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Access Health Centre



BOOK
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Big Art History: Art History as Social Knowledge

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Introduction

The College Art Association's published guidelines for tenure and promotion are the gold standard for the profession, even here in Canada.¹ They recommend "the following forms of publication (whether in print or electronic format) equivalent to single-authored books as vehicles of scholarly productivity: journal articles, essays and substantial entries in museum collections or exhibition catalogues, articles in conference proceedings, unpublished manuscripts, whether or not under contract with a publisher."² The guidelines' emphasis on single-authored work validates the notion that the most credible, if not *only* credible form of art historical knowledge resides within an individual. Knowledge that is produced in an overtly collaborative fashion, such as curating, object repatriation, or community-centred web publication, garners no comment and as a consequence seems less than credible.

But is the individual, in fact, the seat of art historical knowledge? This question emerges, in part, from personal experience and from accounts of other art historians who engage in collaborative programs of research, including curatorial projects. We study objects that originate in cultures such as First Nations cultures, in which the idea of individualism and the practice of single-voiced scholarship may be inappropriate, politically charged, and ethically problematic; and perhaps, practically impossible.³ Our experiences suggest that some art historians have a hard time placing collaborative work: it seems difficult for them to position collaborative practices in relation to other art historical products such as single-author refereed articles, and in turn, the difficulty may affect academic processes such as tenure and promotion. The tensions between the merits of single-voiced and collaborative scholarship, I contend, are part of a much larger epistemological debate about whether the seat of knowledge is contained within an individual or a social system. In contrast to the College Art Association's characterization

Detail, the Health Centre in the newly renovated William James Mable Carriage Company Building, 713–715 Johnson St, Victoria, BC, ca. 2010. (Photo: Derek Ford)

of art historical knowledge as limited to the personal, I argue that our discipline has a long and largely overlooked history of social knowledge production. Examples include the oral art histories embedded in Giorgio Vasari's (1511–1574) *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, ed architettori* (1550 and 1569); the development of iconology by Aby Warburg (1866–1929), Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968), and Fritz Saxl (1890–1948); the founding of the Women's Art History Collective in 1972, which led to the co-authored work of Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistress: Women, Art and Ideology* (1981); and the work of Native arts activists, as evidenced by the collaborative work of Nancy Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache) and the Native Arts Alliance. Each of these practices is motivated by different reasons and manifest in distinctive ways; here I will consider those associated with the development of iconology.⁴

I begin this paper by looking briefly at the fate of the thesis that knowledge is personal within the history of modern epistemology as pursued in Western philosophy, since the discipline of art history emerged out of this theoretical framework. Recent studies on the nature of knowledge, especially those focused upon a twentieth-century innovation in knowledge production known as 'Big Science,' have introduced a characterization of knowledge as social. Big Science has helped to destabilize the theoretical monopoly that personal knowledge once held within the discourses of Western epistemology. I then turn to what I will call 'Big Art History,' an epistemological approach revealed through Panofsky's characterization of iconology as the product of an art historical team. A more recent example of Big Art History, a collaborative curatorial project involving dozens of co-creators at the ACCESS Health medical building in Victoria, British Columbia, presents a second and quite different case of social knowledge creation.

Before I delve further, I ought to clarify that I have taken up the issue of social knowledge in the field of art history at this juncture both to recover its roots and to articulate how this epistemological framework differs from that of personal knowledge. I focus on Western philosophical constructions of knowledge with the goal of opening space for the recognition of collaborative research, in general, as a means of reframing the still developing field of art history beyond the box of individualism. The epistemological argument pursued here would require much further extension along very different lines to engage systems of collective knowledge production, such as indigenous systems, with those of Euro-American cultural origin.⁵

PART 1: THE IDEAS OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

The idea of personal knowledge, particularly for European cultures, is fixed in the work of natural philosophers René Descartes and Sir Isaac Newton.

