

- numbers below refer to this source. I would like to thank Bridget Alsdorf for discussing the relation of issues throughout this review to literary Symbolism.
2. Gamboni cites Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1965; new ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
 3. Joseph Jurt, "Autonomy and Commitment in the French Literary Field: Applying Pierre Bourdieu's Approach," *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 38, no. 1 (April 2001): 87–102, at 89.
 4. For an example of analysis along these lines, see Gamboni's remarks on art criticism, pp. 78–79.
 5. For a sample of Pierre Bourdieu's argument—an account of the relation of modernism's rise to academic art with special attention to the matter of readability, which is crucial to the arguments of all three books under consideration—see his "Manet and the Institutionalization of Anomie," in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Jandal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 238–53.
 6. Gamboni refers to Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).
 7. Odilon Redon, "Dans mon rêve, je vis au Ciel un VISAGE DE MYSTÈRE," 1885, lithograph, 11 × 9½ in. (28.1 × 23.8 cm), pl. 1 from *Homage to Goya*.
 8. Gamboni here cites a letter from Redon to his early historian, André Mellerio.
 9. Paul Gauguin, *Manao tupapau (Spirit of the Dead Watching)*, 1892, oil on burlap mounted on canvas, 28½ × 38½ in. (72.4 × 97.5 cm), Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y.
 10. Goddard cites Apollinaire, *Méditations esthétiques: Les peintres cubistes* (Paris: Hermann, 1980), 24–25.
 11. Goddard cites Mallarmé, "Crise de vers," in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bertrand Marchal, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1998–2003), vol. 2, 209.
 12. Goddard refers to Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolist Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985). Goddard also cites Bourdieu and Gamboni on the relation of art to literature in nineteenth-century France.
 13. Pablo Picasso, *Bouteille, verre et journal sur un table (Bottle, Newspaper and Glass on a Table)*, December 1912, cut-and-pasted newspaper, charcoal, and gouache on paper, 24¾ × 18¾ in. (62 × 48 cm), Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.
 14. Goddard cites Robert Rosenblum, "Picasso and the Typography of Cubism," in *Picasso in Retrospect: 1881–1973*, ed. Roland Penrose and John Golding (New York: Praeger, 1973), 35–36.
 15. Pablo Picasso, *Bouteille, tasse, journal (Bottle, Cup, Newspaper)*, December 1912, cut-and-pasted newspaper, charcoal, and pencil, 18¾ × 24¾ in. (48 × 63 cm), Museum Folkwang, Essen.
 16. Goddard goes on to quote Mallarmé's "Le livre, instrument spirituel" (1895/97), in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2, 225, 227.
 17. Goddard has in mind Christine Poggi's "Mallarmé, Picasso and the Newspaper as Commodity," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1987): 133–51; Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism and the Invention of Collage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); and Rosalind Krauss, "The Motivation of the Sign," in *Picasso and Braque: A Symposium*, ed. William Rubin and Lynn Zelevansky (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 261–86.
 18. Goddard refers to the works by Poggi, Krauss, and Terdiman she has already discussed, plus Krauss's *The Picasso Papers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998); and Jean-Joseph Goux, *Les monnayeurs du langage* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1984).
 19. Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," in *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), 176; cited in Arnar, p. 23.
 20. The *elle* that ties the pronoun "it" of the last few sentences back to the *tentative* of "Mallarmé's endeavor" makes this clearer in the original French. See Paul Valéry, *Oeuvres*, ed. Jean Hytier (Paris: Pléiade, 1957), vol. 1, 628.
 21. For more on this topic and its relation to modernism, see Todd Cronan, *Against Affective Formalism: Matisse, Bergson, Modernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). I would like to thank Todd Cronan for helpful consultation here and elsewhere.
 22. In her footnote, Arnar gives the original French in the context of Mallarmé's sentence: "Et comme publication c'est, par fragments de la représentation—chacun en donnant le rythme d'ensemble—selon sa fraction." (Arnar cites *Le "livre" de Mallarmé*, ed. Jacques Schérer [Paris: Gallimard, 1978], folios 171 [A]–172 [A].) The part of the sentence that works for the argument, "chacun en donnant le rythme d'ensemble," seems more likely to translate as "each giving the rhythm of the whole of it," which would suggest, rather, that the fragments were sufficient, autonomous in some sense, and adequate to deliver something like the pattern (the rhythm) of the whole. My thanks to Robert St. Clair for discussing this and other matters with me.
 23. Kevin Kelly, "Scan This Book!" *New York Times Magazine*, May 14, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/14/magazine/14publishing.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed January 7, 2013), where the sentence reads, "Once text is digital, books seep out of their bindings and weave themselves together. . . ."
 24. Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author," *Aspen* 5+6 (Spring 1967): n.p.

