelve samplers with one color mood each consisting of 14 shades. Levine selected one such color keyboard and had each individual shade painted on a mahogany panel. The resulting monochrome paintings show the 14 colors in isolation and, unlike Le Corbusier’s original arrangement (in two

rows against three background colors) against a single background color. In this case, Levine's source was a reproduction taken from a book documenting Le Corbusier's *Salubra* collections.

The colors presented by Le Corbusier as tools for architects in this way were themselves derived from major works from art history, including the palette of the Italian painter Raphael. Levine reverses this process, returning the colors to their source and presenting the "keyboard" as pure painting. With *Salubra*, she found a way of conceptually integrating monochrome painting, which she holds in high esteem, into her work.

In the adjacent section of the exhibition, the so-called *Melt Down* pictures show how sensually, subtly and wittily Levine relates to her fellow artists. The paintings presented here, all made in 1991 and bearing the additional title *After Yves Klein*, are taken from the larger series of *Melt Downs*.

Levine begins by using a computer program to ascertain the average color value of classic works of modern art—in this case Yves Klein—compacting them and melting them down. She "distils" the paintings and records the corresponding visual information, even if their totally altered form means they are unrecognizable, impossible to identify.

*"I wanted to distil these others paintings. I love monochrome paintings. I think monochrome paintings are the apex of modernist painting. For years I've been trying to figure out how to make a monochrome painting that made sense in the context of my work and I was very pleased when I came up with this solution."*¹⁵

Contrary to their title, which suggests a solid melted form, these works, especially when compared with one another, show the playfulness and lightness of touch with which Levine handles her sources. They also highlight the importance for Levine of the way paint is applied. From transparent to opaque, these “almost identical” pictures, that seem at first glance to differ only in color, reveal distinct differences and an astonishing sensual presence. Compared to the monochrome, mostly very opaque paintings of Yves Klein, Levine integrates the structure of the support, the wood grain, as a shaping element.

“I’ve always been attracted to grids. The Dadaists and Surrealists were very interested in games, I think for the same reasons I am. And they were also interested in the language around play. The chessboard was a classic icon for them, and so that was another thing that attracted me.”¹⁶

Check Mate

In the mid-1980s, Sherrie Levine began to paint pictures without reference to specific artists, mainly using the formal repertoire of abstract and minimalist art. Most of these pictures, covered with striped or checkered patterns, were produced as series. They distantly recall works by Kazimir Malevich, Brice Marden and many other artists who have sought to cancel out subjectivity and values via serial repetition of individual forms. The shimmering colors of *Large Check: 1- 6* (1999) and *Large Check: 7-12* (1999), the supports of mahogany, oak and plywood, and the coatings of casein and wax indicate clearly that they were made “after” the historical models, adopting a position of distance towards them.

With the motif of the chess board, Levine also refers to gaming boards, while *Untitled (After Duchamp: Chessboards #6)* (1989) is another reference to Marcel Duchamp, whose passion for chess is well known. *Checkerboard on Table* (1989-90) can also be viewed in this context. A chess board usually needs a table, in this case produced in an ironic and playful manner by Robert Gober, an artist friend of Levine’s. The installation may remind viewers of a famous photograph showing Duchamp playing chess with a naked young woman sitting at a similar table.



After Duchamp

The theme of chess continues in this section of the exhibition. All of the works here refer to the historical “original” Marcel Duchamp. The paintings *Lead Check: 11* (1989) and *Lead Check: 12* (1988) share their structure with a wooden chess board that Duchamp made himself. He attached it to the wall of his studio in order to play imaginary games of chess while he worked.

Duchamp’s approach of drawing on existing materials for his readymades is also crucial to Levine’s artistic practice. But Levine takes this possibility one step further by using art history itself, taking the methods and works of other artists as readymades, to create her own original works.

With *Fountain (Buddha)* (1996), she did this with one of the most important artworks of the twentieth century: in 1914, Duchamp declared a commercially bought urinal to be an artwork. The work has survived only in a photograph, and on the basis of this image Levine purchased a similar urinal and had it cast in bronze. *“I liked it as an object because it’s an object that has a function so closely identified with men, but the form is so feminine, so vessel-like.”*¹⁷

In this sculpture, she combines the highly polished material of a Brâncuși sculpture with the conceptual claim of Duchamp’s readymade, creating a sculpture of strange beauty.