The former considers knowledge to be the product of the reasoning powers and observations of the lone, capable individual mind.⁶ In his 1637 *Discourse on Method*, Descartes presents the ‘I’ (the individual) as thinking and reasoning, and he even derogates any regard for others’ research: he writes that, if work is “compounded and amassed little-by-little from the opinions of many different persons, it never comes so close to the truth as the simple reasoning which a man of good sense naturally makes concerning whatever he comes across.” Knowledge on the Cartesian paradigm is, instead, a product of insights gained by the “natural light” of an individual’s reason, through “long chains composed of very simple and easy reasonings, which geometers customarily use to arrive at their most difficult demonstrations.”⁷ Isaac Newton would do Descartes one better fifty years later, with the *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, a book that was *explicitly* arranged as a geometrical argument and generated by the mind of one man.⁸ It is not entirely inappropriate to say that Newton *knew and made* his own science; the preface to his book makes it evident that he conceived it as his own. Unlike Descartes, he nevertheless allowed that he had learned something from predecessors that he could not have acquired alone, acknowledging that he stood “on the shoulders of giants.”⁹

The seeds of personal knowledge sown by Descartes and Newton in the seventeenth century remained viable in analytic philosophy until the mid-twentieth. In that tradition, the analysis of knowledge frequently began with a schema that concerned the individual subject (“S”) and a particular belief held by the subject, characterized in a sentence, or proposition (“p”). The schema suggests that, “S knows that *p*” if the following conditions hold:

- i) *p* is true;
- ii) S believes that *p*;
- iii) S is justified in believing that *p*.

Knowledge, then, is a justified, true belief held in the mind of an individual subject, S. Attempts at interrogating and improving upon the conditions characterized in this simple formula were the primary subject of analytic epistemology.¹⁰ But the assumption that knowledge resides squarely within the individual – captured in the phrase, “S knows that *p*” – was a presupposition that was not generally interrogated within that philosophical tradition, a tradition still pursued today.

As the practice of science became much more collaborative during the twentieth century, modes of investigation such as the Manhattan Project introduced a new era of “big science” and began to be recognized as qualitatively different from previous scientific endeavour.¹¹ It is just not conceivable that an individual subject could gather such knowledge: the lone

mind and hand would not suffice, and the individualist assumption captured in “S knows that p ” would soon come under investigation. Other portions of the analytic schema would also face fundamental challenges: particularly point (iii), that justification pertains to, or is seated within, an individual.

Philosopher John Hardwig made the first of these two points elegantly, simply by reproducing one typical page of a 1983 issue of the journal *Physical Review Letters*.¹² The list of ninety-nine authors of the article, “Charm Photoproduction Cross-section at 20GeV,” registers a variety of expertise in theoretical physics, experimental design, experimental practice, and data analysis that no one individual could be expected to be capable of grasping. All, or, at least, many of the 99 authors would be necessary for producing the knowledge, the work involved would consume more hours than could be available in the lifetime of any individual scientist, and the list of authors might also be extended to include unnamed graduate students, technicians, and janitors. Even if a single author had the ability to perform all of the requisite tasks, the necessary activity to produce this outcome – this knowledge – could not have been achieved: by analogy, were a single member of a string quartet capable of playing all parts, still, she could only play them sequentially, not synchronically. Thus, even if it might be said that each one of these ninety-nine authors can believe (as per point ii of the analytic formula), with justification (as per point iii), that the claims contained in the article are true (see point i), nevertheless, it is also clear from this case that, due to the length and co-ordination of tasks, as well as the degree of expertise required to accomplish each task, no single author alone could produce the justification in relevant detail, or produce the result. Thus, the knowledge produced in this work is ineluctably social.

Hardwig’s straightforward argument is only the thin end of the wedge of the social challenge to individualist epistemology. Philosopher Miriam Solomon, among a vanguard of theorists, has directly challenged the position of the rational individual as the locus of science’s rationality, or justification. Solomon has proposed that, “social groups can work to attain and even recognize epistemic goals without individual rationality or individual cognizance of the overall epistemic situation.”¹³ For example, like the 99 authors noted above, the editorial board of a peer-review publication is integral to knowledge production. Credibility and justification accrue to articles because they appear within the pages of peer-reviewed scientific journals, and so, because it plays a determinative role in the *justification* of a scientific knowledge claim, the board is not merely a mobilizing agent. After publication, the citations that the article comes to receive from other authors determine a claim’s centrality to the field of knowledge over time, and perhaps its acceptability as knowledge. Consequently, the seat of justification

does not lie in the individual, and indeed, it is no longer a seat at all: it is distributed across a network of actors, including corporate bodies such as editorial boards that cannot even be accounted for as individual persons, and its justification changes over time due to the influences of actors distinct from the authors of the claim.