MARY JANE JACOB AND

MICHELLE GRABNER, EDS.

The Studio Reader: On the Space of Artists

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. 328 pp.; 69 b/w ills. \$73.00; \$35.00 (paper); \$7.00–\$21.00 (e-book)

In "The Function of the Studio" (1971), conceptual artist Daniel Buren defined the artist's studio in terms of "frames, envelopes, and limits," limits that he, as a standard-bearer of institutional critique, saw as stifling and untenable. For Buren, this privileged space of artistic production had become nothing more than an "ossifying custom." He aimed to demystify the studio by calling it a "commercial depot" for curators and dealers and then render it irrelevant through his commitment to site-specific art. Once a work leaves the studio to be installed in a museum or gallery, Buren argued, its meaning is irrevocably compro-

mised and "neutralized to the extreme." Unmoored from its site of inspiration and creation, it loses its intentionality and connection to its conditions of production. Unless artists have the authority to demand their work be preserved in their studios in perpetuity, like Constantin Brancusi (a hero of Buren's), then it is better to shutter the studio and shift all art making outside its walls (pp. 156–62).

The model of the studio Buren critiques is a modern one, and its tropological features were articulated 140 years earlier in Honoré de Balzac's tale of artistic genius and failure, *The Unknown Masterpiece* (1831).¹ Balzac's image of the atelier is a cramped, cluttered, and sky-lit space—the dusty lair of a solitary male painter whose bric-a-brac emanates an aura of mystery and genius. The story ends with the master painter Frenhofer in a state of total despair, having just realized—through the eyes of his visitors—that his painting is illegible. The result of ten years of struggle, his depiction of a beautiful woman has amounted to "Nothing, nothing!"—a formless "wall of paint."² Balzac dramatizes a central dilemma of the studio as a mental and physical space, where art emerges from a fusion of immaterial concept and material craft: Is genius to be found in the object, or is it located in the artist's mind? If the former, does the work lose its luster outside the studio, without the trappings of genius? If the latter, how do viewers appreciate conceptual brilliance without, as Buren writes, "visible evidence . . . that allows an understanding of process"? How do they know whether Frenhofer's woman or Buren's stripes are not a scam?

Balzac's and Buren's views of the studio are typically seen as diametrically opposed, with Buren as the disillusioned, clear-sighted critic of Balzac's myth, but they actually share a good deal of common ground. Frenhofer's "wall of paint" metaphorizes the studio as a space of oppressive limits and delusions, presaging Buren's essay; and although Buren "distrusts" the studio as an auratic and idealizing space, he nonetheless attributes to it an "energy essential to [art's] existence." Like Balzac, he has affection for the "clutter" of studio space, and he waxes nostalgic when recalling his first studio visits as a young man. Disillusion over what happens when art *leaves* the studio grounds his critique, suggesting that the problem lies not in the studio but in everything else: the institutions that prey on it (pp. 160–61).

Buren's essay serves as a strange centerpiece for *The Studio Reader*, an anthology of texts whose stated purpose is "to revisit the studio and resituate it in contemporary times" (p. xii). "The Function of the Studio" falls roughly in the middle of the book, and its critical proposals are paraphrased (and sometimes directly cited) throughout. But

Buren's call to leave the studio is often distorted as more *antistudio* than it was. The anthology's other primary purpose is to "confront the myths" surrounding the studio (p. xiii), and to this end a passage from *The Unknown Masterpiece* serves as the epigraph to the introduction. This introduction presents Balzac's model as a romantic fantasy ripe for debunking, but many of the contributors to *The Studio Reader*, sometimes writing under the veil of critique, perpetuate myths of the studio instead.