Untitled ("The Bachelors: "Gardien de la Paix"), 1989

Untitled (*The Bachelors: “Gardien de la Paix”*) (1989) consists of two tall, thin vitrines placed side by side. Being the same, they enter into a (muted) dialogue: while appearing to belong to one another, they also convey a sense of being able to exist alone, independent of one another. Perhaps this is why the objects presented inside feel so isolated, as if taken out of some formerly existing context.

The form of these objects made of sandblasted glass recalls tools or simple devices. They are three-dimensional reconstructions of details from one of the most complex works in western art history: Marcel Duchamp’s *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (the Large Glass)* (1915-23).

As this example clearly shows, Levin is never interested purely in a direct translation, a copy, or an exact replica. Instead, it is clearly about a kind of adaptation. Perhaps, ultimately, it is about showing the impossibility of reproducing a (complex) idea, as Levine repeatedly proves to herself and to the viewer.

After Dürer

In the series *Splattered* (1992) and *Mr. Austridge: 7* (1989), Levine focusses on works from beyond “high culture”, images from the field of comics. The two featured figures are taken from *Krazy Kat*, a comic strip by George Herriman published in various American newspapers between 1913 and 1944. Taken out of their context, Levine shows the figures in their typical poses. The background consists only of the unique grain of the wood.

Levine stresses that she deliberately tries to include funny aspects in her work.¹⁸ She admires the humor and pathos that Herriman evokes with his figures, and she is interested above all in the sometimes absurd repetitions that are typical of comics in general.¹⁹

There is also a reflection here on the fact that we live in a world where pictures in various media are not only massively reproduced and commercialized, but also repeated in what amount to endless loops. Levine promotes awareness of this situation by confronting the viewer with precisely these everyday phenomena—repetition, imitation, similarity.²⁰

This is also true of her most recent series, *After Dürer* (2016). For the 18-part postcard series, the artist used the motif of Albrecht Dürer’s famous *Young Hare* (1502)—a gesture not lacking humor in Dürer’s home town of Nuremberg. The postcards in question are from the museum shop of the Albertina in Vienna where the work

now resides. Can even a trace of the aura of the original be conveyed via postcards? Or why is it that these and similar reproductions are bought in their millions worldwide as souvenirs? What processes of memory are linked to this and how does the value of the individual postcards change as a result of their serial hanging?

Another question raised by this series concerns the way we deal with the ever-increasing global flood of images. Moreover, the seemingly unlimited availability of visual worlds on the Internet further complicates the question of the status of the “original”.

In the context of the two-part sculpture *L'Enfant juif* (2006), which may well be based on a photograph, this question is posed in even more precarious form. This work brings together two objects from Levine's stock of everyday items and things from flea markets and junk shops, which were then cast in bronze: the replica of the head of a boy and, lying beside it, an open hand.

Initially resembling a (luxury) toy, the work's title points to an entirely different context. It seems possible that the pair of sculptures is a three-dimensional allusion to a historical photograph with the same title.²¹

This picture shows a small boy, a terrified look on his face, his hands raised, in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943, as SS soldiers drive people out of a house. Originally part of an SS documentation, after 1945 the photograph was used at the Nuremberg Trials as evidence of the atrocities of the Nazi regime.

This photograph has been reproduced worldwide in many publications and films in a range of contexts, as well as repeatedly being subjected to critical treatments.

“Speaking of my work, I often paraphrase the words of Roland Barthes: ‘I try to make art which celebrates doubt and uncertainty. Which provokes answers but doesn’t give them. Which withholds absolute meaning by incorporating parasite meanings. Which suspends meaning while perpetually dispatching you toward interpretation. Urging you beyond dogmatism, beyond doctrine, beyond ideology, beyond authority.’”²²

Knots

In *Untitled (Golden Knot: 3)* (1987), *Large Pink Knot: 7* (2003) and *Large Pink Knot: 9* (2003), Levine subjected ordinary sheets of plywood, as used in building and model-making or as packaging material (for artworks), to a surprising transformation. The wood grain of the background contrasts with carefully inserted “knots” in different colors. On closer inspection, it becomes clear that these are areas that have been cut out and plugged (industrially)—leaving gaps that were painted over by the artist.