Solomon implicitly suggests that the individual subject might *never* be in the position to know, given that scientific knowledge is a thoroughly social product. *S* cannot know that *p*: rather, the system produces knowledge. Analysis of the development and deployment of knowledge-generating networks is the subject of study for sociologists and historians of science, such as Bruno Latour and Stephen Shapin.¹⁴ Shapin traces the early development of science as a post-Cartesian practice that began with the founding of England's Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge in 1660. The Royal Society established a tradition in which certain "credible persons" accepted by the society are granted the privilege of reporting natural phenomena that others accept, within a "polity of science."¹⁵ The Society's *Philosophical Transactions* (1665–forward), which has some reasonable claim as the first genuine scientific journal, presented the reports of these "credible persons." The development of a society that could grant scientific credibility is an early example of how knowledge was socially produced: indeed, Shapin argues that the Royal Society, as an emerging social and political institution, *generated* the category of credible reporting by others as a viable epistemological category – an epistemological concern to be weighed alongside the traditional first-person authority and demonstrative argument pursued by Descartes and Newton.

Thus, following the efforts of earlier philosophers of science – most notably Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos – epistemologists and sociologists have chipped away at the very notion that knowledge is held and justified by individuals. Latour, Shapin, and Solomon lead us further, to the view that individual knowledge is no longer a viable paradigm.

PART 2: ART HISTORY AS SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

What does this all mean for the production of art historical knowledge? Perhaps the most obvious marks of the social within the profession are evident in scholarly societies and journals: in professional societies such as the College Art Association (1912) and the Universities Art Association of Canada (1967), and their affiliated journals, the *Art Bulletin* and the *Canadian Art Review*. Art historians make claims that they might hope will receive status as knowledge, but they also create social networks that contribute to the shape

of art historical knowledge as it appears in a journal article or book, and these publications contribute justification and mobilize claims in ways similar to those noted above for science.

Eminent scholars within the discipline of art history have themselves interrogated the single-author paradigm. Erwin Panofsky's account of the development of iconology presents a case in point, called to my attention by Cindy Persinger's 2008 dissertation "The Politics of Style: Meyer Schapiro and the Crisis of Meaning in Art History." Her careful history provides clues to Panofsky's theory of learning and knowledge production, as suggested by the following remark published in his *Studies in Iconology* (1939): "The methods which the writer has tried to apply are based on what he and Dr. Saxl learned together from the late Professor A. Warburg, and have endeavoured to practice in many years of personal collaboration."¹⁶ Panofsky's words suggest that he at least conceptualizes himself as a collaborative learner, and in the case of iconology's development, collaboration is a necessary component of his learning process. Yet, in this passage, Panofsky does not clarify whether he differentiates between 'learning' and 'knowing,' nor whether he sees the individual or the collective as the holder of knowledge.

Evidence of Panofsky's struggles with the individual-as-the-seat-of-knowledge paradigm are more clearly articulated some five years earlier in a 1932 letter that he wrote to William Ivins, curator of the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Prints. Panofsky launches into a straightforward critique of Ivins's characterization of iconology as the product of a single individual, specifically, Panofsky himself. Panofsky writes:

I really fear that you overrate me a little. Please do not regard this as false modesty ... I honestly think that you as well as some of my students give me the credit for what, in reality, is due to a scientific tradition of which I am a very modest part. Firstly, the material with which I deal was mostly gathered together by the united efforts of my friend Saxl and our common pupils and collaborators. Secondly, and this is more important, the very method of my work, a method which perhaps was not so well known in America, is almost a matter of course [in Germany], and I am indebted for it to my great teachers such as Wilhelm Vöge and Aby Warburg as well as to my friends and even to my own disciples ... and I feel a little bit ashamed when you believe me to be a kind of innovator.¹⁷

Though Panofsky did not use the expression "social knowledge," his acknowledgment of the contributions made by Saxl and students resonates with the conception of corporate authorship noted in Hardwig's analysis. More importantly, Panofsky pinpoints a failure in the personal knowledge

paradigm: the failure to register the working realities of the creation of art historical knowledge – at least in the case of the formation of iconology.