For example, a statement by performance artist Carolee Schneemann describes her visit to Philip Guston's West Village studio when she was a student, referring to the bare space stacked with paintings as "part of [Guston's] extended mythology" (p. 155). Michael Peppiatt and Alice Bellony-Rewald's historical overview of "Studios of America"—a chapter originally from *Imagination's Chamber: Artists and Their Studios* (1982)—is peppered with phrases like "an atmosphere of want and loneliness," "a universe of pure paint," and "a long, lonely leap into the dark" (pp. 73–75). Contemporary artist Rachel Harrison's brief account of her daily practice is more rhetorically restrained, but it still invokes many of the familiar studio tropes: unself-consciousness, frustration, failure, and authenticity ("it keeps me honest") (p. 217). Rochelle Feinstein's and Buzz Spector's inventories of their past studios convey a nostalgia for origins (pp. 17–22), while Shana Lutker's statement presents the studio as a space of anxiety and dreams (pp. 23–27). Carrie Moyer characterizes her studio as a space of transformation and then discusses her painting, titled *studio*, as imbued with "timelessness and mysterious presence" (pp. 166–67). No matter how often the term "post-studio" appears throughout the book (and it appears countless times), it is clear that contemporary artists and writers have not left the studio or its mythologies behind.

Indeed, the studio has received a surge of attention in recent years from academics, curators, critics, and artists themselves. Within the past decade many scholarly studies, exhibitions, conferences, themed issues of magazines and journals, and artworks have appeared that testify to the enduring fascination of the studio as a space that both cultivates and confines artistic work.⁹ *The Studio Reader* compiles texts from several of these sources and others, mixing in classic postmodern texts (like Buren's) and adding many previously unpublished essays, interviews, and artists' statements. Rather than investigating the studio from a strictly art historical or art practice standpoint, the volume takes a more wide-ranging approach, resulting in a reader as rich and variable as the topic it takes up. The book's great strength is the range of perspectives it offers, bringing together voices rarely placed in dialogue, at least in published

form. Artists, art historians, curators, and critics certainly view the studio differently, owing to their different relations to it as a space and/or object of study. Together, these voices explore a wide variety of definitions of the studio: as a space, a concept, a social hub (or asocial hollow), a psychological construct, a locus of artistic identity, and a crucible of art and criticism. This authorial and conceptual diversity makes the book a valuable teaching tool for a variety of courses in studio art, art history, art theory, and curatorial studies. Teachers and other readers should know, however, that the volume has a strong postmodern slant, and that more than two-thirds of it focuses on North American art.

The book's postmodern focus is no surprise given the contemporary orientation of the editors: Mary Jane Jacob is a curator of contemporary art and Michelle Grabner is a practicing artist and critic. (Both are also professors of art at the same institution.) They have divided the anthology into five sections that aim to give their component texts a conceptual framework: "The Studio as Resource"; "The Studio as Set and Setting"; "The Studio as Stage"; "The Studio as Lived-In Space"; and "The Studio as Space and Non-Space." These categories alone demonstrate a demythologizing approach to the studio, replacing notions of interiority, seclusion, and alchemical transformation with notions of performativity, theatricality, and the banality of everyday life and work. Although I recognize how difficult it must have been to wrangle this diverse range of texts into a coherent structure, and I applaud the editors for managing to curate such an eclectic collection, it is frustrating that they did not further define these categories by adding brief conceptual introductions to each section, especially since the rationale for choosing what went where is often opaque. Readers are left to wonder, for example, how exactly "The Studio as Set and Setting" differs from "The Studio as Stage," and why all three of the historical essays in the section "The Studio as Lived-In Space" focus on gender.