Without referring directly to other artworks, the *Knots* evoke early collages and paintings by Pablo Picasso and Juan Gris. Both artists used the aesthetic of wood grain and imitation wood in many works. Levine may also be commenting on the Surrealist paintings and collages of Max Ernst.

These works also involve an interplay between art and nature—as well as a play on words via the spoken similarity of “Knot Paintings” and “not paintings”. As in the case of the photograph *Untitled (After Walker Evans: Positive): 5* (p. 9) the wooden frames are an integral part of the work here.

In her series *Large Crate Tables* (1993) Levine engages with the work of Dutch designer and architect Gerrit Rietveld. Over the course of his career, Rietveld, known primarily for his work as a



Large Crate Tables, 1993

member of the De Stijl group, designed more than 680 pieces of furniture. From this wealth of designs, Levine selected the *Krate* series from 1934 that was delivered as a do-it-yourself kit of simple wooden laths for buyers to assemble themselves. Levine had six identical tables built according to the plans of the *Krate* series, but enlarged by 50 percent in order to emphasize the sculptural character of the design.²³

Here, too, echoing the minimalist art of the 1960s and its forms of presentation—such as the serial works of Donald Judd—Levine used the principle of repetition. The original design objects are transferred into the field of art—the dividing line between art and design is blurred.



Crystal Newborn, 1993

Newborn

Two shiny black pianos face one another and on each Levine has placed a sculpture: *Crystal Newborn* (1993) und *Black Newborn* (1994). Identical in form, they differ only in color. Cast in matte glass, they recall both the shape of an egg and that of a head.

The installation is based on Constantin Brâncuși's sculpture *Newborn*²⁴ (with which Levine's works share their form and title) and a photograph giving a view of the former living space of a collector. The picture shows a grand piano on which Brâncuși's oval sculpture *Prometheus* can be seen. Inspired by this, Levine used pianos as richly allusive plinths for the (replicated) sculptures. As well as referring generally to the theme of the plinth, this also addresses the "staging of art" in private, domestic spaces, a practice only found in certain social milieus.

By using this historical "model" (Brâncuși's sculpture *Newborn*), the artist stresses explicitly that she identifies with the original work. At the same time, she shows possibilities for reproduction and a web of different signs and levels of meaning. By using an existing artwork, she refers once more to the art history of modernism, but her installation also creates a new sculptural reality.

“Like Brâncuși, I am interested in the physical and the sensory. However, I am also interested in the contingent and the unstable. I like the aura of happenstance. I like repetition, because it implies an endless succession of substitutes and missed encounters. When I cast six identical Newborns in glass and placed each on a grand piano, I wanted to maximize the historical references and the metaphorical possibilities.”²⁵

At the beginning of the 1980s, Levine began painting small-format watercolors. With *After Henri Matisse* (1983), *After Piet Mondrian* (1983), *After Kazimir Malevich* (1984), and *After Joan Miró* (1985), she continued her play with references to modern artists via modified materials and techniques. Here, too, it is significant that she bases her “remakes” on reproductions of greatly varying quality. As a result, the coloration and format in each case is determined not by the “originals” but by Levine’s source. This group of works once again makes it clear that although Levine is interested in the works of these artists, she is equally interested in painting itself and in the transfer of pictures into a material and formal idiom of her own.

Sherrie Levine’s works speak of artists that she values and venerates. At the same time, her works always bear witness to the historical distance she adopts with respect to her “role models”. This special kind of intersection between history and identity runs through the entire oeuvre of this artist who has long since written herself into the history of twentieth-century art.