Given Panofsky's view and his influence within the discipline, it is curious that the notion of the corporate author has not gained traction. Social knowledge deserves our attention and the discipline of art history has more reason to take this new understanding of knowledge production seriously as, over the past decade, an increasing number of art historians have worked to negotiate pressing issues such as cross-cultural engagement and have overtly embraced an array of collaborative practices. These new practices conflict with the modern paradigm of individual creative action, and include community-based research, participatory action research, curating, and histories of indigenous arts. Perhaps the difference between Panofsky and art historical collaborations in the present day is that we are more familiar with the notion of social knowledge, we have some familiarity with articulate challenges to the idea that the individual is the seat of knowledge, and we have access to theory such as the new historicism: theory that historically situates and uproots assumptions concerning the primacy of the individual in cultural understanding, and so, in epistemology.¹⁸ We also have more access to, or take more seriously, our interactions with other cultures in ways that are respectful of different knowledge systems.¹⁹

I offer the recently completed installation of approximately forty works of art at the Cool Aid Community Health and Dental Clinics, located in the ACCESS Health Centre building on Johnson Street in downtown Victoria, British Columbia, as a case study in socially produced art historical knowledge. The brief characterization below presents an account of collaborative knowledge production that expands traditional reception theory, introducing a necessarily *social* example of reception (because of varied subject positions) that comes to be produced dialectically (through discussion among those holding the various subject positions). So, this case presents a significant departure from art history as an individualistic publishing venture. The account draws upon approaches in recent science studies: following Isabelle Stengers's lead, I attempt "to address the practices from which such knowledge evolves, based on the constraints imposed by the uncertainties [that participants in the production of knowledge] introduce and their corresponding obligations." The obligations at issue for each participant are both to other participants and to each himself or herself, in light of interactions with others and perceptions.²⁰

The ACCESS Art project team involved 37 named individuals including myself, University of Victoria undergraduate and graduate students, University of Victoria Legacy Gallery staff, and Cool Aid Community staff. Not named in the acknowledgements were a host of others who were essential to the production, including clinic patients, janitorial staff at the clinic, and support



1 | The William James Mable Carriage Company Building, 713–715 Johnson St, Victoria, BC, occupied by a bingo parlor, ca. 2009. (Photo: Derek Ford)

2 | The Health Centre in the newly renovated William James Mable Carriage Company Building, 213–215 Johnson St, Victoria, BC, ca. 2010. (Photo: Derek Ford)

staff in the History in Art department, the Dean of Fine Arts offices, and the university gallery. The three-year ACCESS Art project began with a request presented by the Cool Aid Community Health Clinic to the Director of University of Victoria’s Art collection for art that would help “brighten up” their clinic space in the newly renovated and reconstructed ACCESS Health Centre building.

The building stands as testament to Cool Aid’s interest in creating a comfortable and aesthetically-pleasing environment for staff and clients. AIDS Vancouver Island partnered with Cool Aid in 2009 to renovate and rebuild what the ACCESS Health webpage describes as a “deteriorated and underused” old carriage factory constructed in 1908 for the William James Mable Carriage Company. Over the years the Edwardian-style building had been used for a variety of purposes including a furniture store, Salvation Army Thrift Shop, and bingo parlor, and by the early twenty-first century, it had fallen into a state of disrepair (Fig. 1). The preservation project aimed to stabilize the building’s original brick façade and restore historic references, including painted signage for Mable carriages on the building’s east end.

To accommodate the building’s new role as a healthcare facility, the interior was gutted and redesigned. The newly-configured space was divided into reception areas, pharmacy, examination rooms, a sickroom, and a variety of administrative offices. The final result is very attractive; the interior has a mixture of exposed brick and plaster walls (painted with cream and

terra cotta coloured paint), and office spaces are equipped with streamlined storage cupboards and new furniture. The ACCESS Health Building was a carefully planned adaptive reuse project and in 2010 it received the local Hallmark Society's historic preservation award not only for the "quality of the restoration, but also because it was completed by non-profit partners actively engaged in improving the [city's] downtown core" (Fig. 2).²¹

When the new clinic facility opened the walls were bare. To fill in the blank spaces, the staff decorated the walls with medical and acupuncture charts, which staff members told me were mostly decorative, and not didactic, in their purpose. The curatorial triage begun by unknown clinic staff would be superseded by a collaborative design effort. I worked with Cool Aid's manager of community health services Irene Haigh-Gidora to develop a timeline that would work for the clinic and also serve University of Victoria students. We decided to focus on curating the ground-floor health clinic during the 2010–11 academic year and attend to the second-floor dental clinic the following year. Throughout 2009–11 I managed the relationships between the various constituencies and worked to ensure a sense of curatorial cohesion and the realization of the project.