One of the volume's most insightful essays is Katy Siegel's "Live/Work," which seems a natural fit for the section "The Studio as Lived-In Space" but instead appears in the subsequent section, "The Studio as Space and Non-Space." What the editors mean by "non-space" is not at all clear from the selections, but Siegel's argument suggests that the evacuation of sociability from the studio may have something to do with it. Siegel points to a curious inversion of the working conditions surrounding the creation of art and other occupations: while it has become increasingly common for professional employees to work from home or wired cafés on a flexible schedule, many of today's young artists can afford only isolated, cubiclelike studios in large converted

factories to which they commute from their homes. Toiling alongside, above, and below a multitude of creative workers whom they never see, these artists react to this atomized artistic community by thematizing relationships and collectivity in their art. According to Siegel, relational aesthetics is in part a reaction formation caused by the isolation and anonymity of contemporary studio space (pp. 311–15). Then again, one might wonder whether the critique of the studio contributed to this atomized situation more than the studio itself.

This is not the first time in the history of art that the interiority of the studio has driven artists to represent and redefine the social. To offer just one example, Henri Fantin-Latour's group portraits painted between 1864 and 1885 convey the same generative tension between atomization and sociable collectivity. As Howard Singerman asserts in his essay "A Possible Contradiction," "the problem of isolation and the problematic nature of interchange" have bedeviled artists and their studios for centuries, and artists' fascination with these problems endures (pp. 39–45). The historical view Singerman provides is brief, moving swiftly from Leonardo to the contemporary context, but helpful in a volume so trained on contemporary art. A more in-depth look at the studio's genealogy in European art is Svetlana's Alpers's "A View from the Studio," the first chapter of her book *The Vexations of Art: Velázquez and Others*, 2005. Alpers's subject is "the grip of studio practice and its internalization into the practice of painting" since the seventeenth century (p. 126). She counters "present antagonism" toward the studio and all its constraints by outlining a range of epistemological models generated by studio practice, including the studio as laboratory, as a space of heightened phenomenological experience, and as an experimental instrument of art. Alpers's thinking on the studio is so expansive that it is hard to see how the studio could seem so constraining to contemporary artists. Indeed, as Siegel aptly notes, such critiques of the studio have begun to sound old-fashioned (p. 311).

On a technical note, I am perplexed as to why essays like Alpers's were reprinted without their accompanying images, since the University of Chicago Press routinely produces art books with extensive and high-quality reproductions (such as the beautifully designed and lavishly illustrated book by Anna Sigridur Arnar reviewed in this issue). Alpers's argument is significantly handicapped without its illustrations (just one, of Jan Vermeer's *Art of Painting*, 1665/1666, is reproduced), since the substance of her text resides so much in analysis of pictures. Long paragraphs of description include phrases such as "See, for example . . ." that ask readers to hunt down the images themselves.

The Studio Reader also serves as a compendium of art that represents or otherwise engages with the studio topos, as well as documentary photographs of artists and their places of work. This is a particularly valuable feature of the book, and for this reason it is a shame that the reproductions are not in color and of higher quality. By introducing readers to a range of works that explore conceptual issues in and around the studio, the book provides a sampling of the discourse of the studio not only in academic and museum circles but in contemporary art as well.

For example, in "A Room of One's Own, a Mind of One's Own," artist and critic Robert Storr tries to dispel the enduring cult of the studio and refocus attention on works of art. Storr criticizes "a considerable constituency within the art world that fetishizes not only what artists have traditionally done but where they have traditionally done it. Hence the romanticizing photographs of artists in their lairs. . . ." (p. 61). He insists (and one can hear the exasperated sigh) that "the mystery and marvel is in the work. The rest is contingent reality and real estate" (p. 62).

One of the works to which Storr draws our attention is Bruce Nauman's *Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage)*, 2001,⁴ an installation that deflates the myth of the studio as a space of heroic action and creation. Consisting of synchronized, time-lapse video footage from seven night-vision surveillance cameras, *Mapping the Studio* shows what happens, or does not happen, in the artist's studio after he has gone home. According to Storr, the work represents "the artist's environment absent the artist and his transformative presence," but Nauman has described the project in more angst-ridden terms, as a way of channeling the frustration and fear that can plague studio work into a state of passive observation and meditative calm.⁵ The drama that unfolds on-screen between Nauman's cat and a number of mice allegorizes (with tongue firmly in cheek) timeworn studio tropes of competition, anxiety, struggle, and death. Critic Michael Kimmelman has characterized the piece as an investigation of "nothingness and artist's block," the same theme, we may recall, that haunts Frenhofer's studio in Balzac's story. Kimmelman writes: "The work overwhelms you with the anxiety, and expectation, that an artist must feel in a studio, alone, desperately waiting for an idea. Mr. Nauman has done more than making something of nothing. He has found a haunting mental music in the endless silence of an empty room."⁶ As this commentary makes clear, installations like Nauman's are no less immune to romantic projections about studio space than a nineteenth-century painting of a disheveled bohemian in a garret. Mythologies of the studio and the

tortured artist die hard, even in works that seem to wish to tear them down.