Notes

1. Sherrie Levine in: “Meine Absicht ist es nicht ein Kunstwerk zu kopieren, sondern es zu erfahren“. Interview with Noemi Smolik, in *Kunstforum International* (125, 1994), p. 286-291, here p. 288 (translated back from the German translation).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
3. Sherrie Levine, “Why I appropriated” in *Texte zur Kunst* (46, 2002), p. 85 (translated back from the German translation).
4. Sherrie Levine in: “The Anxiety of Influence – Head On. A Conversation Between Sherrie Levine and Jeanne Siegel” in *Sherrie Levine*, exhibition catalog (Kunsthau Zürich 1991), p. 18.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
6. According to Kay Heymer, the sculpture was cast from a fragment of a Buddhist sculpture from Cambodia. See Kay Heymer, “Sherrie Levine’s Originality” in *Sherrie Levine. After All*, exhibition catalogue, Nuremberg 2016 (page numbers not yet finalized at time of going to print).
7. “The Anxiety of Influence”, p. 20.
8. According to the biblical account of the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, the Golden Calf was an idol created with Aaron’s help while Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.
9. Interview with Noemi Smolik, p. 289 (translated back from the German translation).
10. With the book object, *Gustave Flaubert, Un cœur simple* (1990), Levine takes her play with concepts like authenticity, authorship, and reproduction even further. The book’s cover is correctly labelled “Gustave Flaubert, Un coeur simple”—except that the name “Sherrie Levine” is printed in striking letters across the top edge, causing it to be read as the name of the author. The text, on the other hand, is Flaubert’s, word for word. Questions are raised, for example concerning the extent to which appropriation is allowed or accepted. See Nora Ramtke, “Ohne Begleitschutz – Texte auf der Schwelle.

Überlegungen zu Textappropriationen und Paratext” in Annette Gilbert (ed.), *Wiederaufgelegt: Zur Appropriation von Texten und Büchern in Büchern* (Bielefeld 2012), p. 107-108.

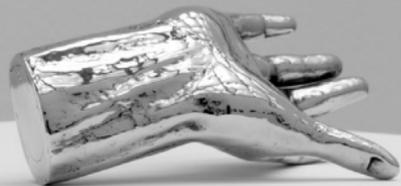
11. “Why I appropriated”, p. 85.
12. “The Anxiety of Influence”, p. 21.
13. “The Anxiety of Influence”, p. 18.
14. A legendary poisonous plant used for healing, rituals, magic and miracles, whose roots sometimes resemble a human figure.
15. “The Anxiety of Influence”, p. 20.
16. “The Anxiety of Influence”, p. 17.
17. “The Anxiety of Influence”, p. 19.
18. “I’m always surprised when people apologize to me for thinking it’s funny. I want the work to be funny, but that doesn’t mean I’m not serious.” Quoted by David Joselit in “Last Laugh” in Johanna Burton et al. (eds.), *Sherrie Levine, Mayhem*, exhibition catalogue, Whitney Museum of Modern Art (New York 2012), p. 161.
19. “The Anxiety of Influence”, p. 18.
20. Susanne Anna, “Im Spiel mit den Allegorien der Essentia” in *Sherrie Levine*, exhibition catalogue, Städtisches Museum Leverkusen 1998, p. 10.
21. See Julian Heynen, “On the Dark Side”, in *Sherrie Levine. After All*.
22. Sherrie Levine, “After Brâncuși” in *Sherrie Levine Newborn*, exhibition catalogue, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Portikus Frankfurt am Main 1993, p. 8.
23. See Catherine Ingraham: “Sherrie Levine’s After Rietveld” in *Sherrie Levine: Sculpture*, exhibition catalogue, Galerie Jablonka, Cologne 1996, p. 30.
24. Unlike Brâncuși’s earlier portrait heads, this sculpture made around 1915 is a strongly reduced portrayal of a child’s head. Protrusions hint at eyebrows and nose, the oval surface suggests a wide open mouth. The sculpture can be read as a child’s head or as a metaphor for birth.
25. See “After Brâncuși”, p. 8.



Ausstellungsansicht

Biography

- 1947** Born in Hazleton, Pennsylvania
- 1963-1975** Studied printing at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (paper-making, bookbinding, book printing, offset printing, lithographic techniques, black-and-white photography, reprographics)
Worked in advertising
- 1975** Moved to New York
- 1981** First solo show at the newly founded gallery Metro Pictures
- 1982** Took part in documenta 7
- 1991** Touring exhibition at European museums (Zürich, Münster, Malmö, Paris)
- 1993** Exhibition at Jablonka Galerie in Cologne
- 2012** Solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



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Sherrie Levine. After All

Werke 1981-2016

28 October 2016 – 12 February 2017

Exhibition curated by: Eva Kraus, Rafael Jablonka

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