During the planning stage (2009–10), I also worked with Caroline Riedel, Curator of the University Art Collections, to identify approximately sixty works of art that would fall within the university's risk-assessment parameters for works of art on loan and also meet the space limitations of the clinic site and provide the "calm aesthetic" that Cool Aid staff representatives expressed as their ideal. Understanding the parameters of what the clinic staff meant by a "calm aesthetic" was a major challenge that the team of students and staff had to negotiate. Apart from their desire to move away from medical charts, our only clue to the sort of art they sought was their rejection of Riedel's initial offer of a series of abstract paintings by local Victoria artist Pat Hardy (Fig. 3). Irene Haigh-Gidora let us know that clinic staff thought the images were too violent due to the thick and random brushwork and bold colours. Perception of violence was of particular concern because many clinic clients were violent-crime survivors. Thus, it seemed that Cool Aid Community Health staff sought an aesthetic that would divert the attention of their clientele from psychological wounds or physical ailments rather than provoke their contemplation.²²

With these rough parameters in mind, Riedel and I pulled together a preliminary selection of images, mostly realistic representations and softer in hue than Hardy's paintings, with the idea that we would winnow down our preliminary selection as we engaged further with clinic staff. For example, during the 2010–11 academic year, seminar participants first consulted with staff members to identify images from our preliminary list that would suit spaces they frequented. The students drafted a plan that included an image



3 | Pat Hardy, *Untitled*, 1997, acrylic on canvas, 106.30 x 153 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U996.12.33). (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

list drawn from Riedel's initial selection, and that identified the locations where works were to be installed within the health clinic. We subsequently presented our initial plan to a team of clinic staff members, and the staff voiced their concerns. One notable aspect of their input was discouragement of any representation of the human body, and specifically the female body, within the Cool Aid Health Clinic facility. One of the nurses felt that images of the body might prompt distress among their many patients who are victims of domestic violence (Figs. 4 and 5). In this way, the art historical conventions of reception theory took on new importance, and I assumed a new role as editor of the image list.

In light of this response, seminar students returned to class to substantially revise the plan. Working with our newly-configured image list, they continued research on individual works of art and the biographies of their creators. The discovery that one of the artists in our group became an artist to help overcome his own battle with diabetes informed our decision to put two of his images in a group therapy room in which diabetic patients gather to learn disease management strategies. Members of the clinic team were enthusiastic about this plan and especially about the didactic role the biography of an artist might play. Through this dialectical process, we gained insight into one way in which art historical research into the biography of an artist could perform a clinical function.

With this final plan in hand, gallery staff framed and helped to install the images. The post-installation period involved further refinements, however. Some images were hung too low, so that patients caught their hair in the frame or bumped their heads as they lay down on examination tables. We were also asked to remove one work from one of the examination rooms,