Some of the artworks reproduced in *The Studio Reader* are overt in their attack on the modern studio. The cover of the book, for example, reproduces the central panel of a photographic triptych by Canadian artist Rodney Graham, a work emblematic of the anthology's demythologizing commitments. *The Gifted Amateur, Nov 10th, 1962, 2007*, pictures a fashionably spare, midcentury-modern living room with a middle-aged man who smokes a cigarette while working on a large, Morris Louis-inspired "pour painting." His casual pouring gesture deflates Louis's legendary technique (which has always been shrouded in mystery), and a layer of newspapers on the floor protects the bourgeois kitsch interior from any mess. One of the pages facing the viewer's direction, directly beneath the canvas in the center of the spread, reads "MIRACLE DAYS," invoking the mythology of the studio as a site of miraculous transformation. This is not a flattering picture of the prototypical modernist painter, dressed up as a bourgeois charlatan in pristine, carefully ironed pajamas. Graham's statement accompanying the reproduction of the photograph calls studio practice "infantilizing" and describes the triptych's subject as the "midlife crisis of a male professional with only a passing interest in art" (p. 150). But elsewhere Graham has referred to his *Gifted Amateur* as an alter ego and admits that Louis's makeshift studio in his Baltimore home has always intrigued him.⁷

This brings me to the central problem of *The Studio Reader*. The approach to the studio represented by many of the texts and artworks in this book rests on a false dichotomy between modernism and postmodernism when defining the nature of the studio and artists' relation to it. This false dichotomy—call it postmodern versus modern, poststudio versus studio, Buren versus Balzac—is not the fault of the editors. Rather, as much of this volume demonstrates, it is endemic to current thinking about the studio on the part of historians, critics, curators, and artists alike. The modern studio has become a kind of caricature or straw man.

Judith Rodenbeck's essay, reprinted from the March 2009 issue of *Modern Painters* devoted to the subject of the studio, is exemplary in this regard, arguing that there has been "a sea change in the conception of what takes place in an artist's studio." Rodenbeck credits contemporary artists with a new sense of the studio as a space of "limits and anxieties, as well as the recasting of the artist in terms of agency rather than pure creativity" (p. 338), as if pure creativity were not always seen through by those who articulated and consumed it. In making this argument she invokes Gustave Courbet's monumental painting *The Painter's Studio: A*

Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Moral and Artistic Life (1855), a highly complex meditation on the studio as public and private, collective and individualist, political and withdrawn, open and closed, that she radically simplifies to serve her point. A closer look at Courbet's painting, or any of the many other depictions of the studio in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art, as well as historical evidence of modern artists' studio practice, would show that past artists knowingly negotiated the same limits, anxieties, and tensions that Rodenbeck names, including art's "relational possibilities" and the link between studio practice and real-world "agency" and "action."

"Studio Unbound," the essay by Lane Relyea that closes the volume, similarly qualifies the contemporary studio as a radically "new kind of space": "No longer does the studio appear as an ideological frame that mystifies production, a space where the realities of social or mass production are supposedly held at bay in favor of an antiquated craft model that showcases the individual artist's creative genius" (pp. 344–45). Instead, Relyea claims, studios are now understood as embedded in and generative of *networks*, understood in the Deleuzian sense as utopian in their potential for egalitarian exchange and collective agency. He credits artists like Isa Genzken and Rachel Harrison with creating works that overturn old notions of the studio as a private, ivory tower retreat. "The studio now integrates" (p. 349). This presentation of the "studio unbound" requires a mystifying and antiquated "bound" studio from which to push off, but at the same time it depends on modern (and even early modern) ideas of the studio as a space of sociability, bricolage, and ideological resistance, not to mention on many past depictions of the studio as a space that opens out, physically and metaphorically, onto the world.

Contemporary artists and critics too often view the modern studio in a one-sided way, as a space of hermetic enclosure that embodies stifling limits on art's conceptual, material, and sociopolitical potential. But this enclosure was often generative, allowing the artist to see and represent the world afresh, from a position apart. The artist David Reed articulates the tension between these ideas when he asks: "How can I justify making art that I hope is connected to the world if it requires a strategic, temporary disconnection from the world?" (p. 119). This is not a dilemma that postmodern artists introduced, and Reed's wish for a studio where he could feel "both inside and outside at the same time" is the same wish materialized in Courbet's painting, where the massive wall of his atelier seems to dissolve into an indeterminate natural space beyond, with the artist sitting in the center of the room painting a landscape.

Barry Schwabsky recognizes this continu-

ity in his essay "The Symbolic Studio." Schwabsky invokes Courbet's painting as "the beginning of the modern myth of the studio," using it to establish a link between that modern myth and its postmodern critique. As its lengthy subtitle and crowded cast of characters suggest, Courbet's painting is evidence that "the studio activity of the painter has never been seen as essentially private but always somewhat performative" (pp. 92–93). Along similar lines, Jon Wood's essay on Brancusi's "white studio" (pp. 269–83) sees the sculptor's mythic, all-white workspace as an elaborate and self-conscious construct, a performance of artistic identity and "an effective device" for controlling his work's reception. Modern artists like Courbet and Brancusi were well aware of the studio as a romanticized fiction and site of social performance, and they engaged this fiction both in their work and in their careers.

A place of practical labor and alchemical magic, material truth and the theatrics of the pose, public display and private withdrawal, sociability and solitude, the studio has long been a space of irresolvable contradictions. And the "poststudio" condition is as tightly tethered to the modern studio topos as postmodernism is bound to modernism as its *raison d'être*. Perhaps, as Joe Scanlan proposes, today's artists and critics are in fact "post-post-studio," reclaiming the studio as a site of production but with an ironic awareness that it is all performance and myth (p. 153). I am not convinced, however, that they sustain an ironic distance from that myth, nor that such self-awareness of the studio's problems is at all unique to contemporary art. *The Studio Reader* is valuable for many reasons, not least for its integration of perspectives, but perhaps most crucially for showing the need for more integrative historical thinking about the studio as a site—and an idea—that has not and will not go away.

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Notes

1. Honoré de Balzac, *Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*, first published as "Maître Frenhofer" in *L'Artiste* (Paris, July 21 and August 7, 1831), revised and republished in 1837, trans. by Richard Howard as *The Unknown Masterpiece* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001).
2. Balzac, *The Unknown Masterpiece*, 40, 43.
3. Recent books and exhibition catalogs on the studio include, among others, Svetlana Alpers, *The Vexations of Art: Velázquez and Others* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Michael Cole and Mary Pardo, eds., *Inventions of the Studio, Renaissance to Romanticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Jens Joffmann and Christina Kennedy, *The Studio*, exh. cat. (Dublin: Dublin City Gallery, 2007); Liza Irwin, *Artists in Their Studios: Images from*

the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art (New York: Collins, 2007); Brian O'Doherty, *Studio and Cube: On the Relationship between Where Art Is Made and Where Art Is Displayed* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Wouter Davidts and Kim Paice, eds., *The Fall of the Studio: Artists at Work* (New York: D.A.P., 2009); Alison Gingeras and Francesco Bonami, *Mapping the Studio: Artists from the François Pinault Collection*, exh. cat. (Milan: Electa, 2009); and Sarah Bezzer, *Ingres and the Studio: Women, Painting, History* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012). Themed issues of *Modern Painters* 21, no. 2 (March 2009) and *Texte zur Kunst* 49 (March 2003) also focus on the studio, as did a Centennial Panel at the Annual Conference of the College Art Association, Los Angeles, February 25, 2012, "Reclaiming the Studio as a Site of Production." An exhibition of contemporary art titled *Picturing the Studio*, curated by Michelle Grabner and Annika Marie at the Sullivan Galleries, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, served as the centerpiece of the 2010 CAA Annual Conference in Chicago; it was designed to accompany the publication of *The Studio Reader*.