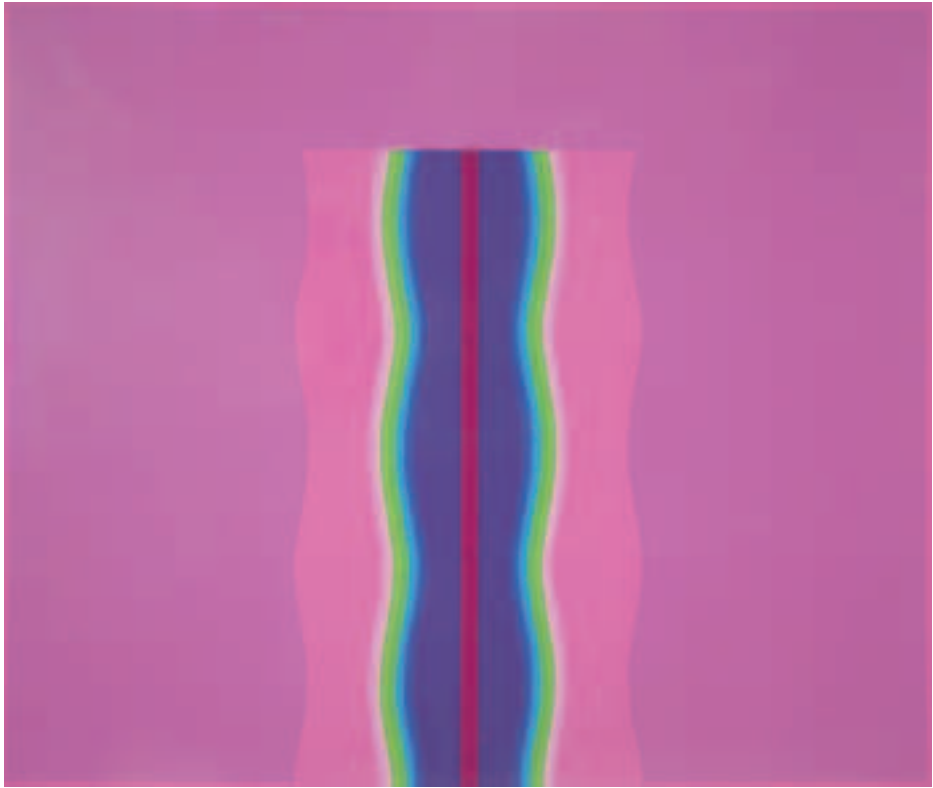
4 | Patricia Martin Bates, *Woman with Words in Her Head*, ca. 1900-50, ink, watercolour, and paper, 57 x 38 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U977.1.25). (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

5 | Bruce Chic, *Betty*, 1977, lithograph, 57.3 x 39.5 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U985.20.12), formerly in the Patricia Martin Bates and Clyde Bates Collection. (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

Gordon Smith's *For Alen Wallin* (n.d.), after Irene Haigh-Gidora let us know that one of the physicians found it to be “too pink” (Fig. 6).

Although no further details were provided as to why pink was such a problem, an important clue surfaced one year later during a discussion about *Conch Balance* by Torrie Groening, which was part of our preliminary installation plan for the dental clinic (Fig. 7). A member of the dental staff disapproved of the selection because the scalloped edges of the shells looked too “teethy” and might prompt discomfort among their clientele. The editorial interventions of the physician and dental clinic staff member thus added a layer of refinement to the rough parameters initially articulated by a nurse on the team of clinic staff members – to avoid representations of the body, and especially the female body in the case of *For Alen Wallin*'s pink vaginal allusion.²³

The ACCESS Art project is an example of knowledge production with similarities to Hardwig's observations on Big Science. The development of the project was parcelled among various actors: the ACCESS Art team



6 | Gordon Smith, *For Alen Wallin*, ca. 1900-50, serigraph, #16, print no. 5052, 80 x 63 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U982.25.20). (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

that included Legacy Gallery staff and Cool Aid Clinic staff had expert understanding of both design aspects and image reception; the students researched the life stories of artists, uncovering medical history of significance to the production; and I myself brought exhibit design and project management to the effort. Although it is possible that one individual may have been able to select works, frame, and hang them, it was only through the dialectical and collaborative process of image selection that the clinic aesthetic came to be known. The clinic's aesthetic was produced collaboratively: it was an experiment in 'Big Art History' that parallels the Big Science that Hardwig considers.

Although the ACCESS Art project – unlike the peer-reviewed article that you read here – does not fit neatly into the institutionalized standards set by professional organizations like the College Art Association, it clearly registers social knowledge precedents hinted at by Panofsky, and articulated in recent philosophical theories of social epistemology. The paradigm of



7 | Torrie Groening,
Conch Balance, ca. 1985,
planographic lithograph
56.25 x 38 cm, University
of Victoria Art Collections,
Victoria, BC (U996.12.33).
(Photo: Victoria Art
Collections)

social knowledge suits art history, and I have argued above that it particularly suits recent developments in art history's practice. One such development, the ACCESS Art project, presented ineliminably social advances in the study of artists' biography and in reception theory, and its collective construction might indeed be an example of work that deserves the title 'Big Art History.'

NOTES

- 1 This text is an expanded version of a paper that I presented at the 2012 annual meeting of the Universities Art Association of Canada at Concordia University, in Montreal.

- 2 See, for example “Standards and Guidelines for Retention and Tenure of Art Historians,” last modified 25 Oct. 2009. Accessed 1 Nov. 2012, <http://www.collegeart.org/guidelines/tenure>.
- 3 Julie ELLISON and Timothy K. EATMAN, “Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University,” *Imagining America* (Syracuse, NY: Artists and Scholars in Public Life Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship, 2008), 22–23. Accessed 14 Nov. 2012, <http://imaginingamerica.org/fg-item/scholarship-in-public-knowledge-creation-and-tenure-policy-in-the-engaged-university/>. For further discussion of the ‘modern individual’ see Stephen GREENBLATT, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- 4 More detailed discussions of Vasari’s, Parker and Pollock’s, and Mithlo’s activities can be found in the following publications: Marco RUFFINI, *Art Without an Author: Vasari’s Lives and Michelangelo’s Death* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011); Rozsika PARKER and Griselda POLLOCK, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); Nancy MITHLO, ed., *New Native Art Criticism: Manifestations* (Santa Fe, NM: Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, 2012).
- 5 For epistemological studies in this vein, see the contributions in Sandra HARDING, ed., *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
- 6 See René DESCARTES’s exposition of such ideals in *Discours de la Méthode* (Leyde, 1637), and his demonstration of them in action, in *Meditationes de Prima Philosophiae* (Paris, 1641). For further explanation of Cartesian individualism in epistemology, see Miriam SOLOMON, “A More Social Epistemology,” in *Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimensions of Knowledge*, ed. Frederick E. Schmitt (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1994), 217–33.
- 7 John COTTINGHAM et al., trans., *Discours de la Méthode*, Part 1 and Part 2, in vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 9.
- 8 Isaac NEWTON, *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (London, 1687). Descartes also makes a perfunctory attempt at a similar presentation of his metaphysics *more geometrico* in a few pages of his *Responsio ad Secundas Objectiones*, a supplement to the *Meditationes de Prima Philosophiae* (Paris, 1640), and Baruch Spinoza would develop this effort further, in *Descartes principium philosophiæ Pars I et II. more geometrico demonstratae* (1663).
- 9 Newton to Robert Hooke, 5 Feb. 1676. The admission may have been a backhanded insult to Hooke (who was of short stature), a mocking reference to Hooke’s claims to priority in some areas in which Newton also worked.
- 10 For an account of such philosophical analysis, see, for example, Jonathan JENKINS and Matthias STEUP, “The Analysis of Knowledge,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Accessed 14 Nov. 2012, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/knowledge-analysis/>
- 11 Derek J. DE SOLLA PRICE, *Little Science, Big Science . . . And Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).
- 12 John HARDWIG, “Epistemic Dependence,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 82:7 (July 1985): 335–49.
- 13 Miriam SOLOMON, “Extensionality, Underdetermination and Indeterminacy,” *Erkenntnis* 33:2 (September 1990): 219.