4. Storr's essay incorrectly dates this work to 2002.
5. Bruce Nauman, *Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage)*, 2001, at http://www2.tate.org.uk/nauman/work_3.htm (accessed November 1, 2012).
6. Michael Kimmelman, "Art in Review; Bruce Nauman—'Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage),' " *New York Times*, July 5, 2002, www.nytimes.com (accessed November 1, 2012).
7. Rodney Graham, interview by Robert Ayers, "What's in Your Studio, Rodney Graham?" *Artinfo*, October 10, 2007; and Shepherd Steiner, "In the Studio with the Gifted Amateur: Rodney Graham Practices Painting," *Modern Painters* 64, no. 9 (March 2007): 64–69.

DAVID T. DORIS

Vigilant Things: On Thieves, Yoruba Anti-Aesthetics, and the Fates of Ordinary Objects in Nigeria

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011. 420 pp., 78 color ills., 12 b/w. \$60.00

What began for David Doris as a graduate student "in a darkened lecture hall" in the autumn of 1995 has today culminated in one of the most rigorous and compelling studies on *aale*, that ubiquitous yet enigmatic object in the Yoruba visual and social landscape and the theoretical discourses that frame, define, and engage its critical articulation. Through this study, Doris has produced a very lucid and robust account, written in a refreshing first-person narrative. Succinctly put, "*Aale* makes permeable the boundaries of easy dichotomies: display and power, the visible and the invisible" (p. 16), and operates covertly as "allegorical emblems of what must not be done" (p. 358). *Aale* are cautious reminders and warnings as well as signposts intended to alert people to the devastating consequences of transgression of societal and ethical norms and values. *Aale* is the proverbial elephant in the

room we cannot ignore. To place *aale* on a piece of property, space, or object is to draw attention to its symbolic import as signification of ownership, on the one hand, and "as a site for the deployment of power," on the other (p. 115).

The book is divided into three parts. The first focuses on the processes of creating *aale*, the second on what the author categorizes as a call and response, underpinning the aesthetic notion of looking and remembering, the concept of the eye, and the meaning and symbolism of color. Part three presents *aale* as "portraits and punishments" and, by extension, as embodiment and paradigmatic representation of sufferings and uselessness, which are portrayed in combs and rags, tattered shoes and snail shells, corncocks and brooms, rusted iron and red peppers. In the conclusion, the author attempts to situate *aale* within an invented historical past that is mediated by grafting its meaning, use, and proliferation on the twelfth-century potsherd pavement from Ife, showing how these are of immediate relevance to modern military dictatorship and political adventurism during the draconian rule of the late General Sanni Abacha in the closing decades of twentieth-century Nigeria.

Although Doris makes a compelling argument throughout the book for classifying *aale* as an image of artistic contemplation, or *aworan*, I will insist that *aale* does not qualify and cannot be regarded as *aworan*. It is much more complex than that. Used generally with regard to two-dimensional images in drawing or photography, *aworan* can be broken into its constituent morphemes: *a-wo*, the act of looking, seeing, encountering, or simply to behold, with *iran*, a spectacle, an apparition, a vision that elicits some level or degree of admiration, puzzlement, amusement, and fantasy in the beholder. Simply put, *a-wo-iran* literally implies: we-saw-a-spectacle. In the nominalization process, the *i* in *iran* has been dropped, and the word *ran* means "to send, to sew, to weave into, to spread or creep."¹ This is why *awo-iran* is different from *aworan*. One would have preferred that Doris had used the term *aworanti* in defining *aale*. In that respect, the operational word would have implied weaving together memories and visions of the past. It should be stated right away that *aworanti* in essence is very different from *aworan*. What could be remembered may not necessarily stimulate instant delight or admiration. Because Yoruba is a tonal language, another inflection and modulation of the tones in the operational word *aworan* transforms it into an adjectival noun becoming the spectator, or one who is watching some spectacle.² It is for this reason that *aale* are not *aworan*, although they could be construed as *aworanti*, which triggers memory. For practical purposes, *aworan* pertains only to two-dimensional images on