- 14 Bruno LATOUR, *Science in Action* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1987). Steven SHAPIN and Simon SCHAFFER, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985). Latour, Michel Callon, and others at the Centre de Sociologie des Mines are the primary exponents of the actor-network theory introduced in this paper.
- 15 SHAPIN and SCHAFFER, *Leviathan and the Air Pump*, 58, 332. See also Steven SHAPIN, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994).
- 16 Cindy PERSINGER, “The Politics of Style: Meyer Schapiro and the Crisis of Meaning in Art History” (PhD thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 2007), 496–97, quoting from Erwin PANOFSKY, *Studies in Iconology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), v–vi.
- 17 Erwin Panofsky to William Ivins, 27 Feb. 1932. Dieter WUTTKE, ed., *Erwin Panofsky Korrespondenz: 1910–1936* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001), 486; as quoted in PERSINGER, “The Politics of Style,” 154.
- 18 See Greenblatt (*op. cit.*) for a first inquiry into the social construction of the modern individual. The role of culture as a challenge to the primacy of the individual as both the seat of knowledge and the source of experiential authority is examined in Catherine GALLAGHER, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).
- 19 For example, major surveys of Canadian art history have shifted from the Euro-Canadian foci of J. Russell HARPER’s *Painting in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966) and Dennis REID’s *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) to the multicultural approach of Anne WHITELAW, Brian FOSS, and Sandra PAIKOWSKY’s edited volume *Visual Arts of Canada* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada, 2010). In addition, some art history programs, such as the University of Pittsburgh’s Department of History of Art and Architecture are redesigning graduate and research programs to emphasize collaborative practices: “Constellations.” Accessed 4 Dec. 2012, <http://www.haa.pitt.edu/research/constellations-foundations>
- 20 Isabelle STENGERS, “Preface,” in *Cosmopolitics I*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), vii. For a related characterization of methodology and goals from the examination of Big Science, see Wesley SHRUM et al., *Structures of Scientific Collaboration* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 1–4.
- 21 Victoria Cool Aid Society “Access Health Centre Celebrates History & Heritage Award.” Accessed 20 Feb. 2013, http://www.coolaid.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=388&Itemid=1
- 22 Within European practices of medicine, there is a long history of images that visualize disease and ailments being used as part of the process of healing or to prompt empathy within the viewer. For example, as David Freedberg observes, *ex-voto* images depicted an accident or ailment and the Saint who intervened to restore health or safety, and the graphic portrayals of sores and wounds that characterize the *sacri mori* tradition of Northern Europe were designed to marshal a sense of empathy and affection within the beholder. For a more detailed discussion see David FREEDBERG’s *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 136–40 and 168–75.
- 23 For Alen Wallin found a temporary home in the group therapy room; the following year, it was permanently installed in the dental clinic upstairs.

La méga-histoire de l'art : ou l'histoire de l'art en tant que connaissance sociale

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Comment font les historiens de l'art pour créer le savoir ? Les conventions disciplinaires reconnaissent communément que l'individu est le siège de la connaissance historique de l'art, les publications à auteur unique constituant la forme la plus crédible d'érudition. Toutefois, une longue histoire, largement ignorée, de la production collaborative de savoirs au sein de la discipline comprend, par exemple, les récits oraux de Giorgio Vasari; la recherche concertée sur l'iconologie d'Aby Warburg, d'Erwin Panofsky et de Fritz Saxl; les réalisations du Women's Art History Collective; et la formule coopérative retenue par Nancy Mithlo et la Native Arts Alliance. Le présent article examine en particulier les efforts d'Erwin Panofsky pour articuler son activité de collaboration, utilise les derniers travaux d'érudition pour élaborer une théorie sur la création de la connaissance sociale et présente une étude de cas sur un tout récent exemple de création collaborative de savoirs selon cette optique théorique.

Bien que le principe de la connaissance individualiste remonte à Platon, notre analyse commencera avec Descartes. Du reste, la production collaborative de savoirs n'a véritablement été prise en considération dans la philosophie occidentale que depuis une cinquantaine d'années, à la suite de l'essor de la collaboration scientifique à grande échelle marquée particulièrement par le projet Manhattan. Elle s'est développée dans les années 60, avec l'analyse de la structure sociale de la science du philosophe Thomas Kuhn et d'autres historiens des sciences. Le présent article élabore une théorie de la connaissance sociale pour la recherche en histoire de l'art. Il cerne d'abord le paradigme individualiste de la connaissance, puis il présente un compte-rendu de la connaissance sociale qui s'appuie sur des ouvrages d'érudition et de science de John Hardwig, de Miriam Solomon, de Stephen Shapin et de Bruno Latour. La critique « néo-historiciste », initiée par les théoriciens Stephen Greenblatt et Catherine Gallagher, est également évoquée pour miner l'autorité de l'individu comme siège de la connaissance et soutenir que certaines connaissances, comme le postulat déduit de rapports de laboratoire de physique sur les représentations symboliques développées dans le domaine de l'iconologie, ou la conservation, la conception et la

réception d'expositions à long terme et à grande échelle, sont bien souvent nécessairement sociales.

La théorie s'applique à une installation artistique collaborative instituée dans une clinique de Victoria, au Canada, de 2009 à 2011. Ce cas a pour objet d'indiquer des parallèles dans la production des connaissances entre la science collaborative – connue sous le nom de « mégascience » dans la littérature sociologique – et la conservation collaborative.